



Sloan Career Cornerstone Center

Profiles of Electrical Engineers and Computer Scientists



Roger Carolin

**President and CEO
CFM Technologies
West Chester, PA**

Education:

B.S. - Electrical Engineering, Duke University
M.S. - Business Administration, Harvard Business School

Job Description:

President and CEO of CFM Technologies. He works in corporate administration overseeing the companies' activities.

Advice to Students:

"Networking, get to know people, get to understand how people communicate and work together effectively."

Video Transcript:

"In 1983, I was in graduate school at Harvard Business School working on my MBA and I had a classmate by the name of Christopher McConnell and he and I decided that we would like to do an independent study. And really, our purpose in doing an independent study was to look for a business opportunity. We were both interested in starting a company."

Interview:

As president of CFM Technologies, Roger A. Carolin hires engineers regularly. The principal quality he looks for in a candidate is drive. He is interested in hiring "someone who really has a desire to do things and really wants to have impact and make a difference, (who wants) to take the initiative. That, above all, is the single most important quality for an engineer's success"

Carolin's company rewards engineers who actively pursue their personal interests. At CFM Technologies, management believes that it benefits the company as well as the individual. Carolin describes a recently-promoted engineer as having "by nature a somewhat entrepreneurial personality. He wants to have some freedom to make things happen on an individual basis, and I think that going into marketing and sales was a good fit with those desires. So here we always try to find a way to accommodate the individual's personal goals and desires. And it's through selfish interest because, when someone's doing something that

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they want to do and they like to do, they tend to be naturally more motivated in doing it and generally get a better result too."

Beyond drive, Carolin looks for different qualities in a candidate, depending on the position for which he or she is applying. He considers GPA "a good indicator of intelligence and the willingness to apply the energy needed to get the grade," but not the strongest indicator of success. Certain positions are ideal for introverted, technical persons. The company has "some roles where brilliance is really important and that person doesn't need to interact a great deal with the rest of his colleagues or the outside world, but he needs to have great ideas for what we can do in the future."

Conversely, there are also roles that require the ability to interact well with others. "If it's a person who's going to work ... doing a major product, interfacing with manufacturing, interfacing with the customer, then, of course, communication skills are very, very important." And Carolin believes that, in general, "engineers tend not to place enough emphasis on communications skills."

He advises undergraduates and graduate students to work on "networking, getting to know people, getting to understand how people communicate and work together effectively." He adds, "One of the things that most universities do is that they reward you for working individually." In fact, Carolin points out, in the real world engineers need "to work as part of a team."

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