



The ENGINEERING CAREER COACH PODCAST SESSION #40

Strategies for Shifting Your Engineering Career from Domestic to International

Show notes at: engineeringcareercoach.com/fadi

Anthony's Upfront Intro: In this episode, I'm going to give a young engineer some steps that he can take to go from an engineering job in the Northeast U.S. to find an international opportunity. Let's do it!

Episode Intro: Welcome to *The Engineering Career Coach Podcast*, where it's all about helping real engineers to overcome real challenges and get real results. And now for your host, who is on a mission to inspire as many engineers as possible, professional engineer and certified career coach, Anthony Fasano.

Welcome to this episode of the podcast and it's an interesting topic today. I was contacted by a younger engineer who wanted some help to go from his job local here in the Northeastern U.S. to an international kind of global development opportunity working on infrastructure and some other exciting different projects. And so I'm going to dig into that with him in a minute and actually, have him on the podcast.

But before I do that, I want to take a minute to recognize our sponsor for today's show, which is Purdue University's Master of Engineering Management Program. I can't tell you how many calls, emails, LinkedIn messages I get from engineers saying, "Anthony, should I get MBA or should I get a master's in Engineering?" And a lot of them are not familiar with the whole idea of this Master of Engineering Management Program and produces great and that it allows you to earn a master's degree that's specifically designed to advance your career in the industry, and they have both on-campus or online study options, which is huge in today's world because we all need flexibility.

It's a great program. It's ranked one of the top in the country. And I personally have met with Melanie Schramm, who is in charge of the program, and went through a lot of the details of the program with her. And I think it's fabulous and I highly recommend it.

So for more details on the program, you can call 1-877-598-4233 or send an email to promasters, P-R-O, promasters@purdue.edu. Applications are being processed daily.

So with that, before we jump into the show, one last announcement that I want to make that's important to me for this upcoming year as this will be the last podcast for this year is Goal Setting, and I spent a lot of time with engineers this year on goal setting. I did some smaller workshops

The ENGINEERING CAREER COACH

WITH
ANTHONY
FASANO 

around the United States, had a bunch of coaching sessions, did a lot of work through the Institute for Engineering Career Development.

And I've decided that what I'm going to do, which is really important for this year for myself but also for the engineers that I'm helping, is to create a program. It's going to be called Engineer Your Goals and it's going to be 30 days to setting clear goals. It's going to be a very simple program. And each day, we'll email you one question or one small action you can take. And by the end of the 30 days, you will have a full sheet with your goals and the steps that you need to achieve them for the next year and beyond.

The program will be available in the first week of January. And right now, there's a page up at engineeryourgoals.com where you can put your name and email and if you want to get a notification when we do actually launched the program.

I'm super excited about this because as you know, my goal is to help engineers create extraordinary careers and you can't do that without clear goals. So I want to get this course out to as many engineers as I can in the next year, and that is one of my main goals. So I hope you're a part of it.

Alright. Let me give you a quote that has to deal with kind of change in general because this is going to be a big year hopefully for you for changing, for improving. The quote goes like this, "A year from now, you will wish you had started today," and that's from Karen Lamb. And again, it goes, "A year from now, you will wish you had started today." So please, whether it's goal setting course, just getting clear about what you want, talking to your mentor, listening to this podcast, whatever it is, take some steps now. So that in a year from now, you're going to be in a much better place or at least closer to your goals than you are right now.

Coaching Segment:

Anthony: Alright. So now, it's time for the main segment of the show. And today, I have with me 28-year old Electrical Engineer, Fadi, from New York City, and he is looking to make a shift in his career. I'm going to try to help him do that here today on the show. Welcome, Fadi.

Fadi: Hi, Anthony.

Anthony: So, Fadi, tell us a little bit about your background, what you're doing now as far as the type of work you're doing, and where you want to be.

Fadi: Okay. So, originally, I'm from Iraq. I got my bachelor from Iraq in Laser Engineering. I got an opportunity to get a scholarship doing my master in NYIT in Manhattan. And, at the same time, I got

an internship with the MTA doing design engineering for the 2nd Avenue project and then new material line. And from that, I got the fulltime position with them with the same group and the same project.

Anthony: So your responsibilities in that job include electrical design, is that correct?

Fadi: Well, it's mainly communication networking.

Anthony: Okay, communication networking.

Fadi: Yeah, communication networking and fiber optics cameras, public addresses systems.

Anthony: Okay. And you're taking additional graduate level courses that anyway you know?

Fadi: Yeah, that's the construction management.

Anthony: Alright. So that's where you're at now. Where do you want to be, Fadi? Where do you want us to try to help you go?

Fadi: Okay. See, from the beginning, before I started my bachelor, I always wanted to do international relations or international development, which is something kind of similar to engineering but more abroad and I didn't get the chance. But now, I'm in the states, a lot of opportunities. So I don't know if I should take classes or take another degree International Development, or I should just move myself from position to position or from company to company to achieve that goal so that's why I got this opportunity to talk with you to help me with it.

Anthony: Sure. So in your application, you said that you want to shift your career to international development where you can focus on building infrastructure of communities.

Fadi: Yes.

Anthony: And I guess that that's the reason that you're taking the construction management courses?

Fadi: That's correct.

Anthony: Okay. Well, first of all, I think that you're taking the right move by trying to expand your education into a different field than the field that you have your bachelor's degree and which is nice to see that. And couple of things I would do if I were you to think about would be, number one, there's

probably a fairly shortlist of companies that you can look at that have both U.S. and international locations.

Fadi: Okay.

Anthony: You know at least the bigger companies that are going to have the infrastructure opportunities. So that's one thing that I would do if I were you, is I would be investigating who the big companies that are you know doing the international infrastructure from the U.S. Get to learn about them and maybe see what companies, which of those companies you think might be a good fit, which ones are in locations that you want to go in, things to that nature.

Once you have identified the few of the companies that you would like, I wouldn't really try to understand what they look for in international infrastructure programs or what kind of employees they're looking for or what kind of certifications do they expect, what kind of experience do they expect you to have.

This way, if you're going to try to seek a job at one of those companies, you're going to be lined up. Before you even knock on their door, you're going to know what they are looking for. And hopefully, you'll be able to provide it or at least start to take some courses or some other avenues that can help you to build your resume up for them.

Fadi: But I have a question, isn't it preferable to get a lot of degrees because they would think that you're overqualified for the position even if it's in you know an entry level?

Anthony: You could just say, if you get a lot of degrees, you're overqualified. I think it depends on the specific situation. And I think in your situation, what you need to determine is for an infrastructure type work/international, what are the certifications that can help you? And there's one that comes to mind immediately for me, which is the PMP.

Fadi: Yes, true.

Anthony: Project Management Professional.

Fadi: Mm, and the CCMA also.

Anthony: That could be another one as well. So I don't necessarily think that if you get a few of them or too many of them, you'll be overqualified. What you need to find out from these companies is, what do they like their infrastructure experts to have, and that's what I would go after.

The **ENGINEERING CAREER COACH**

WITH
**ANTHONY
FASANO** 

Fadi: Well, let's think, my experience now with the MTA, it's only construction management with subways and tunnels. It's not like... I don't know, maybe like in developing country, they don't have that kind of things. That's the problem how I'm going to turn that experience into building communities over there.

Anthony: Now, listen, there's definitely going to be some learning that has to be done by you and some research and some courses around that. If you want to do something new in your career, you have to break into it somehow. There's always going to be like a first infrastructure job for you that you're going to have to get into by just building up your own knowledge.

But I think the key is to pull out the positives of the work that you're doing and the types of things that will transfer into that business. So, for example, infrastructure, you've done some design potentially on subways. So, if part of infrastructure for a new community of abroad might be some design associated with new subway system. Okay. So you have to understand that there are some things that you're doing that are going to translate. You just have to be clear about what they are so that you can make them clear to you know like a potential employer or potential client.

Fadi: Okay.

Anthony: You don't just want to dismiss the stuff you're doing because maybe you think it's further advance than another community because there might still be a lot of information you could take from this opportunity and apply another situations.

Fadi: Okay. That's what I'm trying to do now, you know build more experience until maybe I get another opportunity. As you said, to do work with an international company.

Anthony: I think the one thing that you can do is, like I said before, you should try to learn about infrastructure whether it's you're doing some research, maybe getting a book or two on it, maybe taking like a course online or something just to learn like nothing like extravagant like a certification but just to get some knowledge behind you. So even so when you talk to these companies, you're more educated on that arena.

Fadi: Mm. Yes.

Anthony: I think it'll be helpful for you just to learn as much as you can about it. And then what I would do if I were you is, what you might consider is looking until like the PMP or the CCMA or one of these things. I don't know if you're going to apply for it, but make sure that you have the experience or you figure out what you need to do to get those certifications because I think that will be helpful for you.

The **ENGINEERING CAREER COACH**

WITH
**ANTHONY
FASANO** 

And taking the next step further is I would look for organizations like professional associations that are international that would give you opportunities for networking in other countries. So, for example, I know that the PMP or the PMI, the Project Management Institute, is a worldwide organization.

Fadi: I didn't know that.

Anthony: Yes, they have a very strong network around the world. So that's like an organization that you might want to get into, get involved with that right away. They have the certifications, different things that you can get to try to better yourself as the project managers and international professional. So if I'm you, I'm definitely looking at the PMI as soon as possible.

Fadi: Yeah. Alright. Okay. I'm writing the notes. That's why I'm silent.

Anthony: Okay. So you want to look at the PMI and other organizations like that.

Fadi: Okay.

Anthony: And really, another thing that I would do, and I know a lot of these is I'm thrown a lot of stuff, and you can go through this stuff later and figure out which is going to be the best for you, but another thing I would try to do is, if I wanted to go from local work to international work is I would try to find even like on LinkedIn or something, I would try to find a few international experts, I mean ideally in infrastructure management. But even other fields and just talk to them about what that entails, you know going into the international realm, what do you need to be able to do that? You have to focus on learning languages. Is there certifications? Because I mean, obviously, I can talk to you for a while here and give you some information. But the really good information is going to come from people that have made that transition in their career.

Fadi: That's right. But I think it's not impossible, right? But it has to go through a lot of you know steps.

Anthony: Yeah. I mean listen, nothing is impossible, and it's probably not going to be an easy thing to do. But there's certainly plenty of resources out there now for you to be able to put yourself in a position to do this.

The key thing for you is that you want to just try to utilize resources that are going to help you the quickest and you want to understand what you need to be able to accomplish this because I mean you can go online. You can research. But the best way to figure this out is, like I said, talk to the companies or talk to people that have done it because there's a lot of different ways you can get pulled today and you want to make sure that you're focusing your energy on the ones that are going to help you the most.

Fadi: Yeah. And I'm talking about this kind as the experts, probably career services in the school. They have a lot of connections also.

Anthony: Yeah, great idea, the career services, the alumni, the engineering alumni associations, and usually, that's a good way to find these people. Also, if you go on LinkedIn like if your school has like a group on LinkedIn, you can just post a question of exactly what you're trying to do and see if anyone can steer you in the direction.

Fadi: You know I see it. That's what I was planning to do hopefully like soon.

Anthony: So do you have any other questions for me, Fadi, like around and all the stuff?

Fadi: I got all in the notes actually. And now, I just wrote them down.

Anthony: Okay. So for those people that are listening, I'm sure many of you want to make some conscious transition in your career, maybe it is local to international. Let's just sum up a couple of points that we talked about here in a couple of possible steps to take.

And the first step would be to try to identify some companies or perspective employers, would have the international work available in that field. There's probably you know a handful of larger ones that you could pinpoint. Then what you want to do is research those companies and figure out who the people are there doing the work, what credentials they have whether that means just looking at the website or it means finding this person on LinkedIn and then talking to them. So that's a really big component of because you want to understand what credentials their employees have so you can get those credentials if you want to work for that company. You must start to understand that.

The second point we talked about was credentials. Once you've identified some of these credentials, go after them. There isn't necessarily too many credentials or too little credentials. It just depends on the situation. So in this situation, Fadi and I have identified the couple of credentials that might be helpful for him and he is going to consider pursuing them and consider looking into them and he is taking some additional certificate courses which hopefully will help with this transition as well. So you want to think about your credentials, your reputation, your resume.

And then lastly, you want to try to build a network that's going to help you in the international space. And the best way to do that that I can think of is to become a member in the professional associations that's spin the globe. Like PMI is one that stock out for us here and it's probably perfect for Fadi to look into. But they have a worldwide network of Project Management Professionals that consist of all types of different professions. But the bottom line is that they're going to give him an avenue to build

The **ENGINEERING CAREER COACH**

WITH
**ANTHONY
FASANO** 

connections pretty much wherever he wants to depending on the chapter he joins or the activities that he engages in.

So those are some steps that really you could take to probably transfer from any one discipline to another but hopefully, here for Fadi, this will help him to get on his way from working locally New York City to working on a global scale with infrastructure and building infrastructure for communities.

Fadi, I hope this is helpful for you in your endeavor. And I would just say to you, you know stay positive. Stay focused that it's not going to be an easy endeavor. But, usually, things that are meaningful to you are not always easy. You have to take the steps to get there. And then once you get there, it'll be very rewarding.

Fadi: Thank you very much. I will keep that in my mind. And thank you for all of the information that you gave me.

Anthony: Absolutely. Alright, Fadi. So I hope that that was helpful for you. I hope that you got some stuff there that you can take and you can utilize. Alright.

Fadi: Okay.

Anthony: And, listen, if you have any questions in the future, feel free. Email me. I will... once I get this show done like in the next few weeks, I will send it out to you so that you can listen to it and stuff.

Fadi: Okay.

Anthony: Alright, Fadi.

Fadi: Thank you very much for your time.

Anthony: Alright. Have a good night.

Anthony's Closing Remarks:

Anthony: I hope you enjoy the main segment of the show. I certainly did. We gave Fadi some steps he can use. And those of you out there who are interested to make me changing your career, you may use some of those same steps, Take Action Today segment of the show is not really going to be related to the topic we just discussed. This is going to be related to change in general.

The **ENGINEERING CAREER COACH**

WITH
**ANTHONY
FASANO** 

A new year always brings about a time for you to reflect on the last year and think about what you're going to do the following year. And what I want to urge you to do today is to reflect. Reflect on as last year. Think about the goals that you achieved and why and how you achieved them, and think about the goals you didn't achieve and why you didn't achieve them. Maybe they weren't important to you. Maybe you didn't give the time they deserved. A lot of people just jump into the next year without reflection, and reflection is where you can actually learn a lot. And I'm going to take the time to do that this next week, is really look at my goals for last year. I didn't hit them all. I hit a bunch of them, but I didn't hit them all and I'm wondering why. Maybe I'll find that some of those weren't really that important to me and then I'll restructure and use what I've learned in setting my goals for next year.

And as I mentioned earlier in the show, I will have a goal setting course for engineers at engineeryourgoals.com in the first week of this New Year 2015.

Until then, I hope you had a wonderful year and I look forward to doing whatever I can do to help you have the best year ever in 2015. Until then, continue to engineer your own success.

*If you want to hear more episodes of **The Engineering Career Coach Podcast** you can subscribe on iTunes or go to engineeringcareercoach.com, where you will find tons of free engineering career resources. Just click the 'start here' button on the site for an easy to navigate index of all the resources available.*

You can also follow Anthony Fasano on Twitter @anthonyjfasano or Facebook at [facebook.com/engineeryourownsuccess](https://www.facebook.com/engineeryourownsuccess). Until the next time, thanks for listening!