
Comment



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Welcome to the New Year!
Things are hotting up. 2010 is closer.
The world is a different place. And we face further challenges in our industries.

And wasn't last year an interesting one? As I recover from it I can now reflect on just how significantly things have changed.

For instance, I had to apply for re-registration as a professional engineer – and I am sure many of you were faced with similar responsibilities.

I had to ensure that all of the short courses that we offer at the University (and that are open to you) have so-called validation numbers, so that attendees can legitimately claim CPD points for them. I also read with interest the act covering the reservation of work – and so on.

And indeed I commented on these developments during the past year.

But I think that it is timely to re-emphasise that it is our responsibility to ensure that we not only stay up to date with the technical developments in our profession, but also with the landscape around us. For instance, given that the act regarding the reservation of professional work has been around for some time, and given further that the various professional councils (in our case the Engineering Council) had been engaged with the professions through the various societies to define exactly what the reserved activities should be, I was astounded to hear a colleague say to me the other day that 'we'd better watch out for this' on the assumption that it was still to happen.

The message is clear – stay in touch with the landscape, or lose the opportunity to influence it.

With this in mind, we aim to look a little more

closely this year at the skills shortage that we face. I have been pleasantly surprised by the level of interest that you have shown to my comments on this, and I am deeply indebted to those of you who also asked me to share my opinion more widely through your good offices, and to engage with your organisations on the matter.

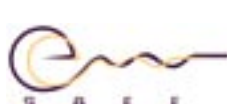
Save to say, we join much of the developed world in facing up to this crisis, and we continue to lose skills to overseas markets at a shockingly fast rate. We need to be honest and frank about this, and we need to understand that folk move on for two reasons: there is a push factor, and there is a pull factor. In my view the pull factors are always there, and largely beyond our control. But we are complete idiots if we can't figure out what the push factors are and actually start addressing them.

My opinion is that we live in a world where we seem almost incapable of seeing the big picture. Now there is nothing wrong with focus – let's be clear on that. But we need to be sure that we don't completely lose our peripheral vision. We need to be aware of the consequences of our action, and we need to be held accountable for them.

Let's tackle the year ahead with our eyes open, and let's see whether we can take on the positive ground that we are gaining as a nation, and as an industry, and really fly!

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