

# Mentoring Early Career Hires In Quality

Jason A. Fowler, CQE.

Sr. Quality Engineer, Saft SDD



# Agenda

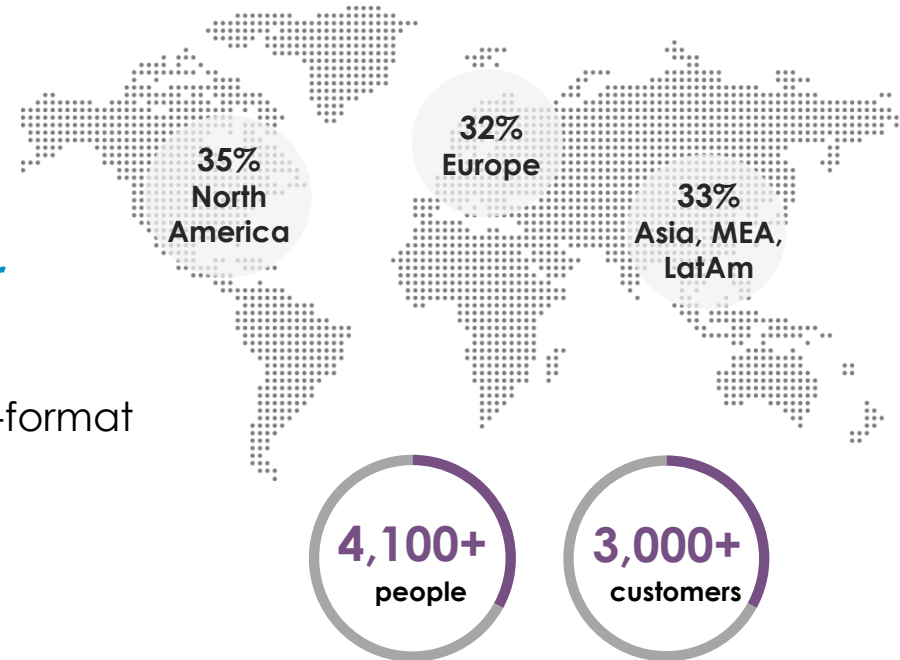
1. Mentoring The Two Types of Early Career Hires
  - New to Quality & the Workforce.
  - New to Quality With Years of Experience.
2. Mentoring Regardless of Experience.

# About Saft

## SAFT COCKEYSVILLE PROFILE

-  270 employees
-  One of two R&D centers in Saft
-  Produces the world's **highest power density** electrochemical cells
-  **Saft Cockeysville focuses** on large-format **Lithium-ion** technology

## INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE



# ABOUT THIS PRESENTATION

# What You Will Not Get From This Presentation!

---

- **A Set-By-Step Mentoring Playbook.**
- **A Mentoring Style That Will Work for Everyone or Fit Every Mentor-Mentee Relationship.**
- **Anything New or Ground-Breaking, as it Has All Been Said Before!**

**If You are Looking For This Type of Information There are Plenty of Books and Online Resources That Contain This Information, Supposedly.**

# What You Will Get From This Presentation!

- A Dry Sense of Humor.
- A General Description of the 2 Different Type of Early Career Hires.
- Specific Issues and Pit-Falls for Each of the Types of Early Career Hires and Ways to Address Them.
- What I have Found That Has Worked for Me, as Both a Mentor and a Mentee.



Every Mentor-Mentee Relationship is Different. I Emphasize Relationship and Will Reiterate This Multiple Times Throughout the Presentation.

# DEFINING THE TWO TYPES OF EARLY CAREER HIRES

# What are the Two Types of Early Career Hires

- 1. New to Quality, New to the Workforce.**
  - We Will Refer to These Individuals as “No Experience” for Simplicity.**
  
- 2. New to Quality, Years in the Workforce.**
  - We Will Refer to These Individuals as “Experienced” for Simplicity**





# New to Quality, New to the Workforce (No Experience)

## General Attributes of a No Experience Hire

- **Recently Graduated College, Tech-School or High School.**
- **Younger in Age.**
- **Limited Expectations or Preconceived Ideas of the Work and Work Environment.**
- **Impressionable.**
- **Either Overly Confident or Very Timid.**
- **Out to Prove Themselves.**



# New to Quality, Years in the Workforce (Experienced)

## General Attributes of an Experienced New Hire

- **May Have Recently Graduated College.**
- **Older in Age.**
- **Many Expectations and Preconceived Ideas of the Work and Work Environment.**
- **Set in Their Ways and Biased.**
- **Easily Upset by Negative Feedback/Criticism.**
- **May be Easily Overwhelmed Initially.**



# New to Quality, Years in the Workforce (Experienced)

---

**Keep in Mind There are Multiple Types of Experienced Hires, and Mentoring Will Need to be Tailored Accordingly.**

- **An Electrical/Mechanical/Process Engineer Who Moves to Quality.**
- **An Inspector/Technician Who Graduates College and Moves into A Quality Engineering Role.**
- **A Manufacturing Employee Who Moves into an Inspector or Quality Technician Role.**

# MENTORING THE NO EXPERIENCE EARLY CAREER HIRE

# 5 Mentoring Topics for the No Experience Hires

1. **Impressionable and Unbiased...Make it Count**
2. **Quality: A Thankless Job**
3. **The Rigidness of Quality**
4. **Harnessing and Focusing the Enthusiasm of Youth**
5. **Continual Learning and Emersion in Quality**



# Impressionable and Unbiased...Make it Count

---

## 1. Your Mentee is Impressionable.

- **It is Very Possible That This is the First Professional Environment Your Mentee Has Seen. Make it Count!**
- **Your Interactions With Others and Your Demeanor & Work Style Could Very Well Shape How Your Mentee Behaves in the Future.**

## 2. Your Mentee Has no Biases or Preconceived Notions About Their Job and Company.

- **Take Advantage of This and Show Them Your Passion!**
- **Make Every Opportunity to Talk Positively About Quality and Your Organization.**

# Quality: A Thankless Job

**Let's Face it, Quality is a Thankless Job. So How Do We Mentor Around This Issue?**

- **Be Honest Up Front! Tell Them What to Expect.**
- **Provide the Praise Others Will Not. Provide Small “Rewards”.**
- **Provide Reassurance That the Pushback and “Distain” Others Show is Normal, its not Personal.**
- **Allow Them to Vent Frustrations at Lack of Thanks From Others.**
- **Help Them to Build Relationships With Others Throughout the Organization.**
- **Put Them Into Situations Where Their Accomplishments are Seen.**

# The Rigidness of Quality

**Quality as a Career Tends to be More Rigid Than Most. It is Hard to Work Remotely When You are Chained to Production.**

- **Provide Projects That Allow Some Flexibility.**
- **Help Your Mentee to Understand and Embrace a More Rigid Work Life.**
  - **Provide Work/Life Balance Tips.**
  - **Provide Personal Anecdotes. Use Caution!**
  - **Follow-up Often and Listen.**
- **Guide Them Towards Alternate Careers/Career Paths.**





# Harnessing and Focusing the Enthusiasm of Youth

**Youthful New Employees are Ready to Set the World On Fire and Provide Value to the Organization. This is Their Greatest Asset!**

- **Know Your Mentee.**
  - **Being Timid is Not a Sign of Lack of Enthusiasm.**
  - **Find Out What Excites Them and Provide Them Opportunities to Work in That Area.**
  - **Relate Other Areas of Quality to What Excites Them.**
  - **Be Excited Yourself!**
- **Reign Them Back When Needed, Gently!**



# Continual Learning and Emersion in Quality

**Continual Learning and Emersion in the Quality Community Will Help Your Mentee Build Passion for and Excitement in Quality.**

- **Attend ASQ Section Meetings and Training With Your Mentee.**
- **Attend Conferences, Such as This One, With Your Mentee.**
- **Encourage ASQ Certification.**
  - **“I Just Got My Degree.”**
  - **“I Think I Should Get My MBA/MBS First.”**
  - **“This Job Already Has a Terrible Work/Life Balance.”**
  - **“We Don’t Do Half This Stuff Here.”**

# MENTORING THE EXPERIENCED EARLY CAREER HIRE

# 3 Mentoring Topics for the Experienced Hire

1. **Experience = Skills + Biases**
2. **The Stressors of a Career Change**
3. **Continual Learning and Certification**



# Experience = Skills + Biases

---

**Years of Experience Means Your Mentee Will Have Unique Skill Sets and Biases.**

**These Skills and Biases Can be Both an Asset and a Hinderance.**

**Never Discount Your Mentee's Skills.**

**Biases are Normal!**

**Biases and Negative Outlooks are a Product of Previous Environments.**

# Experience = Skills + Biases

## Acknowledge the Mentee's Experience and Skills.

- Be Open to Learning From Your Mentee.
- Provide Projects Which Utilize These Skills Whenever Possible.
- Allow Your Mentee to Share Their Experiences Whenever Appropriate.
- Show How Quality Enhances Your Mentees Skills.
- Firmly but Gently Explain That Some Things May Need to be “Unlearned.”



# Experience = Skills + Biases

---

## Communicate Openly and Frankly About any Biases.

- **Determine What Biases and Negative Outlooks Your Mentee May Have.**
- **Listen to Understand Where These Biases Come From, How Were They Formed?**
- **Address Each Bias and Determine if They are Negative or Positive.**
- **Acknowledge That You May Very Well Have the Same Bias(es).**
- **Create a Plan Together to Eliminate as Many Negative Biases and Outlooks as Possible, For Both of You.**

# The Stressors of a Career Change

**Starting a New Career Path May be Extremely Stressful for Your Mentee.**

- **Acknowledge With Your Mentee That a New Career Can Be Stressful.**
- **Provide an Adjustment Period Where Requirements are Loosened.**
- **Create an Obtainable Short and Long Term Plan for Your Mentee.**
- **Act as Liaison Between Your Mentee and Previous Co-Workers and Supervisors.**





# Continual Learning and Certification

---

**There Can be Challenges and Frustrations With Continual Learning and Certification for Your Mentee, Especially at This Stage in Life.**

- **It May Have Been Years Since Your Mentee Has Been in School.**
- **They Already Have a Difficult Work/Life Balance.**
- **Job Demands May Not Allow For Training During Work Hours.**
- **“I Just Got This Position and You are Already Asking me to Think About the Next Position?”**
- **“I’m Good Where I’m at Until I Retire.”**

# MENTORING REGARDLESS OF EXPERIENCE

# Mentoring 101

**Regardless of the Situation or Person You are Mentoring, There are Certain Actions Which Will Always be Necessary and Correct.**

- **Preach The Classics!**
  - **Shewhart, Deming and Juran Can Create Passion for Quality.**
  - **Give Your Mentee a Book Like “Out of the Crisis” and Discuss on Regular Intervals.**
  - **Provide Work Time for Your Mentee to Read and Research.**
  - **Explain the Origins of What They Are Doing.**

# Mentoring 101

- **Develop a Relationship With Your Mentee.**
  - **Be Approachable and Relatable.**
  - **Ensure Communication is 2-Way.**
  - **Get to Know Your Mentee on a Personal Level.**
    - **Do not Become Friends, At Least Not Until Much Later.**
  - **Evaluate the Relationship Regularly.**
  - **Ensure Power Dynamics Have not Changed.**



# Mentoring 101

- **Examine Yourself at Regular Intervals.**
  - **Are you Learning From Your Mentee?**
  - **Has your Passion for Mentoring Changed, Negatively?**
  - **Are You Putting Your Mentee's Needs First?**
  - **How's Your Attitude?**
  - **Are You Still Challenging Them?**



# Mentoring 101

- **Manage Your Expectations Vs. the Mentee's Abilities and Learning Curve to Avoid Burn-Out!**
  - **Evaluate Your Mentee's Abilities Early and Often.**
  - **Not Everyone Will be a Superstar.**
  - **Give Small, Easily Obtainable Projects & Goals Up Front.**
  - **Look for the Warning Signs of Burn-Out.**
  - **Provide Stress Reduction Techniques.**



# Mentoring 101

- **Praise and Positive Feedback is a Universal Builder of Self Esteem and Job Satisfaction.**
  - **Even if They Say They Don't, Everyone Likes Praise and Positive Feedback.**
  - **Try to Provide Daily or at Least Weekly Praise and Positive Feedback to Your Mentee.**
  - **Reevaluate Your Mentoring and/or Your Requirements on Your Mentee if Praise and Positive Feedback are Hard to Come by.**
  - **Small Tokens of Appreciation Can go a Long Way.**

# CONCLUSION



# Conclusion and Final Thoughts

- **It's All About Relationships!**
- **Know Your Mentee, Know Your Self.**
- **Don't Forget to Preach From the Alter of Our Quality Forefathers.**
- **Remember it's About the Mentee, Not You!**
- **Learn From Your Mentee!**
- **Evaluate, Evaluate, Evaluate!**
- **Have Fun!**



# Mentoring 101

---

## Books on the Fundamentals of Quality Management

- Quality Is Free by Philip B. Crosby
- Out of the Crisis by W. Edwards Deming
- Monday Morning Leadership by David Cotrell
- Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom.

# Questions/Comments/Concerns/Insults

