



Sloan Career Cornerstone Center

Profiles of Electrical Engineers and Computer Scientists



Jody Gerstner

**Technical Director
Walt Disney Imagineering
Glendale, CA**

Education:

B.S. - Electrical and Electronics Engineering, California Polytechnic - Pomona

Job Description:

Technical Director, providing guidance for project engineers and technical reviews of designs.

Advice to Students:

Gerstner advises young engineers to get their licenses.

Video Transcript 1:

"Initially there weren't too many people who had their PE licenses here. The numbers have grown. And it doesn't hurt to be a licensed engineer, because I expect that we'll get to a point where, due to liability and the litigious nature of our society, that ride systems will need to be approved by professional engineers, not just facilities electrical."

Interview:

Jody Gerstner is a technical director of Florida control systems for Walt Disney Imagineering. As a manager of project engineers, he brings a unique perspective to his job. "I view myself not as their boss but as an agent." Just as an agent gets work for an entertainer and negotiates for him, "I'm acting as the engineers' agent to make sure that they have everything they need to get their projects completed." Secondly, he gives them the benefit of his experience by pointing out concerns they may have missed. Not surprisingly, he is highly esteemed by his team.

There is one quality Gerstner values in his engineers: "An outgoing personality is mandatory, in my opinion, if you want to grow in this job because you have to communicate." The engineers have to be able to negotiate with the creative people about the best way to achieve the effects they desire. They then have to give clear directions to the shop people who actually have to build the attractions. "You have to bridge the gap between pure technical stuff and hands on, how to put it together. So, if you can't communicate, then no one will know what you have to offer, and no one will know how to build what you are conceptualizing."

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Prepared as part of the Sloan Career Cornerstone Center (www.careercornerstone.org)

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Gerstner advises young engineers to get their licenses. "I recommend it for anybody coming into this field. For many years, in past history, there had been very little legislation of ride systems, amusement systems. But what we've seen is a growing body of legislation of the field. It doesn't hurt to be a licensed engineer because I expect that we'll get to a point where, due to liability and the litigious nature of our society, ride systems will need to be approved by professional engineers." He adds, "And for students coming right out of college, taking the EIT is absolutely the right thing to do because it's all fresh in your mind. It's the best time."

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