

# SUCCESS STRATEGIES

## WORDS OF ADVICE FROM NEW ENGINEERS

The Capstone to Work (C2W) team studies students' experiences in the transition from capstone engineering design courses to the workplace.

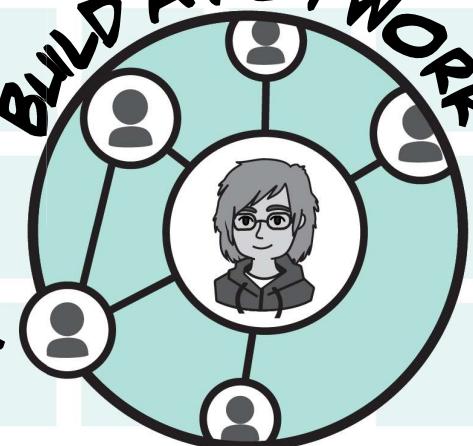
TAKE INITIATIVE



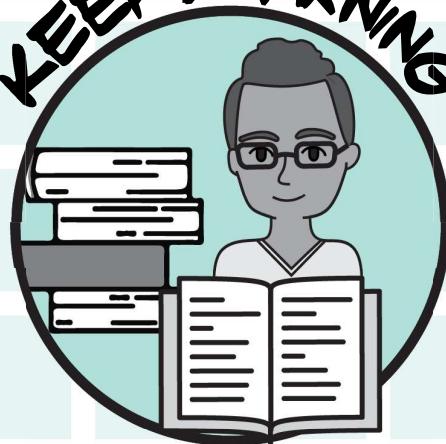
ASK QUESTIONS



BUILD A NETWORK



KEEP LEARNING



GO ALL IN



PURSUE QUALITY



VALUE YOURSELF

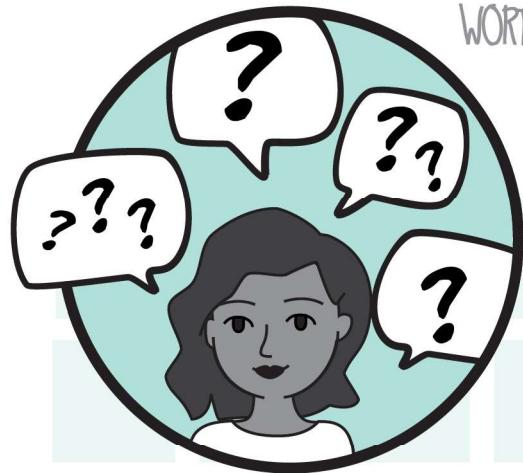


Themes and advice come from more than 100 engineering graduates at four institutions.

# SUCCESS STRATEGIES

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## ASK QUESTIONS



"Learn to talk to other people to get information."

Not everything is in a book."

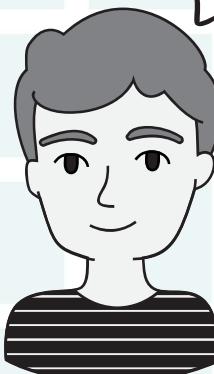


"Don't be afraid to ask questions and admit that, 'Hey, I don't know something.' ... They don't expect you to know everything right off the bat."

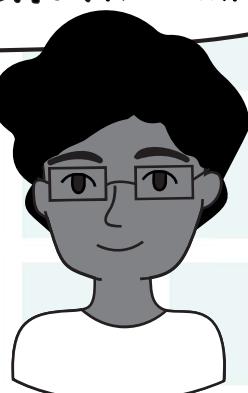


"Expect a really steep learning curve and ask questions."

**Don't be nervous about asking questions."**



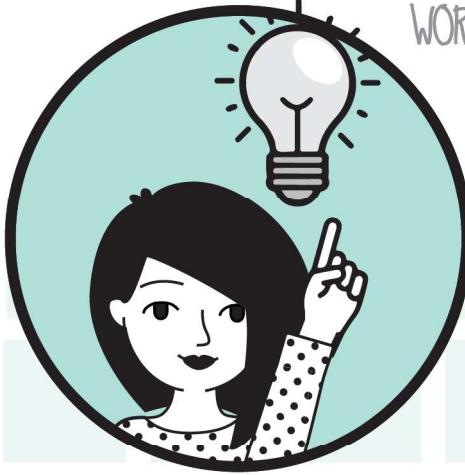
"I have noticed that if I make the effort to ask the questions, that often my boss will take note of it, appreciate it. ... It has never been a waste of time to ask a question in a meeting."



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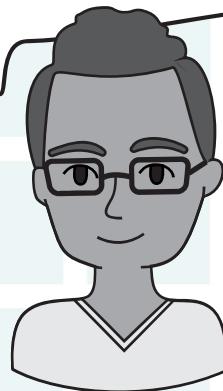
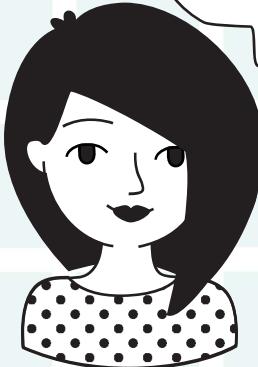
WORDS OF ADVICE FROM NEW ENGINEERS

## TAKE INITIATIVE



"Going out and **trying to seek the answers** seems to be received a lot better than **acting like I know things** about things I don't."

"Focus on two big things:  
**showing initiative**  
and  
**communicating** well."

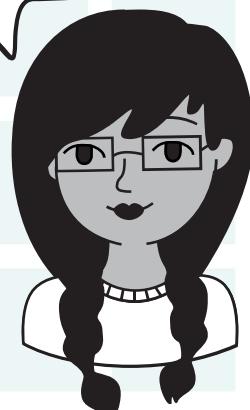


**"Ask for the sort of work you want."**

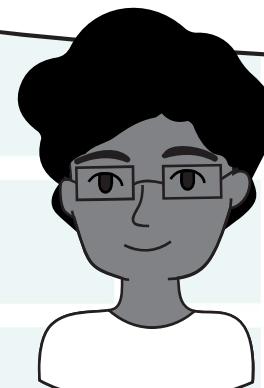
... It took me a while to realize that I had that capacity to say, **"I'm interested in this.**  
**If it comes up let me know."**

**"Take advantage of all the opportunities at work. ..."**

Even if it doesn't apply directly it's still learning something different."



**"Show initiative and a positive attitude working, try to go above and beyond, show that you care."**



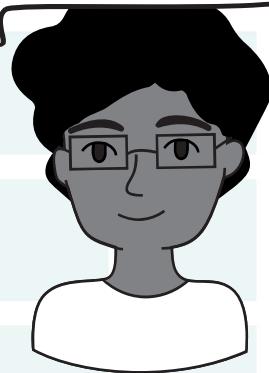
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## PURSUE QUALITY

"Take everything you do seriously, even the little jobs, because it's all a reflection of your work."



"Focus on quality of work rather than deadlines, because in the working world, projects get delayed."



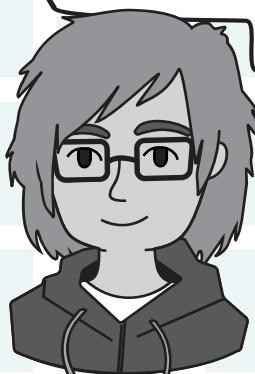
"There is nothing that goes away when you finish it... If you half ass something or it's close enough but not quite right, ... it just comes back

and you'll just have to fix it eventually so you should just do it right."



"Being in a job is kind of like being in a class where the homework isn't graded, or even collected."

"Make sure that you're doing your due diligence in your projects and at work, because it does kind of make a huge difference, in how people perceive you."



I mean, you're basically expected to understand what you're doing, and if you don't, ... it's your own fault.

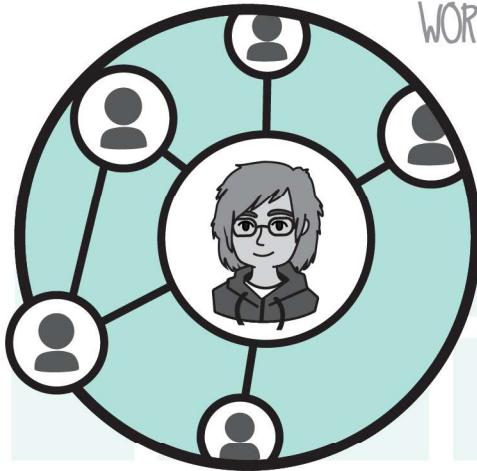
And all you're doing is hurting yourself."



# SUCCESS STRATEGIES

WORDS OF ADVICE FROM NEW ENGINEERS

## BUILD A NETWORK



**"Talk to as many engineers as you can."**

I think the **biggest transition** from being a 22-year-old college kid to a 22-year-old professional engineer is the **maturity**.

One of the **best ways** and easiest ways to mature

is by **being around** and talking to **people** that are **in the profession**."



**"Keep an open mind."**

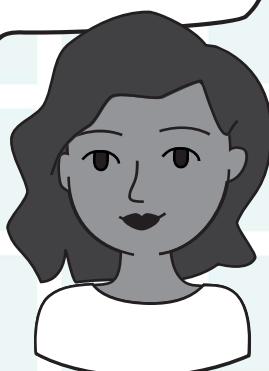
There are a lot of people out there that know a lot of stuff.

**Don't take anybody for granted.**

... I've talked to a lot of **operators** and **machinists** that have this idea of **engineers** always **talking down to them**."



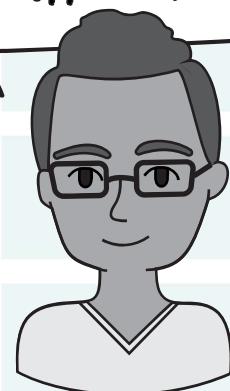
**"Get to know the people at your work on an informal level and network with them."**



**"[Build a] group of people**

where you can look for resources

and ... get to know how to just **communicate with a lot of people** from a lot of **different disciplines**."



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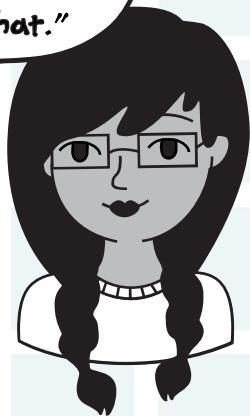
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## KEEP LEARNING

**"be very spongesque**  
with information absorption,

be able to **retain** that,  
and be able to **apply** that."

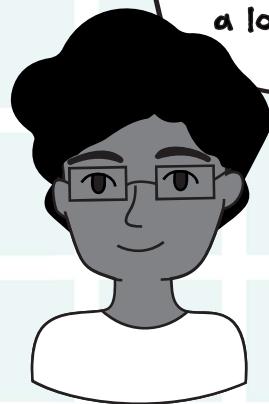
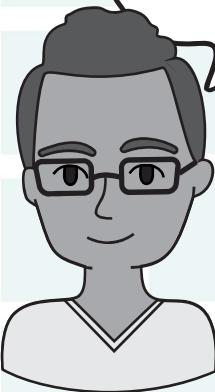


**"It's gonna be a learning process.**

... You **can't expect** to go into any job knowing what you're doing,  
especially as an engineer."

**"You're just going to have to keep learning**

...If I had been given that advice  
I think I would have been  
**a lot less frustrated**  
... going into this job."



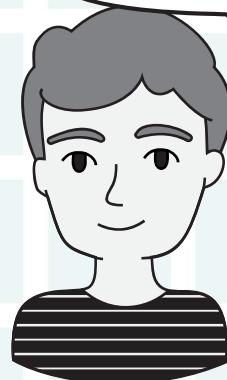
**"It's like a continuous fire hose...**

There's always so much to be absorbed.

I think [in] two years, **you should learn a lot**,  
but I **don't think you can be an expert at anything**  
until you're at least 40 and [have] done something for a while."

**"Be prepared to not know anything.**

You're going to be taught new tools,  
you're going to be taught new concepts."



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## GO ALL IN



**"Give it your all**

and be available as much as you can.

Try to go beyond what's expected of you, because that will get you

not only ahead, but that will also set you up for success."

"You can be an ass%^&# at your job, but you **have to be the very, very best.**

Or you can be **just okay** at your job, and just **show a willingness to learn.**

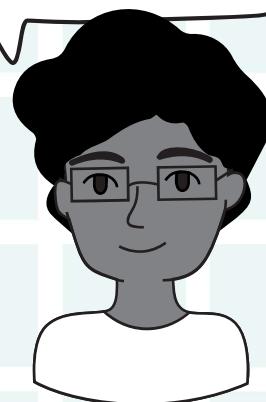
You can do one or the other. But you can't be like a stubborn ass%^&# and then only do an okay job."



"You don't have to be right **all the time**,

as long as... you're making the effort and you're showing that you want to be right,

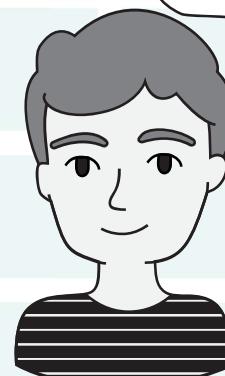
and **you want to be doing well.**"



"Go in **open-minded** and **willing to be taught.**

... People are much more receptive to someone that is

**down to earth** and **excited to be there**, and that really just wants to learn."



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## VALUE YOURSELF



"If you're excited about your job, good.  
**Stay excited** about it.

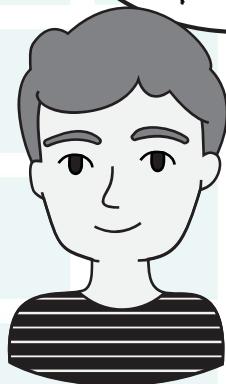
Don't get discouraged by not knowing things  
and **absorb as much  
as you can.**"



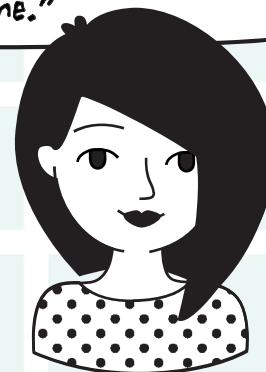
"There are gonna be good days  
and bad days,

**just let go of the  
bad days. ...**

Just kinda roll with the  
punches a little bit."



"You can **still be a good engineer**  
even though you **don't have much experience**,  
and that experience will come."



"It's really important to  
**take care of yourself**  
**outside of work...**

Take care of your health  
and your emotional well being.

... Go to sleep on time."



"Understand that **you have a** very  
**different mindset**  
... **than some of the people**  
**that are 40 and 50 years old,**  
**so figure out how to**  
**leverage yourself.**"

