



Name: Olamide Aje
Company: Greeley and Hansen
Job Title: Instrumentation and Controls Engineer
Education & University: BS in Electrical Engineering, Washington University

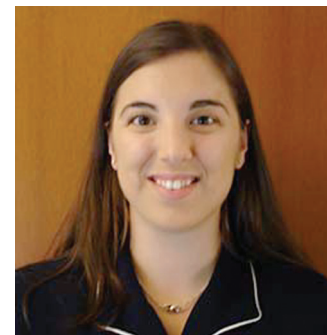
Greeley and Hansen hired Olamide Aje right after graduating in 2004. His previous experience in engineering consisted of a co-op with Anheuser-Busch where he assisted in design and system implementation of modernizing the company's St. Louis brewery.

Engineering became an obvious career choice for Aje when he began dismantling and assembling items ranging from wristwatches to videogames when he was just a child. He found engineering appealing because it offered endless challenges.

Aje believes he'll be successful in the field by focusing on short-term goals, such as enhancing his skills, being active in professional organizations, striving to be a dynamic team member, and learning from his co-workers and managers.

In addition to his learning opportunities at work, Aje has also gained experience and responsibility through various activities outside of the firm. He has served as a guest speaker at self-esteem workshops for high schools and grade schools, and attended the Pre-College Initiative Program (PCI), which promotes college, academic, technology and leadership to pre-college students. Aje is currently involved with the Instrumentation, Systems and Automation (ISA) Society, the Association of Computer Machinery (ACM) and the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE).

Name: Jean Malafronte
Company: Greeley and Hansen
Job Title: Engineer
Education & University: BS in Engineering, Loyola College in Maryland; MS in Environmental Engineering, University of Massachusetts



Upon graduating with her MS in environmental engineering in 2002, Jean Malafronte joined Greeley and Hansen and has been there ever since.

Malafronte first became interested in the field during her international travels, which introduced her to non-drinkable water. This experience triggered her interest in a career in solving water challenges. Her current career goal is to obtain her P.E. license.

Malafronte is a member of the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and the New York Water Environment Association (NYWEA). She also devotes extensive amounts of time to fundraising efforts for Water for People, an international nonprofit organization that's dedicated to increasing access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation for impoverished people (www.waterforpeople.org).

completing a section of a report, calculating sewer capacity, or being successful in a search for information. These things happen daily. This is what work is about—not money (beyond providing a stable way to live). I anticipate even greater satisfaction as I grow and have increasing responsibilities.

OA: Having a good paying job is always good, but if you don't like what you do, then your days at work will be terrible. Since this is something you're going to be doing for many years to come, it's imperative that you enjoy it.

JM: Job satisfaction. If you enjoy your job and are challenged by what you do, the rewards will come.

4) What's the best career advice you've ever received?

BR: Try and figure out problems independently before asking for help. If you have attempted to solve a problem on your own, you will be more in tune, engaged and familiar with the situation and be able to participate in a meaningful discussion about the appropriate solution. Help will always be available, but you will learn more and be more prepared to handle the issue next time.

OA: When given the opportunity, learn as much as you can. If your job assignment is not appealing to you, find areas within the company that are of interest to you. In a nutshell, make sure you enjoy what you do. Also, find ways to stay on top of your game. This can be accomplished through subscriptions to engineering magazines, certification programs, courses that interest you and industry conferences.

JM: Get involved in professional associations. It's a great way to meet colleagues in your field. In addition they provide a forum to talk about

new advancements and technologies that are being developed. It is also a forum to promote the company you work for.

5) What's the best way a fresh-out-of-college employee can impress you during their first week on the job?

BR: This is a hard one. I feel like I'm still the fresh-out-of-college employee, wanting to impress my co-workers. However, in general, someone that is very responsive to assignments, interested in civil engineering, and eager to learn would impress me.

OA: It is necessary for new employees to have drive, a good sense of humor and willingness to succeed. It's also essential for them to understand that in order to achieve something meaningful, they need the cooperation of their co-workers as a team.

JM: Admit when they don't know something. It is a hard thing to admit because they want to be impressive, but it is more impressive that they want to do the job right by making sure they know exactly what they need to do.

6) How did you learn to work with staff outside of your department?

BR: At first, I needed to learn the strengths and specialties of all my co-workers. If I had a question, I didn't know whom to ask. Now, I have an idea who to ask if I have a computer-modeling question, a UV disinfection question or a wastewater filter question. I am fortunate to work in an office full of friendly, approachable people. If I have questions for someone I don't work with day-to-day, I just ask, but at first I had to pay close attention and mentally file away who works on what types of projects.

OA: I have a simple recipe for this: Respect every co-worker regardless of his or her field or background, be open minded to new ideas, and remember to show appreciation for the time and contribution of co-workers. Even though I am one of the newest and least experienced members of the

engineering team at Greeley and Hansen, I get positive feedback from my co-workers all the time. I attribute my success to my approach to working with others.

JM: Use the telephone. So many times email is the preferred way to contact people, but when you do get to talk to them, they get to hear your voice and it brings your personality through. People like to know they are working with another person, not just a message that pops up on email.

7) What traits do you admire in your co-workers?

BR: I admire polished communication skills. I have a high regard for those that are articulate, clear, and quick thinking in both speaking and writing. I also respect their knowledge, experience, perspective and patience in being mentors.

OA: I admire the technical, analytical and people skills that my co-workers possess. But one thing that I admire even more is their genuinely positive attitudes toward fellow co-workers.

JM: I admire the integrity and dedication of the people I work with. They are truly concerned with providing the best possible service to the clients we work with.

8) How do you relieve job frustration?

BR: There is nothing better than coming home and sitting on the couch with my two fat cats and reading a long novel. I also love to cook vegetarian dishes and experiment with new and exotic ingredients. Also, my husband and I are having lots of fun with our new German shepherd puppy. When I want to be more disciplined, I run.

OA: Sometimes, frustration at work is just unavoidable, especially when you have to solve and deal with design complexities. At work, I relieve frustration by discussing my projects with co-workers. Their willingness to listen and help me goes a long way to alleviating my

stress at work. Moreover, I like to be physically active outside of work by playing soccer and going to the gym.

JM: I talk about it with someone who is completely removed from the situation. They usually have a logical perspective and there is no backlash from talking about it with someone else in the office. This prevents your conversation from escalating.

9) What one thing do you know now that you wish you knew when you first started your job?

BR: When I was preparing to start my new job, I was worried that I was going to be expected to design some complicated wastewater treatment plant without guidance and oversight. I now know that it is accepted and understood that new employees don't exactly know what to do or how to do it. Co-workers are understanding, forgiving and even enjoy teaching newcomers. You actually learn when you begin a job what a classroom isn't able to teach you.

OA: I had a [negative] co-op experience before joining Greeley and Hansen. As a result, my expectations were low. Now, I really enjoy what I do. I love the challenging work and the opportunity to interact with the company's decision makers. I do not regret anything.

JM: About a year into my job, I learned that talking to the decision-makers about what I was interested in got me a lot farther than just doing whatever I was given to do. When a new project comes up that is more inline with my career goals and interests, I am no longer afraid to say "I would like to work on that project, if it is possible to switch me off my current project." In the past, I was afraid to verbalize my interests. Most of the time, people in the decision-making positions want to keep you in track with your interests. This is more productive in the long run and a win-win situation for all parties. ▲

—Compiled by Valerie Anderson