

Yale 2005 - No. 2

Please develop a question/topic of your choice and answer it in essay form. (500 words maximum.)

Topic: Describe your career history, highlighting transitions and what you have learned from each position.

I've always been fascinated by modern technology and how it affects our everyday life, which is why I decided to study Engineering. The most significant job I held while in college was a summer internship at Worcester Polytechnic, an exciting research experience that inspired me to pursue further education. Consequently, I got my Master's from the University of Illinois, a "Top 5" school in the field.

My life took an unexpected turn during the "Internet Bubble" years, when we started a high tech company. Our "dot-com" venture, although ultimately unsuccessful, was definitely the most exhilarating experience of my career. It also made me realize the importance of having a solid business background in order to effectively manage an organization.

Looking for a fresh start, I decided to move to New York where I found a job at Slant/Fin. This was a relatively small company, which enabled me to make an impact in areas beyond my primary responsibilities. For instance, I took initiative to establish and implement computer security guidelines, drastically cutting down on data loss and significantly increasing the productivity of an entire department. In retrospect, the most difficult aspect of this project was convincing others to adopt an unfamiliar infrastructure, which required patience, sensitivity, and a team effort.

Two years later, a call from a recruiter resulted in a Senior-level position with General Dynamics, a leading defense contractor. I jumped at the opportunity, although it required me to relocate first to New Jersey and then to Vermont. Suddenly, I became a proverbial "Rocket Scientist." My responsibilities now include executing thousands of guided rocket simulations, which is one of the most thrilling assignments an engineer can have.

However, I am often bothered by the fact that it is rarely the engineers who make final technical decisions, but rather the people in marketing and management. Unfortunately, in our world of extreme specialization, it is increasingly rare when those in charge of operations have sufficient background to deal with complex technical issues. Again and again, I've witnessed vastly inferior technologies being chosen based purely on marketing hype.

Therefore, I've come to realize that the only way to actually have a real impact is by getting involved in Business Development, which is the direction I've been actively moving in. In particular, I've managed a company-wide Technology Integration project, building a database of innovative ideas from emerging small business ventures. I also had leadership responsibilities on a vendor selection effort for a crucial component of a Navy defense system. Both of these tasks allowed me to analyze business problems and to polish my communication abilities. I also learned a lot about organizational dynamics and how it can be influenced.

Yet, in spite of all the success in my chosen field, my most cherished experience was an attempt to get our own business off the ground. This is something I am eager to repeat and, hopefully, with far greater success.