

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF AIRAH

MARCH 2018 · VOLUME 17.2

RRP \$14.95

PRINT POST APPROVAL
NUMBER PP352532/00001

Ecolibrium

Common good

A Games facility
built for all.



YOU CAN CALL ME AL

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Alan Fok, M.AIRAH

How it started

When I was little, I had a passion for building Lego and constructing all sorts of things with it. Building moving parts from Lego was not simple back then and it brought up some interesting challenges to occupy my day as a five-year-old. My passion to understand how moving parts work led to a mechanical engineering degree.

Defining characteristics

I like to use my experience to help others and hopefully bring the best out of them.

Approach to work

I always like to find out why things are done. Once you work out the core reason or objective of the work, then you can think more laterally to derive a solution rather than just following a step-by-step guide.

I don't get involved in the design aspect of consulting these days, but my work in existing buildings and providing energy solutions for clients is something I really enjoy. Seeing the benefit for the client is very satisfying.

Checklist

Understand the end goal, then work backward to achieve the goal for the client. Always take a step back and think from the client's perspective and see if things make sense. My favourite aspect of projects is working with clients who understand their issue. This is when you are challenged to come up with a solution. The most satisfying part, of course, would be to implement a solution that actually works.

Collaborations

I'm always open to new ideas, but a lot of the time the old ways help work out the fundamentals of the problem.

Collaboration allows us to develop the best solution for the client. However, the team must work together to achieve a common goal. Individual agendas that don't align with the common goal may cause grief rather than help, so it's important from the outset that the idea of a common goal is embedded into the minds of the team.

Inspiration

I admire my wife, Maggie. She is a very positive and energetic person who always finds a way to deal with her challenges. If she can't, she tries to find it through books or asks experts until she gets to the bottom of it.

Mentoring

Sharing our knowledge with the next generation is an important part of developing the industry but also the individuals – mentor and mentee. It is quite satisfying to see junior engineers succeed after you give them some guidance that opens up their thinking and helps them see things from another perspective.

My advice to young engineers is to develop soft skills wherever you can. Engineers are not great communicators. If you can excel in communication, you will achieve success across many aspects of your life, including your career.

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You need to constantly evolve, learn new skills and add value to avoid being left behind. The industry is constantly going through cycles – you need to be aware of where the market is at and identify any risk to you and your position. Look beyond the current trends and explore opportunities before you miss the boat.

If I wasn't an engineer, I'd be?

Maybe a carpenter – I like to build things. There is a sense of achievement when you can build something useful from raw materials.

Goals

I'd like to work more closely with investors, and develop solutions for their portfolio assets to be more sustainable and have less environmental impact. Working in the sustainability space, I see the bigger picture of how we should steer our built environment to provide solutions to social and environmental issues with our work and living spaces.

I'd also like to manage my own team of consultants, work with industry groups, and have a bigger say on policy relating to our industry and our environment.

Most valued possession

Knowledge. Using my knowledge, I can help myself and others save energy, and reduce their environmental impact.

AIRAH

Being a member of AIRAH is important for engineers to stay in touch with the industry and establish themselves as key contributors. Every engineer and every company is working on amazing projects. For the industry to grow and advance together, we need to share ideas and concepts so we can all be part of the solution to a sustainable future. ■