Words of Advice:

Construction is a constantly changing industry where no two projects are the same and wherever how to do it work is constantly being improved and new methods created. As a CEM grad focus on working in a team environment and in finding solutions to issues that arise on a project site. Being able to excel at both the office work, checking quality hold points and managing our subcontractors is essential in order to be able to analyze and review submittals/RFIs and help solve conflicts, you need to understand how the business building goes together. The business electives were also more useful than I anticipated – I didn’t realize I’d be responsible for writing and reviewing contracts as much as I do. All of the team-projects we did were also very representative of how things work on the job site. My project has about 10 full-time engineers/project managers, and since we’re together for about 10 hours a day, it’s important to cooperate with one another.

Words of Advice:

Ask a lot of questions! Working on a project of this size and caliber has been mind boggling, and there’s some engineering feats that I’ve never seen before. It’s a lot to take in, but you’ll never understand the whole picture if you don’t ask questions.

Benefits of the CEM Degree:

The CEM degree helped to establish a strong foundation for technical skills required to understand and functional in the construction industry. Most importantly of all, the degree taught me how to adapt and to never stop learning.

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Benefits of the CEM Degree:

Aside from allowing you to take technical (construction and engineering) and non-technical (business, management and law) coursework, the CEM program enables individuals with different backgrounds (studying in various programs all interrelated, to work together in both small and large groups, towards a common goal). This is great for developing interpersonal skills, learning how to work effectively and manage work in teams.

At the time when I was in the program, I didn’t have a full appreciation of that particular aspect – but hey, I learned from it – and that’s what getting an education is all about.

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A Day in the Life of a Construction Engineering & Management (CEM) Graduate

Jason Tartaglia 2010

Job Title: Engineer II - ACS/RCS/Special Design Company:
Peri Formwork Systems, Inc.

Job Description:
As a design engineer I work with concrete formwork contractors to design a system that is unique to the building structure and fits the desired schedule of the project. This process involves understanding the structure, the construction process as well as the construction schedule. Many times our systems are designed to construct a new typical floor every 2 to 3 days.

When necessary, I am also responsible for assembly and installation of the concrete system. This involves supervising a crew to assemble the concrete forms and work platforms as well as install the system onto the structure so further construction can be completed.

Depending on the stage of a project my typical day can be very different. If a new project is in the design phase I am communicating with project personnel to complete the design of a system that fits their needs. This process involves a large amount of AutoCAD design. If our system is being installed, my typical day involves being on-site to aid in the installation of the system. Once a project is progressing, my typical day involves troubleshooting any problems that arise during the construction process.

What I enjoy most about my position is that I am responsible for not only the physical design of a system, but also how this system fits into the entire construction process. It is my goal to design a custom system that is cost efficient, easy to use and structurally sound.

Benefits of the CEM Degree:
My CEM degree has given me knowledge of structural design; allowing me to assist with design of temporary structures. Finally, the construction specific courses gave me insight as to the contracts and specifications that are used on this project.

Lisa Alban 2011

Job Title: Project Engineer
Company: Manhattan Construction Company

Job Description:
My major responsibilities include quality control and subcontract management. A typical day for me often includes working with various subcontractors. I need to make sure any questions they have are answered so they can proceed with their work. This means reviewing drawings and details to answer their questions or submitting a request for information to the owner on the subcontractor’s behalf. I am frequently inspecting installed products in the building for several hours a day to make sure that the quality installed meets the specifications set from the owner. In order to QC a construction project effectively, you first check the paperwork on an proposed product to make sure this meets the specification. Once a product is approved by the owner, I make sure the subcontractor installs the specified product and meets the quality standards set forth on the project. I am constantly working with both the owner and the subcontractor to make sure a high quality product is obtained and that the client is satisfied with the work. My favorite thing about working in construction is that there is a new challenge every day. There is always a question that needs to be answered or a scenario where a creative solution needs to be determined.

Benefits of the CEM Degree:
CEM helped me gain a basic knowledge in the principals of managing a construction site. I learned how to keep up with schedules to keep a project on time and budget. CEM also taught me the basics needed to get started working in construction. The CEM program made it easy to obtain internships to get the on the job training required to be successful in this industry.

Joshua Zilke 2012

Job Title: Field Engineer
Company: Fluor, Inc.

Job Description:
My major responsibility is to assist project managers and superintendents on hot-topic tasks. These items include writing work plans, creating shop drawings, field inspections, and managing subcontractors. On a typical day I generally arrive at 6am and review emails. All field personnel including myself attend a safety and planning meeting at 6:30am. After the meeting, I review items I am working on with my supervisors and then get to work. Normally, I venture onto the job site about once a day, the visit last anywhere from 1 hour to 3 hours depending on the tasks I have. Around 3pm, I try to get back to my desk to work on outstanding items until 5pm when the workday ends.

Benefits of the CEM Degree:
The CEM degree gave me a knowledge of construction plans, means, and methods. I am able to understand how the work is being built. Also, the CEM degree has given me knowledge of structural design; allowing me to assist with design of temporary structures. Finally, the construction specific courses gave me insight as to the contracts and specifications that are used on this project.