



**The ENGINEERING CAREER COACH PODCAST
SESSION #44**

**TECC 44 The Engineering Career Coach Podcast – The DOs and DON'Ts of Content
Consumption in Your Engineering Career**

Show notes at: engineeringcareercoach.com/consumecontent

Anthony's Upfront Intro: In this episode, I'm going to give you some strategies for how to decide which content to consume in your engineering career. 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.

Welcome to the show today. This is the show for engineers that want to create extraordinary careers and lives. All the show notes for today's show can be found at engineeringcareercoach.com/consumecontent.

I have a very interesting show today one that you may not think about often but something prompted me to think about which I'll discuss this weekend into the show today. But it's how to decide what content to consume.

There's podcast, books, articles, events to go to. There are so many opportunities for learning, but how do you know what you should spend your time on and what you should focus on. And that's going to be the topic that I'm going to focus on here today.

Before I jump into the show, what I want to just mention real quickly is there's an opportunity for you to volunteer with *The Engineering Career Coach* if you're interested. I posted this on my blog last week at engineeringcareercoach.com/volunteer.

Essentially, I put out three volunteer positions and I'm taking the applications from anyone who wants to help out and get some coaching and career advising returns. So the first position is Episode 50 of the podcast will be coming up within the next month and a half. And one thing as I really like to do for Episode 50 is make it all about you, the listener. So I love for you to go to engineeringcareercoach.com. Click on the Tell Your Story button on the right side of the page and just record, take two minutes – five minutes – ten minutes, whatever you feel comfortable with and just record an audio saying what success you may have had doing the podcast but most importantly, how you had that success, what did you apply and what worked.

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I'm not just looking for people to call in or record a message thing, "I love the podcast. Oh, that's great." I want it to be something where you say, "I took something that you said in this episode. I applied it and I had success, and this is how I did it," so that the listeners can try to do the same. So I'd like to get a whole bunch of those for Episode 50 and just play them for Episode 50 because I think it should be about you, the listener. So that's available and you can do that on the website.

The second volunteer position is I want to create a resume and interview products for engineers because I get at least five emails or LinkedIn messages a week from engineers that need help with their resume and with their interview process. So I don't want to just make a product up on my own. I want to get engineers involved telling me what do they go through with their resume and interview process. I love to talk to hiring managers or recruiters that have hired engineers and what they look for in resumes and interviews. And I like to put this all into one kind of do-it-yourself product because I obviously can coach the 500 people that contact me a year about that. Then in return for that product, you'll get one-on-one coaching from me. So it's an opportunity for you there with your career if you'd like help out.

And the last position that I'll ask, the position is to help me to put on the engineering career success on it. It's a big event that I'm going to be holding May 1st and 2nd in Washington D.C. this year. It's really going to help engineers go from technical professionals to leaders, to transform communication skills, networking skills, build your leadership abilities, etcetera. And I'm looking for some engineers that want to volunteer and help out at the actual event and leading up to it. And in return, you'll get complimentary registration to the event which includes all the learning sessions and also, the party on Friday night as well as a complimentary Engineering Your Own Success t-shirt, which you can see again at engineeringcareercoach.com/volunteer.

So we've already got a bunch of volunteers, but we still have room for some more. So please, if you're interested, check it out and apply and I'd love to work with you.

So with that, let me give you a quote and then take us right into the main segment of the show. The quote goes as follows: **"If you have an hour, will you not improve that hour, instead of idling it away."** Let me say that again, "If you have an hour, will you not improve that hour, instead of idling it," and that's from Lord Chesterfield. So with that in mind, let's jump into the main segment of the show.

Coaching Segment:

Anthony: The topic for today is content consumption. How do we decide what content to consume?

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Why did I even pick this topic today? I picked this topic today because I'm a huge believer in goals. I recently built the course for engineers, which is at engineeryourgoals.com and I launched the course and we have some engineers going through it, I mean just getting some initial feedback. And also, I of course went through it myself and I'm really laser-focused right now with my goals.

And one of the things that I noticed through this whole process is I'm thinking about constantly every day, what is deterring me from my goals or what's taking me away from my goals. And one of the things that I noticed is content consumption. I mean I pretty much read a book a week. I read blog posts. I listened to podcasts. I go to events when I can. And I started thinking about this, "Why am I doing these things if they're not contributing to my goals?" I mean, "Okay. It looks like a good article. It's got a catchy headline. It's got some whole pictures in it, but is it really going to help me?"

And so I started thinking about that a little bit more deeply and I realized that we should be focusing on content that is really going to help us to move towards our goals. What I wanted to do in this episode is to walk through the different kinds of content that you can consume and give you some questions to kind of ask yourself for each situation to decide whether or not it's worth your time. And then at the end of the show, I'll give you some DO's and some DON'Ts on what you should do in order to make sure that you're consuming the content that really works for you.

So let's start off with events. Event is a great way to get content that can help you. But it's also a great way to help you meet people that can help you to get closer to achieving your goals. So if you're considering attending an event like [The Engineering Career Success Summit](#) or technical conference that one of your professional associations is putting on, these are some of the questions that I recommend asking. And again, you can see all these questions at engineeringcareercoach.com/consumecontent.

First question - will this event bring me closer to my goals? You should ask that question right off the bat. Look at the event website. Look at the schedule and ask yourself will it bring you closer to your goals. If the answer to that question is no, then don't go to the event. If the question is maybe, then you know keep asking more questions.

The next question you might ask is - will this event bring me together with the kind of people I want to network with and surround myself with? I'm a big proponent of surround yourself with positive motivated people. Will this event help you to do that? Will it help you to be in touched with the people that may yield opportunities in your career and enjoyment in your career? That's something you have to consider. And again, if the answer to this question is no, then the event isn't sounding like a good one. But if the answer is yes or maybe, then ask the next question.

The next question is - will this event bring me to a location that I will enjoy? When you go to event, you go most likely for the content in the context. However, it's also can be a leisurely trip. I mean it

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also can be something that you enjoy if you can go to a conference that's going to bring you good content, helping meet good people, and in a location that you enjoy. I got the opportunity to go to a great event last year that was in Austin, Texas. I took a ton out of it. I made really good context. And I had fun because Austin is such a great city. And those are the things that you should think about.

And if you're ever planning an event, too, you should think about that whether you're just planning a monthly event for your association or society, or you're planning a bigger event like for [The Engineering Career Success Summit](#), I'm always thinking about the location. We did one in Austin. We did one in San Diego. We're doing one in D.C. this year. D.C. is a great spot. You could see great things. So I want people to think about that when they're deciding.

And then the last question, which probably is the most important question is - how will I be able to measure the result. Let's just say you answered all these questions yes, "Yes, this event is going to bring me closer to my goals. Yes, it's going to help me meet people and help me yield opportunities and bring enjoyment into my career and my life. And yes, it's going to bring me to a location that I will enjoy to visit."

But how are you going to measure results? So you need to have a plan. You need to say you know, "I want to go to this conference and I want to take this out of it and this is how I'm going to measure it." And you may not know exactly how you're going to measure it until you actually go to the conference and you say, "Well, I went to these sessions. I'm going to apply these strategies I've learned and see how it works and then give yourself a timeline." And will that all those that will help you to evaluate that specific event for the future, but also help you evaluate other events and how you learn and other things about you that you might be able to pick up in that. So that's events.

Now, let's think about reading some books and articles. You can start off with the first question - will this article or book give me information that I can apply in the near future? I always like to think about that because if I'm reading a book about something that I want to do five or ten years from now, it doesn't seem to work well because then I forget about it or I put them on the backburner. And so that's something that you really need to consider. Is it a now book for you?

Next question - will it move me closer to my goals? Okay. Again, and that's something you'll hear a lot during the episode today. So a couple of books that I'm reading right now are Clutter free With Kids by Joshua Becker, which for my wife and I, we're trying to strip down kind of our belongings and stress essentially. So we were trying to simplify our life. And one of the things is, when you have three kids, you have potentially a lot of clutter that builds up in toys, in school or in papers. So we're starting that process with the kids and that's been helpful for one of my goals.

Another book that I'm about to read is Organic Gardening, book about how to look for organic gardening because one of the goals that we have in my family is to start a garden this year, a

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vegetable garden and so I'm going to read a book on it. It's going to move me closer to my goals. It's going to give me information that I can apply in the near future.

And the last question on this topic is, again – how will I be able to measure the results? So obviously, in the situations to the examples I just gave you, I'll be able to measure the results by when we have a garden right in our backyard. And secondly, a clutter free with kids is you know our stress or how the house looks, how long does this take us to clean up, stuff like that, we'll be able to measure and you can apply kind of the similar-type results in your career.

I recently read a book called the Miracle Morning by Hal Elrod, which is about how to set up a dynamic and transformational morning routine which I've been able to do since I read the book. And I can measure it by the results and the productivity that I've had and the tasks that I'm now getting accomplished in a day because of how I'm starting off the morning. And I'll link to all those books in the show notes, which will be at engineeringcareercoach.com/consumecontent.

Here's the last piece of content I'm going to go over, which is podcasts. Obviously, you like podcast. You're listening to mine. I love podcast. I listened to a bunch of different podcasts on different topics, and let's go through some questions with podcast. Will this podcast bring me closer to my goals in this area of my life? So if you have goals in different areas of your life, which I certainly promote in the Engineer Your Goals Course that I have created for engineers, it focuses not only on professional goals but also on personal goals. And if you go through the course or if you go through your own goals, then you should have both personal and professional goals.

So when you listen to a podcast, is it going to help you achieve your goals at any one of those areas of your life? So that's something that you got to keep the forefront of your mind. How will I digest and implement the information from this podcast? That's another one that could be tricky because you're probably listening to this podcast in transit whether you're driving to work, on a train, on a plane, whatever the case may be. And how do you apply that? Like, you're not sitting there necessarily with a pen and the pencil writing these techniques down. So obviously, you could go back to the website, the link that I gave you and you can get some of the information and apply it. But that's something to think about going into a podcast. If you're going to listen to it, "Okay. I'm going to listen to this podcast, how am I going to apply it?"

One of my goals is to become fluent in Spanish and be able to give my Engineering Your Own Success talk. And so I'm going through a course, and I'm also listening to a podcast for vocabulary and I listen to it every day and I go through and I repeat it in. And then at dinner time, I kind of repeat it with the kids and can teach them in the process. But I know that it's going to help me in the couple of areas of my life and I know that I can implement it by continuing to use it and say it and see how the results are and test myself, which is the last question of course, which is, how will I be able to measure the results?

So now, you have some questions on these different pieces of content. Now obviously, you're not going to go through a lengthy process to decide if you're going to read an article that takes five minutes to read. But if you're going to listen to a podcast that comes out on a weekly basis, you should go through this process. You're going to spend money and invest time in going to an event. This is an important process. If you're going to spend the month reading a book, this is an important process because every ounce of your time, energy, and effort really matters. That's one thing I want you to take out of this episode today. Every ounce of your time, energy and effort matters. And unless you're directing it in a right direction for you, then it's really a waste of time.

What I'm going to do now is, I'm going to crank off seven Do's and four Don'ts for you to try to be more focused in your content consumption. And then I'll go into our Take Action Today portion of the show where I actually give you one really, really powerful action, one piece of advice that you can do to get into this process of being more aware of your content consumption.

So let's get into the Do's, the seven Do's of content consumption.

1. Ensure that each of your goals has a list of resources with it.

So if you've gone through a goal setting process, if you're going through the [Engineer Your Goals Course](#) and you have your list of goals, next to each goal or on that page or that sheet or however you keep your goals, jot down some resources that might be helpful for you like this conference or this podcast or this blog article or this website. Make a list because that will make it easier for you to remember for each goal which content you want to focus on.

2. A lot of specific amount of time each week to content consumption, and that includes social media and that's important. Because social media is essentially content consumption.

So whatever that might be for you, it might be every morning with this new miracle morning routine that I have, I read a book every ten minutes every morning. It was part of the routine. So I know that I have a lot of that time in the morning for content consumption. When I take trips in my car, which I usually do certain periods or certain days of the week, I have that blocked off for podcast consumption, and then I also decide early in the year what conferences I want to attend that year. So try to allot a specific amount of time each week so you know how much time you're spending on it. I said one of those things if you just say, "I'm going to do it whenever," you're going to do it whenever and you might be spending a lot of time on it and you might be spending a lot of time on the wrong content. So if you limit the time, you're going to be really focused.

3. Maximize the resources from your professional association of choice.



So if you belong to a couple of different associations, understand what content they provide and take advantage of it. For example, in the Institute for Engineering Career Development, for those of you that are IECD members, we have a recordings page that has probably 20-30 past webinars on it. Schedule an hour a week or 45 minutes a week to watch one of the past webinars. It's going to help you, the resources there, and use it.

4. When you find the good resource, focus on it and get the most out of it.

This is a challenge for me sometimes. There are some really great websites out there that can help me to ensure that I'm getting my message on the Engineering Career Coach out to as many engineers as possible. Yet, I tend to look at a couple of articles on one side and then try to find more sites. If you find a good resource, get the most out of it. It's like if you have a newspaper sitting on the table - and no one even has these papers anymore - but if you have a newspaper sitting on the table, go through the whole newspaper and get the most you can out of it. Don't just read one article and throw it out right it's there. You have the resource, use it.

5. Delete the social media applications from your cellphone.

I did this recently because I read the whole article about productivity and stress reduction because what happens is, those you know, if you have Facebook icon on your phone, you see this little red circle that it has like one notification, it has two notifications, that's going to potentially pull you into content that isn't important for you like, "Oh, I'm in the middle of my meeting, I just got a Facebook thing. What is this?" You hit the button and it's like, "Oh, you know Jack Smith in Maryland just said that he's having a beer." It's like - how does that help me? I just wasted time, effort, energy on looking at that thing.

So I just delete those applications from my phone. I use Facebook and I go on it once in a while but I try to go on it on my time that I have scheduled to do that and get the most out of it. I mean sometimes I struggle with it like everyone else. It's not that easy to do. But just by deleting the apps from your phone, it's going to be helpful.

6. Do consume content in a way that it can be digested and implemented.

So if you're going to listen to a podcast, make sure that you jot down some notes or what I do if I'm listening in the car potentially is, if I hear something I don't like, I just hit like the Siri button on my iPhone and I just, say, email and I email this information to myself. So it pops into my email and then I have it later. Just think about when you digest it. And if you're reading a book, are you highlighting the book and do you have a mark to go back and pull that information out later? That's something that you really need to think about. You have to try to



put yourself in a position to digest the information and implement it. Or else, why are you taking it in? It doesn't make sense.

7. Consume content at a specific time of the day if possible, the same time every day.

So the miracle morning routine that I've been doing, I will consume at least ten minutes of a book every morning and that doesn't sound like a lot but ten minutes a morning of a book can add up to 15 to 18 books for me in a course of a year, and that's how powerful that can be. Maybe do your social media after lunch you know. You're just getting over lunch and you're relaxing for a few minutes. Maybe do podcast every morning in a year can be a routine. It's going to help you getting a better routine for taking in the content, digesting it, and implementing it.

Anthony's Closing Remarks:

Anthony: So those are your seven Do's. Okay. Yeah, I'll run through them real quick.

1. Make sure that your goals, when you write out your goals, jot down some resources that can go along with those goals.
2. Allot a specific amount of time each week to content consumption including social media.
3. Maximize the resources from your professional association of choice.
4. When you find the good resource, focus on it and get everything out of it.
5. Delete the social media apps from your cellphone. Big one. Trust me do it.
6. Do consume content in a way that can be digested in and implement it easily. You got to think about this.
7. Do consume content in a specific time of the day whenever that can be for you. The morning is good because you're sharp. But there are other points of the day that can be helpful as well.

Now, let me jump into the four Don'ts that you don't want to do so that you're making sure you consume the right content.

1. Don't consume information that is not aligned with your goals even slightly. There's so much information out there that you should find something exactly for you. So if you're an engineer, you want to go to management, find articles from engineer to manager, which I have on my website. If there are resources focused for engineers on leadership and development, focus on them. Don't just read general leadership books. Read them two if you have time. Primarily focus on the content that's specific to you and your goals.
2. Don't just read every article or watch every video that comes across your Facebook or LinkedIn feeds. People do this all day, every day. I'm guilty of this sometimes, too. If the article or video is not going to help you, then don't watch it because when you go into what I call rabbit hole and I'm spending 15-20 minutes watching videos, and that time ends up over the course of a year.
3. Don't consume only non-fiction self-help informational articles. Reading fiction can help you distress. I tried to read fiction at night. I'm a big Dan Brown fan and other books along those lines, other authors that have novels, etcetera. Because if you're always constantly looking to get the information to your brain, you might overload. So don't strictly consume non-fiction.
4. Don't go one day without reading something informative. Small winds equal big victories. That's the whole idea that I'm doing with reading a book ten minutes a day. The Spanish podcast that I listened to is seven or eight minutes a day, just picking up a little vocab each day that's adding up. Don't think that you need to chop off and consume large quantities of content because that becomes scary and then you don't do anything.

So those are your four Don'ts. So let me just review them one more time.

1. Don't consume information that is not aligned with your goals even slightly. Get specific info.
2. Don't just read every article that comes across your Facebook or LinkedIn feeds.
3. Don't consume only non-fiction self-help informational articles.
4. Don't go one day without reading something informative. Small winds equal huge victories.

So there's your seven DO's and four DON'Ts for content consumption. And now, I'm going to jump into the Take Action Today segment of the show and give you one real actionable piece of advice to start consuming better content for you today.



Take Action Today Segment:

Anthony: So this is what I want you to do. Think about your goals and I want you to Google something that's aligned with your goals. So for me, like if it's learning Spanish, Google 'learning Spanish'. If it's becoming an engineer and manager, Google 'becoming an engineer and manager' and try to identify one or two resources that are extremely specific to that goal and then consume them whether you do it immediately, or you schedule to do it and think about how you're going to digest them and how you're going to implement them and think about how you're going to measure it. Do an experiment. Find an article on your goal or a podcast, listen to it, take good notes from it, and then implement it over the next week or two and see results.

And if you're thinking, "Man, I'm too busy to do this," then what's the point? If you have goals and you want to reach them in your career and if you can't take the time the better yourself to try to achieve those goals, then why do even have them? So I really want you to test this out and if you want to email me about it and how you meet up, please do it, afasano@engineeringcareercoach.com, or you can just go engineeringcareercoach.com/consumecontent and leave a comment on the post and I love to hear that, and obviously, that will be available to other listeners.

So as I end up this show, I still I'm really focused on trying to get this goal setting course out there. So if you are an engineer and you're not quite sure about your goals, I don't want you to spend five to ten years trying to figure out what you want to do as an engineer. I want you to spend the couple of weeks and that's what the goal setting course can help you do.

So again, that's at engineeryourgoals.com. And if you have questions about the course before you enroll in it, you want to email me. Again, you can do so at afasano@engineeringcareercoach.com. Thanks for listening. I will catch up with you on the next session of *The Engineering Career Coach Podcast*.

And until then, I hope that you continue to engineer your own success!

*If you want to hear more episodes of **The Engineering Career Coach Podcast** you can subscribe on iTunes or go to engineeringcareercoach.com, where you will find tons of free engineering career resources. Just click the 'start here' button on the site for an easy to navigate index of all the resources available.*

You can also follow Anthony Fasano on Twitter @anthonyjfasano or Facebook at facebook.com/engineeryourownsuccess. Until the next time, thanks for listening!