



Ryan McCavigan

Head of
New Product
Development

What did you study and how did you end up working for Interface?

I left St. Michael's Grammar school at 16 with the idea to become an engineer. I went to SRC (Portadown) and studied an Advanced GNVQ alongside the practical NVQ 2&3. I served my mechanical engineering apprenticeship in Huhtamaki for 5 years. In the last 2 years of my apprenticeship I studied a HNC in Mechanical Engineering. Once I completed my HNC and apprenticeship, I left Huhtamaki for pastures new and joined Interface as a mechanical engineer. In the first few years I undertook a degree from the Open University. Alongside that I wanted to continue to grow my practical skills, so I became a Multi-Skilled Engineer by achieving an NVQ3 in Electrical Engineering. All of this was to make my everyday working life easier.

What function do you currently work for?

After 7 years as an engineer within Interface, there was a new opportunity internally to take on a role in New Product Development. This was an area I knew nothing about but seemed exciting. This was a completely new role to what I was used to, from working under machines and getting dirty, to now sitting in an office answering emails and having meetings. I had to learn a whole new way of thinking and set of skills. My engineering background kind of allowed me to be creative and solve problems so this came in useful. But otherwise I felt like a fish out of water.

What previous roles have you had with Interface?

I started looking at courses that could potentially help me break down some of the fears I was having, like presenting to people, managing projects and writing formal emails to executives etc. So, I took on a Prince2 Project Management course, Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and some practical courses and programmes in Queens University, such as Emerging Leaders and the Mini MBA programme. This equipped me with some practical knowledge as well as theory on how to handle situations and to grow in the environment I found myself. This leads me to the now, I am still in NPD within Interface and find myself currently studying an executive MBA in Queens, my current job title is New Product Development Manager EMEA.

What would you say to someone considering a career in Interface?

If I were to travel back in time to give my 16-year-old self some advice, I would probably try to convince myself not to worry about what everyone else thinks of you. You do not necessarily need the degree from Queens to be successful. Experience is every bit as useful as the degree. Everyone has their own talents and not being the most gifted academically does not mean you cannot become the most creative, most enthusiastic, most passionate member in the team. "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid", Albert Einstein.