



Meet Peter Bannister: a volunteer case study

Chairing a Technical and Professional Network (TPN) has allowed Peter to tailor technical events around his area of specialism, widen his skill set and even raise the profile of his employer, Asalus Medical Instruments.

Volunteering as Chair of an IET TPN

Peter Bannister, Head of Operations at Asalus Medical Instruments, volunteers as Chair of the IET's Healthcare Technical Network (HTN). This role includes overseeing the community and committee meetings, responding to emails and keeping momentum going on future event planning.

He originally became aware of the network through work colleagues, who recommended he join the committee. Having seen the positive contribution the HTN had made to their work, he decided it was a good fit for his own career.

What the role entails

The amount of time Peter dedicates to this role ebbs and flows, depending on events taking place. He is supported by a group of IET staff who, amongst other things, help with event logistics, media promotion and membership interaction.

On average he tries to block out two to three hours a week to focus on his work as chair, responding to emails and overseeing the upcoming events.

"It's not an overly onerous role if you've got a committee that knows what it's doing and everyone is playing their part in arranging events," he explains.

A unique proposition

Peter believes volunteering for an IET technical network is a unique proposition. Volunteering for a community that ties in closely with his area of specialism gives him an opportunity to tailor events aimed directly at that audience.

"They're genuinely relevant topics that we cover, using our own contacts to run events around the kinds of things we run in to on a day-to-day basis," he says.

Organising technical events relevant to your career

"We might run an event around a new medical device development that is relevant to engineers working in the healthcare technology sector, rather than pick some theoretical topic that might be of more general interest," he continues.

"There's a couple of events we're planning to host in the next 12 months that reflect the personal work of committee members. For example, Anil Vaidya, who's been shortlisted for the X Prize Tricorder competition, wanted to put on an event tailored around medical start-ups. He's lined up several people from the product development side and past IET president and HTN committee member Mike Short has brought someone in from a regulatory background.



Through my own company's contacts I was able to get a venture capitalist investor to take part as well.

"Working as part of the HTN allows us to put together more technical events that are relevant to our community's daily work."

Supporting your professional development

As well as supporting the healthcare engineer community, volunteering for the HTN has also supported Peter in his own career and professional development.

As he works for a small company he believes he's been able to add new experiences to his résumé that he might have otherwise lacked.

"With a small company you get the freedom and responsibility to do a lot more, but you don't necessarily have the formal career development support that you might have at a larger company," Peter explains. "Volunteering for the HTN, and later becoming its chair, means I've been able to attend to other aspects of my career development that aren't necessarily relevant to what I do with my current employer. It widens my horizons and gives me access to a broader range of contacts."

How volunteering can also benefit your employer

Both Peter and his employer also believe that working with the HTN benefits the company too.

"I support Peter's work as HTN chair as it provides opportunities for strategic leadership that complement his role at Asalus," says Dr Dominic Griffiths, Managing Director at Asalus Medical Instruments. "The time commitment is relatively minimal and often doubles as networking and CPD. His work with the TPN brings added value to Asalus by putting the company on the same platform as established multinational companies whose employees also volunteer for the IET."

Add some prestige to your CV

As well as ticking a lot of boxes in regards to professional development and benefits to your employer, Peter highlights that volunteering for the HTN is also very rewarding. He also enjoys the immediate sense of feedback that comes from his work and is proud of the prestige that comes with this role.

"I derive a considerable amount of pride from being able to represent the IET through my role as chair of the HTN committee; it is consistent with my overall aim to excel in all aspects of my career as a healthcare engineering professional. I get a lot of satisfaction and also tangible benefits from being involved in this committee and I truly believe it's a great thing to be part of," he concludes.



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