

These Are The Two Things You Need To Become Expert In To Succeed

1. Project management 2. Negotiation

Checklist

1. At Stage 2 of its Competency Standards, Engineers Australia requires you to demonstrate competency across its 16 prescribed elements – Deal with ethical issues; Practise competently; Responsibility for engineering activities; Develop safe and sustainable solutions; Engage with the relevant community and stakeholders; Identify, assess and manage risks; Meet legal and regulatory requirements; Communication; Performance; Taking action; Judgement; Advanced engineering knowledge; Local engineering knowledge; Problem analysis; Creativity and innovation; and, Evaluation. That's why "CPEng" is such a covered post-nominal.
2. To achieve Chartered status, you will need to meet or exceed the requirements under each element. However, to succeed in perpetuity, there are two things you will need to master; not demonstrate competency at, but truly master. Project management and negotiation.
3. The good news is there are only two. The bad news is that they are as much art as science. They must be studied, learned, practiced, debated, improved and rehearsed. It takes time to perfect and discipline to practise.
4. Everything you do in life as a professional engineer is a project. The ability to successfully navigate and manage through the project life-cycle needs to be hard-coded into your professional DNA. Otherwise, you your career will flounder and languish. There are secrets to success. Know them.
5. Everything you get in life is by negotiation. You rarely get everything you want. You must learn to trade and compromise. To do that, you need to know what's important to you and what's important to them; what you're prepared to let go of and what you must hold. Document your negotiation strategy. That's right, you need a strategy.
6. Every project must be de-briefed, and lessons learned. This usually happens when projects perform poorly. However, de-briefing and understanding why projects go well is just as important so these lessons can be applied next time. Don't forget what went well.
7. Preparation for negotiation is essential. The higher the stakes and more complex the project, the more time is needed to prepare for a negotiation. Do not leave it until the last minute. And remember, every meeting you attend is actually a negotiation. Treat it like one.
8. Formal training and qualification in project management and negotiation is highly desirable. It gives you a professional edge.
9. Remember, the great engineers are expert in these two disciplines because they practise them. They plan, brief, execute and de-brief on every project and every negotiation. Make sure you do.
10. Mastery requires supreme sacrifice. If much of your discretionary effort is channelled into these two career-defining skills, you will be successful. Seek out the guidance of senior engineers about where and how to invest your time. It's up to you.