

Women in STEM – Speaker Questionnaire

1. What is your position title?

Applications Engineer

2. What precisely do you do? What are the duties/functions/responsibilities of your job?

Support our business to provide and optimise our solutions for our customers. We do this by looking at each customer application, our products and technologies and using case studies or data to determine the best option.

3. To what extent is it what you expected it would be?

It is very flexible and varied, so it changes a lot. I didn't expect the breadth of the work I do nor the exposure to the many different types of people and companies.

4. What is a typical day like?

If I'm not travelling it would entail doing computer work to build business case models in excel or production simulations and conveying results in presentations; communicating with internal people and customers in meetings or via email; presenting our results and ideas to customers. Sometimes we go to customer sites (mine sites or head offices) either locally or in Australia. Since we work for a global company we sometimes travel overseas for training, new product launches or group meetings.

5. What projects have you worked on that have been particularly interesting?

We worked on a project in India which was a real learning curve for us. The culture is very different and the way things are done is very different. We aimed to review how things are done to assess the risk and help them improve, so it involved a lot of questioning and discussions. The means of communication and change management aspects were real learnings for us. It was fascinating to see how differently things are done and it challenges your norms too. Also, it was a crazy, noisy, colorful place so that added to the overall effect.

6. What skills or talents are most essential to be effective in your job?

I would say there are three important aspects:



1. To be able to communicate effectively;
2. To manage work and priorities tasks;
3. To think laterally and rationally towards achieving a solution

4. Does your work relate to any experiences or studies you had in college?

More or less, I believe that studying Industrial Engineering helped me with an approach and structure to solving problems and thinking laterally. Some fundamentals from university come in handy every now and then but aside from that its how you learn from others on the job and apply that to real world situations to make a difference.

5. What was your entry-level job title and functions?

Junior Systems Engineer – similar to what I am doing now but I was more of an assistant to the more senior engineers, so I would help them out on all their optimisation projects by taking time studies, making excel models, writing reports and preparing the presentations.

6. What kind of hours do you normally work?

Normally 8-4 in Perth, if I travel its normally during the week days and for 2-4 days.

7. What kinds of problems do you deal with?

We don't normally solve problems but rather look into optimisation and better alternatives.

8. What do you do if you can't solve a problem on your own?

I have a very supportive manager who I would turn to, we also have very knowledgeable people in our business both locally and globally who we turn to often.

9. What kinds of decisions do you make?

Normally decisions about how to approach projects, how to deal with data, how to address problems we have in order to achieve our project goals

10. To what extent do you interact with customers/clients?

We are very customer facing, some weeks every day, other weeks not at all. Generally once-twice a week would be an average. We also perceive our colleagues to be our internal customers as we provide a service to them to assist them.



11. Which other departments, functional units, or levels of the hierarchy do you regularly interact with?

Sales, production, technical support and business line management.

12. How much flexibility do you have in determining how you perform your job?

A lot of flexibility, we operate quite autonomously. We have a range of tools, templates and have experience, so with all that in mind I decide how to perform the current job / project / task.

13. Is your work primarily individual or predominately in groups or teams?

Normally in small teams.

14. What do you like about working in this job?

The variety, the flexibility and the opportunity to be able to do a lot and learn a lot.

