

The 2nd Career Development Workshop for Young Students and Professionals

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1. Introduction

The 2nd Career Development Workshop for Young Students and Professionals was held in the Tokyo Denki University (Kanda campus) on 2009/11/28. This workshop was mainly organized by the IEEE Tokyo GOLD Affinity Group, IEEE Japan Council Women in Engineering Affinity Group, and was co-organized by the three student branches in Tokyo Denki University, Yokohama National University and Tokyo University of Science.

2. About the workshop

2.1 Objective

This workshop is targeted to young students in undergraduate, master and doctoral level in order to help them to think about their career paths as well as the skill sets. Topics include “Thought which can be applied anywhere”, “Job hunting activities for Doctoral/foreign students”, “Things you should prepare during student life”, “What the companies demand from a fresh graduate” are being discussed in the workshop. Through these topics the workshop can help students to think about and prepare their career in advance.

2.2 Activities

A total of 8 young researchers and engineers who are active in the industry/academy were invited as facilitators, each of them was responsible for the discussion of one topic of each group (see Table 1). Inside the discussion, the facilitators gave in-depth discussion with the participants according to the facilitators' own experience. Also, one supporter was invited for each group to smooth the discussion as well as taking notes in the group.

2.3 Program

The program of this workshop is shown below:

Workshop

Chairperson: Dr Yasuharu Ohgoe (Chairperson, IEEE Tokyo GOLD Affinity Group, Tokyo Denki University)

13:00~13:30 Reception

13:30~13:40 Forewords (Prof Akinori Nishihara, IEEE Japan Council Women in Engineering Affinity Group Adviser)

13:40~14:15 Introduction of facilitators

14:15~14:25 Break

Table 1. Topics in each group

Group	Facilitator	Organization	Topic
A	Mr Yusuke Fukuzawa	NTT Docomo Inc	On how to develop a good product
B	Mr Kazuho Yamada	NTT East	Things you should prepare during student life
C	Mr Norihisa Fukaya	National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology	How to you contribute to the society as an engineer
D	Mr Satoshi Takada	Hitachi High-Tech	What should be the image of an engineer
E	Mr Masashi Tanimura	Fujitsu Laboratories Ltd	What the companies demand from a fresh graduate
F	Miss Natsuki Yamanobe	National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology	Job hunting activities for Doctoral students
G	Miss Chunhua Cui	Ricoh Software Inc	Job hunting activities for foreign students
H	Mr Hiroshi Kurihara	Former employee of Nissan Motor Company	Thought which can be applied anywhere

14:25~15:55 Group discussion (Table 1)

15:55~16:00 Summarizing the discussion

16:00~16:50 Presentation of each group

16:50~17:00 Closing (Prof Takeuchi Seiichi, IEEE Tokyo GOLD Affinity Group Adviser)

17:30~19:30 Party

Party

17:30~17:40 Opening (Mr Aoki Yuto, IEEE student branch, Tokyo Denki University, Mr Nishikawa Sumito, IEEE student branch, Yokohama National University)

19:20~19:30 Closing (Umatani Teruhiko, IEEE student branch, Tokyo University of Science)

3. Discussions in the Workshop

There were total of 50 participants and staff participated in the workshop. Of the 50 participants, 31 of them were students (20 IEEE student members and 11 non-members), 10 of them were from the public (7 IEEE members and 3 non-members), 9 facilitators and personnel staffs (2 IEEE members and 7 non-members). The discussion in each group is given as below.



Fig. 1: Chairperson explains the flow of workshop

3.1 Group A

Group A has discussed the topic “On how to develop a good product”. The demanded functionalities of mobile phone market was put at the main focus of the discussion. First the members brainstormed the demanded functionalities of mobile phones. Then the focus is made to targeting the male/female users of the twenties.

As a result of the discussion, the female users of the twenties seem to demand for something for funny and useful, like “to send information about what is inside the fridge to the phone”, “auto-charging of mobile phone through vibration”, “to display random change on the screen in order to entertain the user” are some



Fig.2: Discussion in group



Fig.3: Discussion in group



Fig.4: Presentation of the finding in each group

functionalities demanded by the female users. On the other hand, the male users demanded for functionalities that are useful and automatic like “to inform when you forget to bring something”, “auto-charging of mobile phone through vibration”, “automatically transfer images taken by the phone to PC”.

To widen these idea, engineers should read more magazines of different types in order to widen the view for different idea as well as understanding the demand from market.

3.2 Group B

Group B has discussed “Things you should prepare during student life”. At the beginning, all the members first tell the things they are now preparing, what they want to do in the future and what do they want to know from other members. And from these opinions, the group also discussed what is the most important thing when they work, or the bottom line they have for the company.

In the discussion, “one should find something he can do even he quits the job during one's student life” got agreement from the members. If one can find the “something” he can think of “if something goes wrong I will quit this company” and in turn, he do not need to afraid of challenging and therefore this helps his career.

Then the topic went back to “things you should prepare during student life”. There were different advices like “one should experience a lots of stuff”, “one should become an affecting person”. In conclusion, “something” one should prepare include “the power to get the job done”, “the power to change”, “a wider view” are important elements. These abilities can be gained from experiencing research activities as well as part time jobs.

3.3 Group C

Group C has discussed “how to contribute to the society as an engineer”. Especially when one has to make choice in his career and preparing to contribute to the society, consideration of what one wants to do (internal factor) and what one is demanded from the society (external factor) are necessary.

At the beginning, the facilitator first try to understand the participants' problems in career choosing through their self introduction. Then the facilitator went through the discussion by asking questions to the participants. When inside the career, there will be limitations from the company on one's action, and in turn it is difficult to do his own job. In this situation, the facilitator introduced two thinking: “Career anchor” and “career survival”. “Career anchor” is that one should have his core thinking internally and plan for long-term career, which is independent of the company. On the other hand, “career survival” means one should play well with the company and to satisfy the company's demand. This is to survive in the company.

Using these thinkings, when one has problems in his career he should plan for his career and find his “career anchor” and make balanced “career survival” in order to be success in the career. Also as an engineer, choosing the right career means he can develop his skill on the career and in turn, contribute to the society.

3.4 Group D

Group D has discussed “what should be the image of an engineer?”. The facilitator introduced his own experience and exchanged advices with the participants, topics (1) connecting people (2) gain/loss vs goodness/badness (3) core value of oneself are the core of the discussion.

(1) As an engineer, there are people above him, below him and as his peers. Within these relationships, ability in communication is required in many cases. Also, by actively connecting with more people, it will be likely that it can improve one's productivity. In the sense of connecting with future engineer, documentation is surprisingly important as well.

(2) For gain/loss vs goodness/badness, as long as an engineer belongs to a company, it is no doubt that he should contribute for the company's profit. However, whether the technology he made is good depends on the company as well as the human being, and this is a very difficult question. Advices from different views are raised in the discussion.

(3) For the core value of oneself, it is known that many people cannot apply those they researched during university to the company. It seems to be difficult to identify one's core value. In this case, the core value one gains during the studies and the core value one gains during his work can be merged and become one's new core, as suggested by the facilitator. By combining them well, there is possibility that it can become one big core values.

3.5 Group E

Group E has discussed “What the companies demand from a fresh graduate” in form of group work.

At the beginning, the facilitator suggested to list up idea of two points: A. What students are demanded from the company B. What the students want from the companies. More comments were given to A. This showed that the members are more passive in the job searching activities that they are likely to change their aptitude in order to satisfy the companies. Next, the listed up idea were classified using KJ method. As a result, A is more about mental, cooperation and communication, while B is more about career development, satisfaction, income. As a result of the discussion, the items in A are necessary in order to achieve the items in B.

Finally the facilitator stated that the people companies want are “people who can get the company to its goal” and “people who can change the company internally in order to take the company to the goal”. For example, if one find there is lack of communication in the company he can try holding some parties within the colleagues, or someone who can make revolution on improving methods which have been used for years.

In conclusion, although it is important to choose the company carefully, many things will not be known until one works in the company. Fresh graduates can find out the way after entering the company and actively making change will be beneficial.

3.6 Group F

Group F discussed about “Job hunting activities for doctoral students”, which includes pursuing studies in doctoral courses, research, and finally job hunting.

First, when one decided to pursue his studies in the doctoral course, he should find it is meaningful to do research, having the power to do research and enjoy the studies.

Then the group discussed what if one continue his studies in the doctoral course. As a result, putting one's idea into the research and work for the others are very important. Also, as after graduating from the doctoral course one has to compete with other doctoral course graduates, one can see the doctoral course as a preparation of oneself for the competition.

After that job hunting for doctoral course students are discussed. Although the choices for doctoral students are very limited, the wide range of level one can work, as well as some companies look for doctoral level are the merit for the doctor students. Also because of the limited choice of jobs, it is important for the doctoral students to start their job hunting activities earlier. Information collecting from conferences or connecting to other students to widen the information network are also very important.

The job hunting for the doctoral students are the results they gain from the courses, by having good timing to make matching successfully, job hunting for doctoral students will also go fine.

3.7 Group G

Group G has discussed “Job hunting activities for foreign students” in the view of foreign students in Japan. As a results, some hints for succeeding in job hunting are found.

First, quality is more important than quantity. It is general for one to study the websites of the companies and join the introductory sessions of the companies during job hunting in Japan. This requires a large amount of time, therefore it would be wiser to focus on a few companies in order to fully understand the companies as well as if oneself is demanded by that company. This should improves the efficiency of job hunting activities.

One more important thing is the understanding of the Japanese language and the culture. The Japanese companies demand for cooperative manner usually, so for sure it is important to deeply understand Japan. However, many

companies make some employment quota specially for foreign students, so it is important for you to stand out from the other foreign students. The chance of getting a job will be increased if one can make difference in the Japanese ability, cooperative manner, passion and leadership.

3.8 Group H

Group H has discussed “Thought which can be applied anywhere” in applying it to research as well as job hunting. In various situations, the keys around this topic are: (1) set the aim of one's life (2) the step you take determine your success. And these two are the main to be discussed in group H.

For the aim of one's life, idea include “the obstacles one knows he will be facing are not obstacles”, “setting a deadline for one's aim can increase the motivation” and “making clear of what one should do” are important. Therefore make the aim more concrete or find a senior as one's aim will be important, as one can achieve this aim step by step. Also, aim is not something to find, but is about what one wants to do as well as the environment, which includes the network of people.

Next the importance of preparation is also discussed. With careful preparation, one's plan will not be disturbed easily and thus decrease of motivation can be avoided. Also not only one should make the plan clear, but also write down the “must do” and tackle them. This can avoid one to simply taking the easy way, as well as reconfirm what one should do.

4. Questionnaire

At the end of the workshop participants are asked to fill in a questionnaire, of these 20 questionnaires are returned. The results are summarized as follow

4.1 About the participants

13 of the participants are students and 7 are working. Of the 13 students, 7 of them are IEEE student members and the other 6 are non-members. The year of study are shown in Fig 5. Of the 7 participants who are working, 4 or them are IEEE members and the other 3 are non-members.

4.2 Evaluation to the workshop

The contents, usefulness, length of the workshop are being evaluated by a 5-level scale with an optional comment:

- (1) Contents: Excellent, good, normal, fair, poor
- (2) Usefulness: Very useful, useful, normal, not very useful, not useful
- (3) Length of workshop: Not enough time, not that enough

time, appropriate, little bit long, long

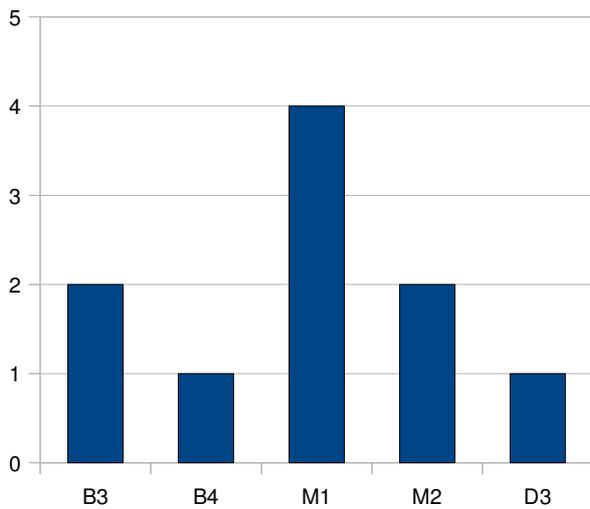


Fig.5: School year of student participants (B: Bachelor; M: Master; D: Doctor)

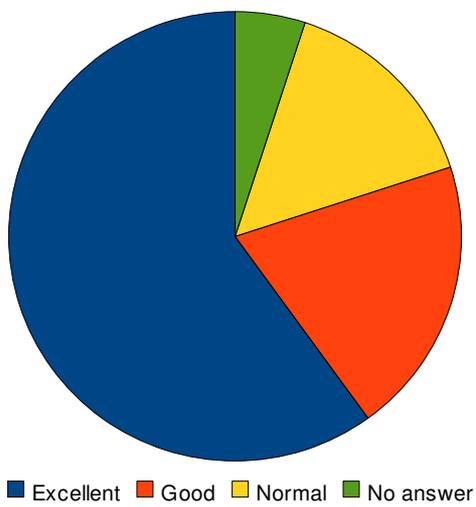


Fig.6: Contents

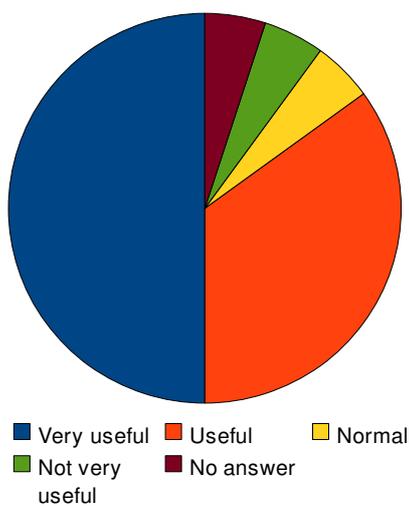


Fig.7: Usefulness

As shown in Fig 6 and Fig.7, the evaluation of the workshop on the contents and usefulness are positive. Some opinions include “was able to know about something not



Fig.8: Length of workshop

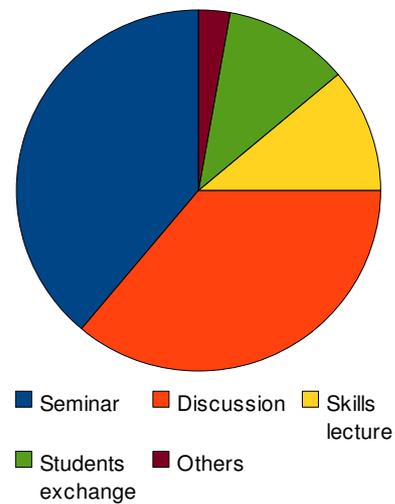


Fig.9: Interested activities

commonly known”, “helped me to think about the future”, which shows that the workshop was able to help students to think about the career development. Of the opinions from the students, “was great to learn something from young engineers and was able to communicate with them”, “when compared to official introductory sessions of the companies, chance of having a direct talk with the young engineers was great” are some of the feedbacks, and this shows the workshop's usefulness to some of them.

Also many people think the length of the workshop was “not that enough” or “appropriate” (Fig.8), and this shows there are enough contents inside the workshop.

4.3 Planning for coming events

When asked to suggest some events they might be interested in, participants are given the following options to choose from (multiple selections are allowed):

- (1) Interested event in future

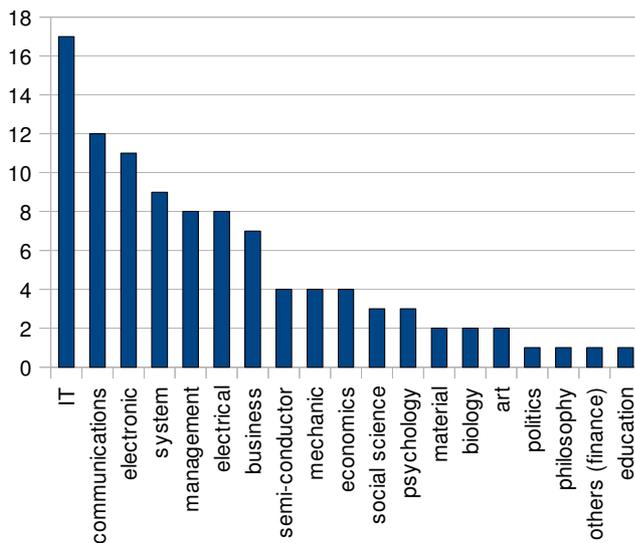


Fig.10: Interested area

- Seminar (from researchers of companies/academy)
- Discussion (if so, what topic you are interested)
- Exchange between students
- Skills lecture (statistics, presentation or others)
- Others (please write down)

(2) Areas you are interested in: IT, communications, electrical, electronic, material, mechanic, system, semi-conductor, chemistry, economics, management, business, politics, social science, education, medical, biology, pharmacology, philosophy, psychology, art, others

As shown in Fig 10, most of the participants are interested in IT, followed by communications and electronics.

5. Expectation for the future

The workshop this time has also received good feedbacks from the participants. The third workshop is planned to be in June 2010 in order to help more people in planning their career.

Acknowledgment

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