



Sloan Career Cornerstone Center

Profiles of Electrical Engineers and Computer Scientists



Tom Cruz

**IBM Corporation
Engineer
Raleigh, NC**

Job Description:

Engineer working in design area chip simulation; chip spinning integration analog.

Advice to Students:

"You need to enjoy what you're doing. I think that's more important than salary."

Video Transcript 1:

"Well it was kind of depressing with the downsizing because in some cases I saw, you know, people that I knew and people that I worked with that were, that were escorted out the door. And it was kind of a mixed emotion, I was lucky, I wasn't one of those downsized but then I felt good about that, but then I felt bad for the other people, so it was, it was kind of bad for morale. Now I understand this is a business and you know they have to do whatever they have to do to be competitive, but it's, it's still just the same. It was, it was kind of depressing."

Interview:

After seventeen years with IBM, Tom Cruz knows what kind of work he wants to do. He was hired as a junior engineer and rose through the ranks as associate, senior associate, staff, and now advisory engineer. Although he considered going into management at one point in his career, Cruz says, "I prefer to stay technical ... It's a lot more fun." Cruz enjoys the creativity of engineering. "You're always creating something that didn't exist before ... You're creating some kind of new function or creating some program or script ..."

Management simply doesn't compare. In management "you're dealing with a lot of personnel problems, and I prefer to be tweaking something." Moreover, management "equals meetings," and these do not suit all temperaments. "Some meetings are necessary, but sometimes you're just rehashing the same data over and over. Sometimes you're taking data and presenting it up the chain." Cruz explains that on the technical side "I don't have that problem because we don't really have that many meetings." Ordinarily, "a status meeting once a week" and open communication among members of a team is what is needed to get the work done.

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Cruz has been at IBM long enough to see significant changes take place. He saw the rise of the personal computer. He also saw three rounds of downsizing in a company that had had a reputation for keeping its employees. "I was lucky. I wasn't one of the ones downsized. I felt good about that, but then I felt bad for the other people. So it was ... bad for morale ... You'd see a lot of people walking around with a hang dog face both the ones that were getting laid off and the ones that weren't."

What keeps Cruz going? The work itself. "You need to enjoy what you're doing. I think that's more important than salary. Salary's nice ... but creativity's important as well."

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