

FRED SCHIPP

Technological Trouble: Policing the Electronic Empire

Graduate: Class of 1979 Occupation: Electrical Engineer
By Tyler Gress, Spring of 2011

You could summarize Fred Schipp's role in society as an “electrical engineer”, but such a general description would bely the fascinating niche that Schipp fills in a world that increasingly continues to embrace technology. Schipp plays the role of counterfeit electronic parts Subject Matter Expert of the Missile Defense Agency's Quality and Safety organization (MDA-QS). In other words, he formulates procedures to prevent counterfeit electronic components from being utilized in Missile Defense Agency hardware. He works in the Crane Division (NSWC Crane, located in Crane, Indiana) of the Naval Surface Warfare Center.

Counterfeit electronic parts are purchased by unknowing consumers every day and constitute a portion of a billion dollar industry. People modify used parts and try to illegally resell them to make money. Because of the threat posed to the MDA from the risk of the MDA's suppliers buying counterfeit products from these type of people, Schipp's-along with many others'-mission is to figure out how to sabotage the wrongdoers' plans to sell illegal parts to the government.

A “typical” week on the job for Schipp can offer diverse experiences. One day he might embark upon an impromptu trek to one of his company's parts suppliers and evaluate their methods for buying their parts and testing them; another day he might try to help impose requirements upon part suppliers to elude counterfeit parts. A typical week for Schipp, therefore, does not exist. What Schipp enjoys most about his job is working with several organizations to develop larger requirements and documents.

Of course, Schipp did not acquire the job he has today without going to high school. What Schipp enjoyed most about his career at Forest Park were the opportunities to spend time with friends and to participate in clubs. When it comes to making friends, he says, “The best friendships develop when people are 'trapped' together and forced to cooperate.” He finished high school ranked second in his class of 1979.

After high school, Schipp enrolled in Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering. Upon graduating in 1983, he earned a position at NSWC Crane as an electrical engineer supporting the Electrostatically Supported Gyro Navigation (ESGN) program, which allows Ohio class submarines to navigate the ocean waters. He held this job from 1983-1994, and afterwards he worked at Kimball Electronics from 1994-2006 as a product engineer for a variety of truck, SUV, and minivan anti-locking braking systems.

Highlights of Schipp's careers after high school include having the chance to take part in some intriguing programs, as well as venturing to new places, including Capitol Hill, NASA Headquarters, and facilities in over 20 states. Highlights from his time at Kimball involved dealing with production emergencies promptly and efficiently.

To aspiring FP graduates, Schipp says that intellect has importance but is not the most vital integrant for prosperity. Virtues he deems more valuable include the following: show no fear toward trying something new just because you may not succeed at first; do not sulk after making a mistake, but instead learn from it, and do not fear being wrong again; rather than go through the motions, implicate why you work, how to work more efficiently, and the results from working more efficiently; and embrace optimism over pessimism.

When all the work is done, Schipp partakes a simple life at home with his wife. His two children both attend college, both following their father's footsteps in terms of success. At the unpredictable workplace or the tranquil family life, one constant remains: labeling Fred Schipp simply as an "electrical engineer" is an understatement when taking his stamp on the world into consideration.