



The ENGINEERING CAREER COACH PODCAST SESSION # 5

Finding and Getting the Most Out of a Mentor in Your Engineering Career

Show notes at: engineeringcareercoah.com/session5

Anthony's Upfront Intro: You are listening to *The Engineering Career Coach Podcast Session # 5*. In this episode I'm going to give you the steps that you can take to find the perfect mentor for you in your engineering career, a mentor that will guide you toward reaching your goals. Let's do it!

Episode Intro: Welcome to *The Engineering Career Coach Podcast*, where it's all about helping real engineers to overcome real challenges and get real results, and now for your host who is on a mission to inspire as many engineers as possible; professional engineer and certified career coach Anthony Fasano.

Hello, hello, hello everybody this is Anthony Fasano, your engineering career coach and I want to welcome you to session five of the *Engineering Career Coach Podcast*. I can't believe that it's already November this year. I feel like the years flown on by, but it's been a great year. I've had a lot of fun. I've got to speak to a lot of engineers in a lot of different locations, and I want to say that the feedback and the response of this podcast has just been amazing. Just by the sheer number of downloads that we've gotten in the first month or so of the show, so I want to thank you all for taking the time to download the show and taking the time to listen to it because I know that your time is very valuable. And that's why I try to really give you specific strategies on the show, I try to keep the show short to about a half an hour or so and I do give one - what I consider to be a - career changing tip at end of each show and I have a great one for you again today and we are going to get into the whole mentoring process today and how to find a mentor in your engineering career. So many engineers don't do that. I'm not sure why I but I will go through that and a step-by-step process, but before I get into the show, before I start us with our quote and our motivational moment I want to take a minute to just mention my *Institute for Engineering Career Development*. That's a community that I started to help engineers succeed. On the show I coach engineers, every show you listen to, I coach a different engineer. And the reason I started the community was because I feel that coaching is such a powerful tool for you in your career and in your life. So while you can listen to the show, some of you might come on the show which you can do by going to the contact us tab on engineeringcareercoach.com.

Some of you may want more training, more development through my *Institute for Engineering Career Development*, you can check it out at engineeringcareerdevelopment.com. It's basically a community of very close-knit engineers, very motivated engineers. The membership fees are extremely low with a yearly membership. It's eleven dollars a month. Every yearly member that joins gets a thirty minute phone session with me so we can really set you up in your career for success by



establishing your goals early on.

We do monthly webinar calls, we have a private network where you can ask questions about salary and things you're not comfortable with, with other engineers so please, again check it out at engineeringcareerdevelopment.com and if any of you have questions about it simply go to the engineeringcareercoach.com website, put your query in through the contact us form or on the engineeringcareerdevelopment.com site as well and I'll answer your questions, any questions you have, to try to help you along your engineering career and guide you and that's my fundamental goal of this show and in all of my efforts.

So with that what I'd like to do is, we're going to get into our show we're going to start off with a motivational quote about mentoring then we're going to go in to me coaching an engineer actually one-on-one on finding a mentor for him, and I really am outlining the steps for everyone out there, so let's start it out by getting into our motivational moment.

Anthony's Motivational Moment: Alright, Today's quote. I'm going to read right out of chapter three of my book, *Engineering Your Own Success*. The chapter's on mentoring and I have a quote associated with each chapter and the quote is; ***'Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen and a push in the right direction,'*** from John Crosby. Again, ***'Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen and a push in the right direction.'*** And I think that that quote is perfect for mentoring because it summarizes what mentoring is. It's someone you can bounce ideas off of, someone that's going to listen to you and your challenges and your goals and someone that's going to kind of push you in the right direction, which kind of leads me to my definition of a mentor and my definition of a mentor is someone that guides you towards achieving your goals. And we always talk about on the show, about how important it is to set goals in your engineering career and your life so you have something to move towards, well once you have those goals and you can see them and they're right in front of you, wouldn't it make sense to find someone that can help you achieve them? Maybe even someone that's already achieved similar goals, alright. And that's something that people don't do enough, engineers don't think about that. They just think, 'I want to be a partner in an engineering company.' Well how about you find someone else that became a partner in a similar type of company, doing similar work and pick their brain and see if they'll help. That can cut years off of your career development. You can achieve stuff much quicker because he already has a blueprint for you so that's something that I want you to think about.

In this upcoming coaching session of our podcast today you're going to hear me walking, actually an engineer from India, through the process of trying to get a mentor in his career, the right mentor and the different steps and I want you to think about as you listen, how you can apply the steps in your career to find that mentor to help you get to where you want to go quicker. And if you don't know

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where you want to go yet, if you're not quite sure what you want to accomplish then you have to think about that. You have to really think seriously about your goals and where you want to go and there's plenty shows that will be coming up on this podcast, and that we've had already where you'll be able to think about goals and set goals, alright.

So we're about to get into our coaching segment of the call. Just remember for those of you out there, you may be commuting or driving and you can't take notes during the show, I do pretty comprehensive show notes on the site where I list the different things that we went over and also put the links in there of anything that I've mentioned, so you can access them by going to engineeringcareercoach.com/session5 for this show. So with that, let's jump into the coaching segment of this show and help this engineer get on the right path to finding a mentor.

Coaching Segment:

Anthony: Alright, It's time now for our coaching session on today's podcast, and today I have our guest with us here today from India, Praveen. And Praveen is a materials engineer who works in different components of materials engineering from research and development to failure analysis and also material testing all in the automotive industry. He's been out of school for three years or so now, he's twenty-seven years old and he's here with us today because he needs to find a good mentor. How you doing Praveen?

Praveen: Very good, Anthony.

Anthony: Alright Praveen so your challenge in your career is you're in the automotive field. Your a materials engineering you want to find a good mentor to help guide you in your career. Is that right?

Praveen: I've been a subscriber for your daily emails regarding this, one good thing I saw is whether or not you're technically very good in your career it's not sufficient but you need to look into other aspects as well, making good relationships, probably I mean those parts I learnt it from you Anthony.

Anthony: Well that's great Praveen, I'm glad you've been getting the daily boosts for some years now. Those are inspirational e-mails that I send out to engineers everyday for those of you out there that aren't aware of them. You can get to them from the engineeringcareercoach.com website or the engineeringcareerdevelopment.com website through the free resources tab. But that's great Praveen and lets talk a little bit about this now because Praveen's right, you've got to have technical skills and you've got be well-rounded as well to be a successful engineer and part of doing that is having a good mentor to kind of guide you. So what I would ask you on this topic. First, Praveen is what would you say some of your goals are in your engineering career?

Praveen: Well, I mean initially what I thought to pursue, to lead a materials department is my primary

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goal then later on looking into other aspects like making good relationships with other business as well the goals constantly change I mean now what I think is what can I do for the society having this knowledge what can I do for society how can I contribute so that is a major goal I'm still forming my own goal but not that successful.

Anthony: Okay that's great so what I'm hearing from you is, one of your main goals is you want to lead a department in your company in your industry. You want to be a leader and you do want to be good at networking and building relationships with people and ultimately through doing those things you want to be able to help society. You want to be a leader and help society, is that accurate?

Praveen: Right.

Anthony: Okay. So let's think about this now you're in the automotive industry you're a materials engineer, you really want to lead a department so who do you think would be a good mentor for you. I mean not specifically a person but what kind of engineer do you think would be a good mentor for you?

Praveen: Well, I mean having six plus years of knowledge in my particular field of study well I can be able to mentor myself if you give me a technical job in my field but building relationships and handling the situations well.

Anthony: Right but Praveen if you were going to describe to me what your mentor would look like, what their experience would be who do you think would be a good mentor for you if you had to describe the person?

Praveen: Well, my mentor would be one who will be able to teach me how to, having this knowledge how can I apply on a wider scale and how to build a relationship. Those parts if someone teaches me then he is a mentor for me.

Anthony: Alright so what you're saying is it's somebody that has already done what you're trying to achieve right?

Praveen: Yes.

Anthony: You said you want to be able to build relationships, be a leader right, so in order to put yourself in a position to do that you need to find a mentor. That's a leader in your field. That already knows how to build relationships, that has impacted society because they are the same person. That's good to be able to help you to do that, and that's a good point that I want everyone listening to the podcast today to realize and that's why I was excited to have Praveen on and talk about this topic because if you're try to find a mentor as an engineer, and whether you're a materials engineer

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whether you're a geotechnical engineer whether you're an aerospace engineer, the person that's going to give you the best chance to achieve your goals is somebody that's already achieved them, and unfortunately people don't think of that. They just try to find any mentor who's out there and that's not a good strategy because there's no reason to reinvent the wheel. If someone's already achieved the goals that you want to achieve try to get in touch with them, ask for their guidance and that'll help you to get there and the more specific you can be the better, so if I was Praveen I would be looking for a materials engineer who's in the automotive industry who has leading or has led a department is good at building relationships and has impacted society, and that's something that you you have to focus on and we'll get into. Now we're going to get into how do you find that person because it's easy to say that, but now we need to talk about how you can find a person like that. Praveen, does your company have any kind of formal mentoring program?

Praveen: Yes, a formal mentoring program, yes but sometimes we have to dig it out for ourselves I mean we have to look for other sources. I found you from engineering.com I mean I've been subscribing engineering.com from past probably when I was doing my bachelor studies so I mean engineering.com helped me really well both in parts of technical as well as behavioral and other skills as well so I mean and I'm very lucky to have you in my friends list.

Anthony: Yes, I mean engineering.com is a great site I do a lot of writing for them, and for those of you out there listening to the show, you don't have to worry about writing anything down because all this information will be in the show notes, any websites we mention, any resource we mention which you'll be able to access at the engineeringcareercoach.com website. Praveen, so you do have a mentoring program in your company or you don't?

Praveen: We have a formal mentoring program

Anthony: Have you gone through that, have you used it at all?

Praveen: But in our company when we are working they're very busy. We often sometimes neglect it. So when we come back home, we have sufficient time to get into the internet, read through the blogs, articles. It'll refresh our mind and give more ideas. That's what I believe.

Anthony: Okay so for those of you out there that's one way you can try to find a mentor through a formal mentoring program and Praveen's saying that they have one in his company but he wants to look for something else as well. So the other thing that you can do to find a mentor is to try to get involved with one of the through one of the engineering societies. I'm not too familiar with India with respect to that but I know in the United States, there's several societies like the (ASCE), (ASME), (IEEE) and so on and so forth. But the point is, a lot of those professional societies have mentoring programs, Are there organizations like that in India Praveen?

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Praveen: Well, some organization do have but I mean it'll not be, it is not that much consistent as in US I mean we do have technical knowledge sometimes I mean we need these kind of mentoring programs to excel more. That's what I believe.

Anthony: Is there like an Indian society for material engineers or something like that?

Praveen: Well, one or two organizations are there but still we need some more.

Anthony: Okay so that's another possibility to find a mentor and if that doesn't work then you can also turn to online avenues like for example websites like LinkedIn or like the engineering.com sites, where you can go in to large groups of engineers. I'm sure if you went to LinkedIn, you could search for material engineers and try to look for a mentor of some sort and reach out to people and say, you know your profile looks similar to where I want to be I'm wondering if you would take the time to mentor me and guide me. Annd everyone's busy, but you'd be surprised on how many engineers are really looking to give back and really looking to help out to other up-and-coming engineers, so if you've tried your company and they don't have a program or you're not comfortable with the program if you've tried your professional society and you're not comfortable with that program, then try the internet I mean try LinkedIn try engineering .com try a website.

I mean even at the *Institute for Engineering Career Development* we have some groups where you could try as well if you're a member there. It's a smaller more intimate group but we certainly have that as well so those are kind of different places you can find a mentor. The one thing to be careful about with a formal mentoring program in a company is, a lot of times you're going to look to your mentor for guidance and you kind of want them to be have a perspective that's different than yours or unbiased and if you if you're if you're approaching someone that you work with on a regular basis, you may not get that perspective and also you may want to talk about something within the company that you might not feel comfortable about talking with someone at the company so even if you have a mentor in your company I think, like Praveen suggested it's always good to have someone else outside the company give you that outside perspective that can really be invaluable in your engineering career. So that's important to remember when you think about company Praveen do you have any other questions with regard to how to find a mentor?

Anthony: Well, I've been able to get what I wanted to get so I mean daily emails, that's served the purpose for me.

Anthony: Okay, alright, let's talk for a minute just while we have Praveen here and we're on the subject of mentoring. I want to just talk for a couple other things about mentoring that are important to understand about the actual mentoring relationship so that you Praveen, when you find a mentor, you'll be prepared and also for those of you out there that are also looking for a mentor one of the things to understand is that with a mentor you need to be consistent. So if you have a mentor you

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want to make sure you meet with them on a very regular basis, at a minimum once a month and you can do it by phone, that's fine, but it's got to be consistent like anything else in your career. You cannot have a mentor in and talk to them every couple months and call them when you feel like it, there's got to be consistent development.

The other point about mentoring is you want to set up the ground rules for the mentoring relationship. In the beginning of the relationship and Just make sure with the mentor that you know it's a confidential relationship because you might want to share things about yourself or about your company or about your situation that you don't want everyone to know about, and that's important to make to understand that with your mentor and that's also sometimes a reason that you don't want to have a mentor within your company alright and the other thing about mentoring is just in general that that is great is the accountability factor that comes along with it and that's the same goes with coaching and mentoring and that's one of the reasons I started the Institute for **Engineering Career Development** is because when you say you're going to do something in your career it's one thing but when you have a mentor or a coach or someone there to guide you on a regular basis to push you to help you then everything changes you're broadening your horizons, you start to push yourself you start to accomplish great things in your career.

So those are some points and some things that I wanted to kind of get out there on the podcast today when we talk about mentoring. So what I'd like to do as we're finishing up here is just summarize what we talked about today. Obviously we have Praveen with us he's a materials engineer young engineer looking for a mentor. So we discussed where you can find a mentor and highlighted three different areas. One with your company, your engineering company might have a formal mentoring program that you can enroll in you can talk your HR department about that. Secondly, your professional association might have a mentoring program that they can enroll you in as a member and you can be paired up with someone else in your industry and lastly online sites like LinkedIn where you can go in to a group specifically made up of engineers in your industry and find someone to guide you and mentor you. We also mentioned that when seeking out a mentor it's very important to be clear about your goals in your career and then find a mentor. That's going to help you achieve those goals. The best is someone that has already achieved those goals. So if you want to be a leader in the automotive industry as a materials engineer like Praveen does you would want to find someone who is a leader as an engineer in the automotive industry. It's kind of sounds obvious, but a lot of engineers don't think that way when it comes to mentoring and then lastly, we just highlighted a couple of main points about the mentoring process, which is it's a confidential relationship, and that should be made clear with your mentor from the beginning. You should have consistent meetings with your mentor to forward progress forward motion at least once a month and again by phone by Skype. However, you want to do it. And then lastly the whole accountability factor is the reason you should have a mentor because If you have goals and you're staring at them. You want to get there when you have someone else that has already gotten there and they had the advice, they're going to give it to



you, they're going to work with you, they're going to help you. I mean, I think we can all figure out that sure your odds of succeeding are much, much, much greater.

So with that again we'll add all this stuff to the show notes which will be at the engineeringcareercoach.com and the podcast tab and I want to thank Praveen for joining us today. Thank you Praveen for coming on and sharing your challenge with us and I hope that this has been helpful for you.

Praveen: Thanks Anthony. It's a pleasure meeting you in Skype.

Anthony's Career Changing Tip: Now it's time for today's career-changing tip and the point of this segment of this show is very simple. You take the time to listen to my podcast so I want to make sure that time is very valuable something that you get a lot of value out of so I want to give you a tip at the end of each show that if you take it and implement into your career or life, you will see dramatic improvements. So for today's career changing tip I want you to write down one thing that if you were able to achieve it or overcome it in your engineering career or in your life it would improve your career or your life dramatically whatever that may be. Maybe it's to become a better public speaker. Maybe it's you want to become a project manager or achieve a certain title in your firm. Maybe it's you want to get your PE license.

I want you to identify that one really career-changing thing that if you accomplish it. Things would change dramatically. And then what I want you to do is once you have that it's down on paper. I want you to identify a couple of people that you know that have already achieved that goal or overcome that challenge. Then I want you to reach out to them and ask them if they'll help you to do the same. This sounds like a very simple thing to do, but if you think about it, it makes a lot of sense if you want to become a project manager in your company, go talk to someone else who became a project manager within the last five to ten years. Ask him what it took to get it done ask him what were the big things that they did that helped them. You know how people always say well the best thing I ever did in my career was this get that information from someone that achieved the goal that you're trying get to. But don't just, I don't want to just throw it out there loosely, I want you to literally write one thing down right now that you can do that would change your career and then find someone specifically that did that. That's where the whole mentoring, sharing knowledge idea, really, really comes into play and that's where it can really really really really help you.

Anthony's Closing Remarks: I hope you enjoyed our show today. Please remember, you can visit the website to get a free gift that's engineeringcareercoach.com/freegift and if you go there, just put your name and e-mail address in, I will e-mail you the top three resources that I utilized to become a



partner at an engineering firm at the young age of twenty-seven and I'll give you a hint, one of those three resources we talked about for a large portion of the podcast today. With that I'm going to sign off for another week, I want to say thanks again for listening. I hope that it helps you to create an extraordinary engineering career and we'll see you next week on the podcast.

Thank you for listening to the ***Engineering Career Coach Podcast with Anthony Fasano - transforming engineering career development one engineer at a time.***

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