



International Federation of
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THE DILEMMA OF A YOUNG PROFESSIONAL IN A CONSULTING ENGINEERING INDUSTRY

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Many young professionals join the consulting engineering industry with lots of expectations. While some of the expectations may be unrealistic and remain unfulfilled, others may be realized within the career life of the young professional. Some of the expectations of the young professional includes but not limited to good salary, better working conditions, opportunity for further studies, training and development opportunities, career progression, clearly defined succession planning of the organization or firm, etc.

Often what some young professionals do not realized is the fact that employer's also have expectations. They hire with the hope of making young professionals leaders of the future and expect them to go through the mill in order to get to the top of the company. This may require loyalty, faithfulness and dependability, on the part of the young professional.

As the young professional remains in the industry and his or her expectations gradually remains unfulfilled while the employer on the other hand continue to demand results, hoping to achieve targets, the young professional becomes disillusioned. This may lead to low productivity as a result of the expectation gap which must be filled by way of decision making either on the part of the young professional and or the employer.

What we fail to do as young professionals most often before entering the industry is making the necessary background checks about the remuneration and other conditions of service that exist within the industry.

The employer and the young professional therefore need to be honest and transparent about their demands from the onset in order to help meet each other's expectations, resulting in a higher chance of long term success.

Until this is realized, the young professional especially, will continue to be in a state of dilemma. Whiles the employer may be considering terminating the contract of the young professional or given him or her another opportunity as a result of non-performance for instance, the young professional will be considering either resigning or staying hoping things may improve. Whatever the decision, the following options among other considerations will be playing in the mind of the young professional:

1. Get some experience, exit and form own firm;
2. Get experience and requisite knowledge and help firm grow and eventually become a partner or shareholder;
3. Get experience and move to a better paid industry;
4. Stay, register and write professional exams and exit;
5. Stay, get experience and join like-minded professionals to improve the industry.

The young professional in most instances, may choose the path of least resistance in addressing the issues by choosing option three as listed above.

Whiles we may have the right as young professionals to either resign or stay and the employer likewise having the right to either hire or fire, who suffers? Your guess is as good as mine! It is the consulting engineering industry!

Studies conducted by Career One Stop, a career exploration, training and jobs institution, in 2013, about the 50 highest paying industries based on the average weekly and annual wages, the consulting engineering industry was nowhere near the first fifty. This is sad, isn't it? Could the low wages paid perhaps the main reason why the industry remains unattractive to young professionals? Or there could be other reasons?

The sustainability of our industry without no doubt depends on the young professional and the ability to attract and retain them. The Employer cannot therefore pretend to be paying realistic wages whiles the young professional pretends to be working. This may not create the right working environment leading to mistrust, suspicion and ultimately, low productivity.

