

Re: SEEKING ELECTIRICAL DESIGN ENGINEER – New Commercial Product Design

Source: <http://sci.tech–archive.net/Archive/sci.electronics.design/2004–07/0860.html>

From: Tim Wescott (tim_at_wescottnospamdesign.com)

Date: 07/06/04

Date: Mon, 05 Jul 2004 19:05:21 -0700

John Larkin wrote:

> *On Mon, 05 Jul 2004 17:09:14 -0700, Tim Wescott*

> *<tim@wescottnospamdesign.com> wrote:*

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>>*John Larkin wrote:*

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>>>*On 5 Jul 2004 16:15:32 -0700, rbongio@erols.com (Robert BonGiovanni)*

>>>*wrote:*

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>>>>*To all respondents,*

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>>>>*When I posted my listing, I actually thought I was contacting a group*

>>>>*of "professional engineers" and not a group of cynical guys who have*

>>>>*nothing better to do than try "one ups–man–ship one liners" all done*

>>>>*in the most amateurish bad taste.*

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>>>>*Fortunately, I did get a personal response from one such*

>>>>*"professional" individual, and will proceed accordingly. Sorry to have*

>>>>*proposed a "legitmate business project" to such a group, I didn't know*

>>>>*any better. Now I do!*

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>>>>*Rob BonGiovanni*

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>>>>*As a public, unmoderated forum, anyone can post here; there's no way*

>>>>*to qualify only "professional engineers." If you found a good prospect*

>>>>*or two, then mission accomplished. All you can reasonably do is ignore*

>>>>*any posts you don't like. The world's supply of jerks, after all,*

>>>>*clearly outnumbers the supply of good engineers.*

>>>

>>>*John*

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>>*And since I did make an unfortunate comment or two, I would also like to add that in my career, with one exception, all of the truly good engineers have been deeply cynical, and the ones I considered great have a very realistic view of human nature and it's limitations. The only exception that I know has left the profession, in my opinion because he couldn't reconcile the cynicism engendered by being an engineer with his own strongly held religious beliefs.*

>>

>>*So if my experience is any guide I hope for your sake that you're engaging someone who is either cynical or a hardened realist. If you don't, you're going to get to the end of your project with one of those nightmare products that turn young optimistic engineers into old cynical ones, and potentially profitable business ventures into case studies for "Inc." magazine.*

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> *Well, optimism is the worst approach to engineering design. On the other hand, optimism is necessary at the system architecture level.*

>

> *John*

>

And optimism is absolutely necessary for salesmanship and starting up a business, as well. The difference in outlook is exemplified by this whole thread, and is the cause of a lot of mistrust and problems between engineering and other departments. It is very difficult to be steady and careful about one's detailed design, and optimistic about everything else -- yet that's how the great engineers that I know seem to manage themselves (the merely cynical tend to top out at really good detail designers).

Someone should probably write a book like "Women are from Venus, Men are from Mars", only showing the difference between a good engineer and a good marketer. Dilbert shows the problems from an engineers perspective, but not the root causes or their solutions (and it also shows why being cynical is so much fun).

Probably the best save I have ever been blessed with was when Ed, our project manager, was going on about a schedule target date. I asked a rhetorical question that was basically "did this schedule come from you or Sales", whereupon Ed turned to me and asked "Tim, what's the difference between a Realist and a Cynic?". I sat still for quite a while, my brain doing a fairly good impression of a fish out of water, totally unable to come up with an answer, snappy or otherwise. I was saved by Nancy, our dear, sweet software lead who I never suspected of a hint of worldliness, much less cynicism who said "At Xyz corp -- not much!"

sci.electronics.design: Re: SEEKING ELECTIRICAL DESIGN ENGINEER – New Commercial Product Design

It took about 5 minutes for us all to stop laughing, and 10 for Ed to get control of the room.

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Tim Wescott

Wescott Design Services

<http://www.wescottdesign.com>