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**TITLE:** Senior Manager, Data Center Operations  
**DEGREE:** Computer Engineering  
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***Q: How did you select your college major, certification program, or career path?***

**A:** I selected IT as a career path primarily because I loved technology, including everything from the game consoles of the day to early personal computers. I also thought that IT had staying power—so I figured I would be able to find a job and stay employed in the field.

I chose computer engineering as a major because as a combination of computer science and electrical engineering courses, it would equip me with broader technical knowledge, including the ability to understand (and work with) both software and hardware.

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

**A:** The biggest influence in my career path selection was probably a desire to do what I love, and the insight that I would be happier, more engaged, more competent, and more fulfilled if I truly enjoyed my occupation. Alongside that was the belief that IT would be a reasonably profitable career choice, considering my anticipated working life and aspirations.

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

**A:** I would probably take additional courses in public speaking and business-oriented electives (e.g., accounting and marketing). Generally speaking, I focused hard on math and science, but I think I should have also placed additional effort on building softer skills that come into play when leading and working through teams.

***Q: What is your favorite aspect of your job?***

**A:** My favorite aspect of my job is working every day with both people and technology to solve problems and deliver solutions for our internal and external customers. Almost every business function is delivered or enhanced using some IT system, and it's great to know that my team can have a positive impact on our company's results. IT professionals are uniquely positioned and qualified to help businesses reap the maximum value available through the use of technology.



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

**A:** One of the reasons that working for International Paper is great is the company's emphasis on getting results in the right way – ethically, responsibly, and with integrity. In line with that emphasis and our vision to be one of the most respected and successful companies in the world, IP endeavors to impact positively the communities where its employees live and work, with a focus on the environment, literacy, and other community needs. The company's generosity and the opportunities it gives employees to contribute towards these goals clearly creates a positive impact on society, while also establishing strong alignment between the company's priorities and my personal values.

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

**A:** The most interesting opportunity I have had in my career was the chance to complete an expatriate assignment in Kraków, Poland, over almost 2½ years. It forced me to enlarge my comfort zone as I dealt with challenges and embraced new experiences related to different cultures, languages, customs, socioeconomic conditions, and workplace dynamics. I learned more new things and developed more competencies during that period than would have been possible without that experience, and I'm very grateful for it.

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

**A:** I get up excited about my profession every day because each day is almost guaranteed to deliver a new opportunity or challenge – there's always a new device, application, upgrade, merger, security development, or business problem to address. IT's dynamic nature combined with its profound impact on business and society make it a continually interesting industry in which to work.

**Q: What advice would you share with K-12 students who are considering your profession?**

**A:** My initial advice would simply be to strive for excellence in your studies and maintain a positive, can-do attitude. Even when you don't clearly see how a lesson would be practically applied in the workplace, don't sell it short – the learning will likely be useful in some way over time, and the discipline of tackling and mastering difficult or tedious material will definitely come in handy. I would also suggest seeking opportunities to gain work experience in IT, preferably across a variety of disciplines. The more varied your knowledge and experience, the more well-rounded and valuable you will be as an IT professional, and the more insight you will have into where you might want to deepen your knowledge or focus your career.