Mechanical Engineer

Kevin Yeoman, Coffman Engineers

Place of Employment

Coffman Engineers, Spokane Office, Industrial Mechanical Department

Employer

Coffman Engineers

Type of Work

Mechanical Engineering for industrial projects, which include cranes, bridge travelers, large manufacturing equipment, machines, steam plants, and natural gas meter stations.

Typical Day

As engineering consultants, we work on many different projects at the same time. I need to ensure that I am completing any required tasks to avoid holding up project schedules. This could include performing calculations, computer modeling, or selecting new equipment manufactured by others. I also correspond with clients and coworkers constantly, which involves meetings and conference calls. It's very important to maintain great relationships with everyone you work.

What I Love About My Job

I get to aid clients in completing a goal or vision. I love getting to see my work implemented and making something better than when it started. I also get to visit many locations for projects I'm working on to determine existing site conditions, most of which are not accessible to the public.

Career Pathway

I received my Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering with a minor in Aerospace from Montana State University. Shortly after finishing school, I found a position with Coffman Engineers in their Industrial Mechanical Department. I then studied for and obtained my Professional Engineers License.

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Most Important Skills Needed

Communication. An engineering consultant must be able to communicate effectively and clearly both verbally and written. Clients come to you, as the expert, looking for advice and solutions.

Critical Thinking. Being able to come up with multiple solutions to a single problem. Understanding how one solution may create conflicts with other items already in place.

Analytical/math skills. Manipulating formulas and creating new calculations. These are used to determine correct sizing of anything from motors and bearings to HVAC equipment.

Mechanical Aptitude. Being able to visualize how pieces go together. Understanding how to manipulate objects in 3D. Interest in what physically makes water, heat, gears, move.

Science and Engineering Practices I Use

Machine Design
Mechanics of Materials
Statics/Dynamics

Technology and Equipment I Use

2D/3D Modeling Programs
Engineering Calculation Software
Survey/measuring equipment

Education Background Needed

A four-year degree from an accredited college/university is required to begin the Professional Engineer licensure process. You become an engineer-in-training (E.I.T.) after completing the Fundamentals of Engineering exam. Then, you work towards becoming a professional engineer (P.E.) by obtaining four years of qualifying engineering experience and passing the Principles and Practice of Engineering Exam.

Salary

Median Annual Wage, Spokane County: $87,954
Source: WA STEM Labor Market and Credential Data Dashboard