

Passion for Consulting March 2023

Not just a job but a passion! When the passion dies let the young ones carry on. We must continue to provide the opportunities for education and pass on our experience.

It is the ultimate career in the plumbing and fire services industry for those who choose to walk the consulting path. The thrill of being the decision maker, the challenge of design and calculations, using experience to achieve the desired result and the pride in our accomplishments, for the dedicated it will never be “just a job.”

Forty five years and longer for some, has provided the opportunity to be part of our changing cities, towns, governments, and the building landscape. It has provided the opportunities to meet and mix with people we may not have otherwise met. The opportunity to sit in boardrooms, express our ideas, influence the outcome and be part of some of the most prestige projects ever to be built.

*The excitement of calculating accurate water flows, pressures and frictional losses for high rise buildings, office towers, resorts, hospitals, parliaments, and large projects, contributing to the pleasure the end user derives from using services that perform efficiently. A day at the races, the football or our favourite pastime and **everyone flushes with success**, the senior citizen standing at the ground floor sink of a 20 storey building and their drinking glass is not blasted from their hand by excess pressure, or the heart transplant patient who knows with confidence that the water will be sterile and at the right temperature while his/her new heart is kept cool. Hydraulic Consultants have a responsibility for performance as well as health.*

*Hydraulic Services Consulting as a chosen career, with it comes **a duty of care, a professional responsibility and an attitude that says it must be right the first time**. There is a need to be well informed, to maintain our level of education with the ever changing rules, regulations, materials and know ‘who is who’ in the industry. There must be a desire to know why, to understand how a particular hydraulic system works, not to just accept it happens, probe and challenge the results. For us to advance our industry we must be logical in our approach, reasonable in debate and open to other view points, accepting changes but only when such ideas are better, **never change simply for the sake of change**, our governments are in all sorts of trouble because they have tried to fix things which are not broken. As consultants we must know why change is required and challenge it, if it is not in the interest of our industry.*

As a Hydraulic Consultant do you feel the passion? When of a morning you wake is there a burning desire to sit in front of the computer and design, or to you is it just a job. We are privileged to have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and experience at an alarming rate compared to other sections of our industry. It was once accurately suggested that tradespeople work on a limited number of projects in their life time, while a consultant has the opportunity to build many new jobs in his/her career even though they may be in their heads or on the computer, the skills, ideas and experience are put to the test on a daily basis. The average consultant will learn more in five years than many learn in an entire lifetime due to their continual exposure to rules and regulations.

*It is often said **the key to success is education**, certainly that is one important ingredient which applies to Hydraulic Consultants, however there is more.*

Both as individuals and as an association we are in an excellent position to determine the systems for construction in the 21st century, too often new products, ideas, methods and procedures are determined by lesser qualified people outside the industry. Consultants often see a need, a real need and choose to do nothing about it as their solution is taken for granted. For many years we have been controlled and dictated to by engineers, committees, local authorities and government departments while we are better qualified to make the recommendations. Such topics as Fire Services where materials, pressures and the manner in which the flows are determined do not seem to line up with reality. Rules, methods and procedures for sanitary plumbing, recycling of grey water are other examples.

*This is where the **passion** enters the equation,*

***Step one.** Each person entering the hydraulic consulting profession should understand they have a responsibility to know as much as possible about water flows, temperatures, pressures, water hammer, friction noises and similar. The effects of water running into gutters, downpipes and stormwater catchments. There is a trend to simply follow the calculation sheets and not have an in-depth understanding of what is happening, which in time will limit our ability to fix the more difficult problems.*

***Step two.** Senior members of the association need to pass on their knowledge and experience just as we do for our children, this provides a solid foundation for our profession to progress and influence the direction of the industry. Only too often we find ourselves debating inflexible and unreasonable regulations which are applied for no other reason than they are the rules. Too often we hear the words **I don't make the rules I only apply them**, this of course is not a responsible approach and in such cases the consultant needs to be diplomatic, using his/her skills to win over the best solution for the particular situation. There is a need to be flexible as difficult design situations are exactly what creates the need for Hydraulic Consultants.*

Step three.** We all have special abilities for various areas within our industry, in fact the ability may be hidden to ourselves while being obvious to others, if we stop and think that special ability is there. Weakness in designs and regulations are easy to identify, particularly when Hydraulic Consultants have the understanding to do it better. Regardless of whether it is a better pipe fixing system, diversion for recycled water, purification, flow and returns and the list goes on, call on that special something, **have the courage to design it, gain support and implement it.

It is difficult to understand why so few manufactures seek the advise of Hydraulic Consultants when upgrading or developing new products, it is interesting because we actually do have the answers.

***Step four.** Become involved in the industry, be informed and identify areas to which you can make a contribution, take every opportunity to lift the profile of the Hydraulic Consultant. Be certain of your facts and fair in your assessments, always remember the contractor is trying to make a profit, the inspector is trying to achieve a satisfactory result and as a team we can arrive there faster.*

The difference between a job and a profession, is the passion, daring to be different, the wanting to be involved, the pride and satisfaction when the job is well done.

There is no limit to what one person can achieve if he/she does not mind who gets the credit!

***Paul Funnell OAM
Life Member***

On behalf of the QLD AHSCA Members