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INTRODUCTION

My big professional moment came between 1974 and 1976, when I was called upon to publish the results of my first major project. These publications took the form of trade magazine articles, and peer reviewed papers, at IEEE and Edison Electric Institute (EEI) conferences. I realized I truly was now a professional; and that excitement of seeing my name in print more than four decades ago, has not abated. To me, publishing one’s work is a major aspect of being a professional.

I can remember the details of the articles and professional papers so clearly I presented back then. That EEI paper was my first corporate trip, as well as my first formal presentation. I can recall in detail giving the presentation; the 35MM slides I used [which I still have]; the questions I fielded; and even the hotel layout and conference room. My first magazine article, which appeared in the now long-gone Electrical World magazine, sits framed and nicely preserved on the desk in my home office. Forty-five years later, I am still happily publishing articles and formal papers—and now IEEE-USA eBooks—and savoring every moment!

I heartily encourage all engineers to bring their ideas and accomplishments to the public forum to enrich our engineering heritage. Stand in front of your colleagues; and proudly tell them what you are doing, and what you have done. In this short volume, I shall discuss why publishing and speaking about your work is important, and link it to how it affected my own career.

My original corporate mentors, all eventual IEEE Fellows, had a saying they reminded us about often: “If you worked hard to develop something, then sign your name to it, and present it. Be proud of your work.” My company required young engineers to attend (and ideally, present a paper) every year at IEEE Society Conferences relevant to our industry. If we did not present a paper, our managers asked us to informally review others' interesting papers—then pass our reviews around back at the office for others to see. Our mentors made a point to personally introduce young engineers to seasoned IEEE members, and get our names and published papers out there for others to contemplate.

~Harry Roman
BACKGROUND

One of the most courageous acts any engineer [or any serious professional, for that matter] can undertake is to bring ideas to the public forum—and listen to what others have to say about them. This critique applies to both formal technical papers and articles. An article can get noticed just as much as a technical paper, and word can get back to you—via a letter to a magazine editor, a phone call, or electronic communication. If someone has something to say, you can bet they will say it, one way or another. It may even end up on your boss’ desk—as the commentator may have an association with high-level folks in your company. A word to the wise: Use words and explanations carefully. Quality of thought and analysis is paramount.

I tell you nothing new when I say we engineers can be insufferable “nit-pickers.” It seems to be in our DNA; but striving to ascertain that concise definition, explanation, or understanding of complex situations is a powerful way to determine the worth of someone’s efforts. It immeasurably helps others who may later base their work upon it. Review of technical papers is a hallmark of IEEE’s quest for quality, as well as that of other professional/scientific organizations that adhere to this proud tradition.

Engineers may also be called upon to formally review colleagues’ work, as well—something I did for many years, when I served on a variety of IEEE working groups and special committees. In addition, I had the honor of chairing sessions at IEEE conferences, and writing comments to various papers presented there. As a volunteer VP of New Educational Products for IEEE, while serving on the old Educational Activities Board (EAB), I was able to lay eyes on a wide variety of writing by many different engineers, and to critique their work. Most of the work I dealt with on EAB involved creating short books for worldwide members, to assist them with their professional development and evolving continuing education.

It is a humbling experience to be on both sides of the fence, so to speak—someone seeking publication and someone commenting on submitted materials. I must say, I loved it all! I grew so much when I participated in the process; and as I said earlier, I still get a wonderful “charge” out of seeing my work in formal print.

Having worked in the R&D end of the electric utility business, it was not unusual for me to belong to a number of organizations, and to have my work formally appear under a wide range of engineering organizations, during my 36-year
career. I always felt that foraging over a wide technological field helped promote multidimensional, interdisciplinary thinking in an R&D work environment. I always emphasized this point to my staff and team members.

Following is a list of the interesting forums where I presented formal papers or articles. Today, with the Internet and Social Media, so many more venues can be reached, easily and quickly.

- Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers [IEEE]
- Edison Electric Institute [EEI]
- Electric Power Research Institute [EPRI]
- American Society of Mechanical Engineers [ASME]
- American Nuclear Society [ANS]
- Gas Research Institute [GRI]
- American Gas Association [AGA]
- Society of Manufacturing Engineers [SME]

I published numerous magazine articles, and I shall not expound upon them or list them here. Suffice it to say, those articles were just as important to my career and work as the technical papers. I not only got my work noticed faster, but it also resulted in more unexpected and fortuitous contacts from industry leaders. Remember—a magazine arrives on someone’s desk probably every month, or bi-monthly. Travel to a conference is not required. Articles are a kind of conversation and can bring about some interesting potential outcomes. Never minimize the power of a well-crafted magazine article. Magazine editors give annual awards to article authors who write particularly important and timely articles.