

P.S. Recommendations for Changes in the Selection Criteria for Fellows – 2004

In my view, the role of and the reasons for the Fellows program as originally stated are still valid today, both for the company and for individuals who wish to pursue technical careers. But times have changed since the 70's and 80's, and it may be appropriate to review the criteria for selection.

The bottom line for the company is to encourage innovation and to reward those who achieve it. Today innovative products can be the work of larger teams, where it is more difficult to pinpoint the source of innovation. Also, innovation can arise as a result of an exceptional team leader who recruits and develops innovators and who point to where to look for the gold. And then there are system architects and analysts who frame the solution but depend on a number of innovations and innovators to realize it. How do you evaluate these contributions and measure commercial success? It's harder to make judgments.

More broadly then, maybe we have to think about truly exceptional enablers of innovation such as design tools, who we believe sets the standards of excellence for what we need in this capacity.

Maybe, in cases where business decisions shortchange the commercial realization of what is clearly an innovation, we should be more flexible, on an exception basis, in judging the criteria for commercial success.

Whenever we extend the criteria for selection, we must be very careful in assuring that the individual selected sets a high standard and precedence by which future judgments will be made.

You can never make this process perfect, and there will also be disappointments and perhaps injustices. I don't think we want to lower the bar. We would be very fortunate indeed if 1% of our technical community will collectively measure up to the high standards we set as exemplified by those who have been selected for this honor. But we should be disappointed if the percentage were to diminish over time, and if there is not some reasonable geographical distribution. This is especially challenging given the proliferation of our design centers in distant locations; where it is more difficult to get to know the people and evaluate their contributions.

My advocacy is to consider changes in the selection criteria that take into account the dilemmas that we have encountered. Presently the criteria reads: "A Fellow does not necessarily perform in all these roles (as innovator, mentor,

entrepreneur, consultant, engineering manager, organizational bridge, teacher, publisher, gatekeeper, ambassador), but in some combination demonstrates an important impact on the corporation. In any case, a prerequisite for consideration for Fellow is a solid record of accomplishment as a technical innovator. The engineer must have demonstrated superior creative ability in product design, process technology or systems architecture that has achieved commercial success and will have been responsible for identifiable innovations at the state-of-the-art. The reporting relationship of a Fellow are those that are appropriate to the objectives and tasks of the organization in which the individual works.”

The criteria says that innovations *and* commercial success are prerequisites. Should we also allow for the technical leader or others who excel at enabling innovation?

The Fellows may also agree as a group to certain responsibilities that come with the job of being a Fellow. One of these should, in my opinion, be to identify the most promising engineers in their sphere of influence and then to proactively mentor their development. It goes without saying that Fellows have a

responsibility to behave and act in such ways as to exemplify one or more of the role models articulated for selection beyond innovation.

The question is, with changes to the criteria and clarification of Fellow responsibilities, do the words in our parallel ladder program still expound the strategic intent of our parallel ladder and the role of Fellows?

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