



PATRICK SON, P.E.

COMPANY

National Operations
Center of Excellence

TITLE

Managing Director

TRAINING ORGANIZATION OR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY:

California State Polytechnic
University, Pomona (BS, MS)

CERTIFICATION/DEGREE:

Bachelors and Master's
degree in Civil Engineering



memphis.edu/setwc

Q: How did you select your certification program or college major?

A: My mom actually asked some people that she knew who described Civil Engineering and I figured, "That sounds interesting to do. I wouldn't mind designing a building or a bridge, how hard can it be?" Turns out it was pretty hard but well worth it. Oh and I didn't end up liking what you needed to do to design a building or a bridge, I liked transportation since my first internship.

Q: What was the biggest influence in your selection of career pathway?

A: This sounds almost cliché and kind of self-serving, but it was recognition. I wanted to be on a career path for which I was recognized for having initials after my name. Getting that Professional Engineering (P.E.) license meant a lot as I was surrounded by P.E.'s. However, it turns out currently, I don't do much engineering and that works better for me and probably the general public.

Q: What attracted you to the transportation industry?

A: As an engineering student, I always wanted to see one of my designs or plans come to fruition and actually installed, used and make an impact in the community. Transportation seemed like an industry where the plans and designs were actually constructed in my lifetime. It also helped that there is such a personal connection with the context of what a positive impact our plans and designs can do for the communities.

Q: What is your favorite aspect of your job?

A: Speaking, I knew I liked to talk but now I get to talk and think with some of the best and brightest in our industry. The opportunities to speak and present have become an aspect of my career that I thought I would get to do maybe once a year or once every so often. But now I am constantly refining my public speaking skills and finding value in every engagement as a way to move our industry forward.

Q: How do you/your company make a positive impact on society/our community?

A: My organization seeks to empower the people we support who are the practitioners that manage and operate the transportation system. In order to move things into the future, we need to bring everyone we can along. This means we need to educate and improve the current workforce by empowering them to be able to grow and implement new TSMO strategies.

Q: What's the most interesting thing you have been able to do in your professional career?

A: Look at a big hole—a traffic signal pole foundation (3' diameter by 10' deep). Seriously, if you ever get a chance to do construction inspection, I would highly recommend it as that is when all of my schooling, practical design experience and knowledge started to click. It's when the lines on my design plans became livelier and a little more 3-D. Even though I knew it, it made it real what I was doing and why certain practices were incredibly important.

Q: What makes you get up each morning excited about your profession?

A: The ability, chance and position to be able to move the needle positively in our profession. We need to be moving at a pace that will set all of us up to succeed and to do that, we need to move the needle of our industry. We need to educate where needed, adjust and improve where needed and work together in all aspects which is why Transportation Systems Management and Operations becomes a foundation for us to build upon.

Q: If you could go back to high school and select any elective course to take that would have better prepared you for college, what would it be?

A: I think I would've picked a liberal arts class or some sort of hands on make something class. One of the most important aspects is to always be open to new ideas and perspectives which means it's worth taking an elective course that will allow you to access a different part of your brain. Creativity is immensely important at different parts in your career. On a more practical note, writing would've helped early on, trust me...

Q: What advice would you share with students or anyone considering your profession?

A: While you are looking for a job in the profession, consider a job in retail, customer service, journalism, service oriented, etc. Any job that allows you to interact with multitudes of personalities, types of people and experiences will help you in ways you never thought you needed. Once you enter the profession, you will constantly need to talk to strangers, understand how to work with different personalities and deal with all sorts of managers (the good, bad and the crazy). I can literally say that most of the people I look up to have a story of a "job" they had that they use skills from the job on a daily basis.