

Helen Randell MEng CEng MICE

CASE STUDY

2015 Karen Burt Award winner

Education and qualifications: MEng, Civil and Structural Engineering, Pembroke College, Cambridge
Which Institution are you a member of? Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
Current job title: Senior Engineer
Company: Buckingham Group Contracting Limited
Length in current job: Five months
Approximately how many staff are employed by your company? 400
Where are you based? Buckinghamshire

Please describe your current role:

I am currently a design coordinator and senior engineer leading a team of seven engineers on the fast track programme to build the Jaguar Land Rover National Distribution Centre at Baddesley. On site, I am responsible for site design, procurement, quality, temporary works and planning and managing all concrete works on site.

Please provide a brief outline of your career so far

I began my career in 2006 while still an engineering student, working on several summer placements as a QUEST scholar for Interserve, until 2010. After graduation I joined Severn Trent Water (STW) as a graduate civil engineer and worked on a number of projects including those involving concrete structures, roads, mechanical and electrical installations. I also managed remedial works at Stoke Bardolph Anaerobic Digestion Plant.

Over the last four years, among other assignments, I have worked on several sustainability projects including project development work on three Energy from Waste plants. I was also senior engineer and civil and structural design coordinator on the development of the new Glasgow Recycling and Renewable Energy Centre, a £146 million project. Before being appointed to my current role, I was responsible for leading and managing a team of ten engineers working on the construction of the Mercia EnviRecover Energy from Waste scheme, a £37 million civil works project near Kidderminster.

Have you worked on any unusual or high profile projects?

The Glasgow Recycling and Renewable Energy Centre was the first project in the UK to combine all the different process technologies into one centre, but it is the Mercia EnviRecover project that will always be special to me. This is because it was this that I used for my project report in my application to become a Chartered Engineer.

What spurred you to work towards becoming registered as a CEng?

Becoming a Chartered Engineer has been a goal since I left university. I see it as a really important continuation of my



academic learning, combined with more practical and 'real life' development at work to become a fully rounded civil engineer.

How did you become registered as a CEng?

I followed a registered training agreement with the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), which was run by my company. I was then assigned a supervising civil engineer who monitored my development against ICE's objectives at quarterly meetings and annual appraisals. He then supported me through the application process by reading my reports and giving me a mock interview as a practice before the big day!

How has professional registration as a CEng benefitted your career?

Being a CEng has really helped me, especially when dealing with designers and clients on site. They respect my suggestions and comments more, which can be useful as a woman engineer. It has also given me more confidence in my ability and decisions, particularly when challenging an aspect of design.

What advice would you give someone considering professional registration as a CEng?

I would definitely recommend that they consider working towards professional registration. For civil engineers I would suggest following ICE's registered training agreement, as this will keep them focused on completing their development objectives and milestones. In addition, I would recommend getting the support of a mentor who is already a Chartered Engineer and knows what you are going through.

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What is your employer's attitude towards professional registration? Were they supportive while you were working towards professional registration as a CEng?

My employers have been really supportive of my goal to work towards becoming a Chartered Engineer through a registered training scheme. My current employer is supporting me in becoming a delegated engineer to support graduate engineers who are aspiring to become members of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

How does your employer benefit from you being professionally registered as a CEng?

It is beneficial when tendering for work to have Chartered Engineers within the company. It also supports the company ethos of training and developing staff.

What are your future goals?

I would like to develop in managing my own projects, while becoming a delegated and ultimately a supervising civil engineer to help others in achieving their goals to become Chartered Engineers.

How do you feel about being the 2015 winner of the Karen Burt Award?

I am thrilled and honoured to receive this prestigious award. I feel extremely fortunate that my love of problem solving has formed the basis of my career. It is so rewarding to have the opportunity to share my experiences with other young women and to know that some have been inspired to join the exciting and ever changing world of engineering, where we really can make a difference.

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Registered: 2015

