Tom Cracknell is a Regulation Coordinator for Didcot A&B Power Stations with RWE npower and has been an Incorporated Engineer for eight years. Here are his thoughts on the importance of IEng:

‘In my field, Incorporated Engineers are right at the heart of the application of engineering, monitoring and interpreting plant conditions and capability and acting upon the information gathered.

Incorporated Engineers can include:
- Maintenance Engineers, who keep operations going in a world where breakdowns can lead to legal non-compliances, human and commercial losses and damage to business reputation;
- Computing and Instrumentation Engineers who provide the systems that give consistency to operations and provide access to plant conditions at the touch of a mouse;
- Commercial Performance and Reliability specialists who look at the efficiency of the processes and where shortfalls occur; they match commercial demands to plant capability to ensure that contracted commitments can be achieved;
- Operations Engineers – at the heart of our generating sites are control room technicians, engineers and shift managers who, along with management of teams, manage and control the operation of the power generation process. They have to have a wide ranging understanding of the different engineering disciplines covering electrical, control and instrumentation and mechanical.

So why would anyone want to be, or would any company want to employ Incorporated Engineers? In my case I, like many engineers, joined the industry at the bottom with what I used to describe as the ‘minimum entry requirements’, which when I started were typically higher nationals for work in engineering disciplines. If you stood still feeling your learning was over and you had made it you would be passed by. Nowadays new starters typically possess high standard degrees, Masters or more and companies expect staff to be on a route to professional status.

As an individual I sought and gained membership of the then Institute of Energy and registration as an Incorporated Engineer. My original motivation was to be recognised for my skills and to be deemed competent to practice within my profession. In reality there is much more to it. There is an attitude that comes with being a recognised member of a professional organisation. In fact it is something I believe true professional engineers must possess and that is the belief that engineers do not want to sit still and accept that they have made it. Through the essential process of continuous professional development we are ever seeking to learn more and broaden our knowledge and more importantly our value to our employers.

For me the benefit has been that I have had a good career which has been enjoyable, personally rewarding and accompanied by continued learning both on the job and academically and this has been marked by my progressive movement up the company ladder. My employer and I both recognise the increased depth of knowledge range of skills and ultimately my value and contribution to the business.’

Tom Cracknell IEng MEI
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