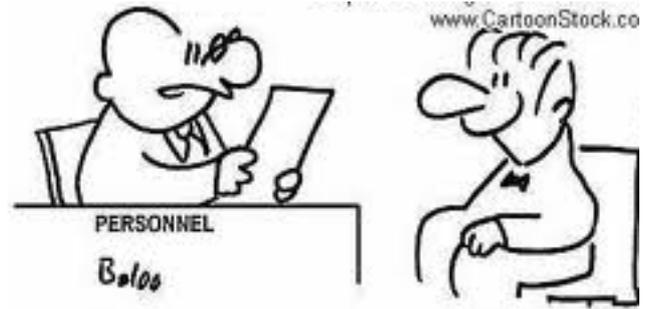


The Master's Degree Conundrum



"Well, I guess a master's degree is a master's degree, even if it is in skateboarding."

Masters degree especially in mechanical

engineering a few years back used to symbolize a gateway, I used to hear many students saying, "if not anything else, I will get a job in teaching ". Many top notch MNC companies used to display jobs 'Only for ME/ Mtech degree holders

However then what happened is what many people never account for in their calculations, 'A recession' along with around a 300% increase in 'ME/ MTech' seats across the board. This creates a two fold situation, job numbers fall down, and the number of aspirants increase, 3 years back even if fresher opening was advertised for a Masters degree holder, max 10 - 15 candidates used to show up, today they have stopped advertising, as companies fear that 200 - 300 candidates may show up at the same time.



"Unfortunately, in this job market guys like you have dropped to nine cents a dozen."

I am writing this article basically for those who have figuratively already jumped into the well, i.e. those who are holders of a Masters degree, or those who are pursuing and about to graduate in the next year.

First of all I would like to tell you that, all is not doom and gloom, if you look around, people are getting jobs, they are getting a break, even if it is taking time.

I always say, if you want a job, follow the person who recently got a job and try to analyze why he or she got the job.

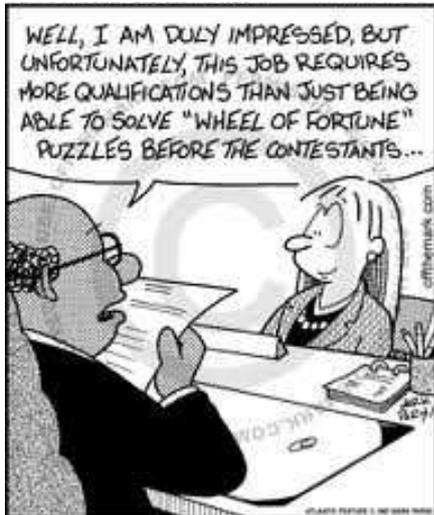
Double edge sword: I always remind many, that the Masters degree is both helpful in getting an entry, but it also can work to your disadvantage, what is a master's degree... It is basically a statement of intent... you have chosen your field of work, you were not satisfied being just a

you cannot go to a job interview having the same knowledge level of B.E. degree holder !!

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Mechanical engineer, you choose to rise and say I am a Mechanical Design Engineer... hence when you show intent, you should back it up with requisite knowledge.



I have said this enough times, still I will repeat, if you want a job in FEA or Design feild, ASA (Advanced Stress Analysis) is a must.. you should know the core concepts of the subject..



otherwise, a B.E. degree holder knows SOM (Strength of Materials), what is the difference if you appear for a interview saying I only know SOM.. you need to show that extra knowledge, that does not mean you give up on SOM !! you revise both SOM and ASA..

Project: You just cannot in an interview say that I do not know this aspect about my Masters thesis, the thesis project is the highlight of your resume, you should know each and every aspect about it. here are some core things you should instinctly know about your project,

1. Material aspects (all properties)
2. Which kind of analysis? (linear / non linear)
3. If non linear, why non linear?
4. Which element is used, why it was used ?
5. Free Body Diagram of the analysis done
6. What did you achieve doing the project?

The project, is the gateway into you for the company, it reflects how hard you worked, did you have an analytical depth, whether you can deliver something meaningful or not. And unfortunately for those who for some reason or the other do not end up doing a relevant project, I suggest start working on one the moment you graduate, you just cannot ask for a job in FEA, if the highlight of your project is some maching process in some chemical engineering company,, that can get you a job on the shop floor, but if you want a job in FEA, get a FEA project on your resume.

Update your knowlegde

The moment an engineer does not get a job after graduation, and as months pass by the next feeling that come to their mind is, how will this gap look on my resume. Look in a recesssionary environment, companies do understand that there will be a gap in employment, hence it is not an issue, however the main thing they will look at is how did you utilize the gap, or the time at

hand. hence it is very important to keep on updating your knowledge, learn something new, do some new projects, and importantly do not drag a project, if a project can be completed in 15 days do not show on your resume that it took you 2 months to do that, do not just fill your resume to remove gaps, sometimes just saying 'few months went into job search, after which I started updating my knowledge by doing this project', is a good answer.

So key is 'Learn' and keep on 'Learning'.



People Do Get Jobs

There is always a tendency to seek data that suits your convictions, it is easy to say 'Jobs only are not there' or 'Jobs are got only by refrence' or 'Masters degree is useless', and then sit with those on are equally jobless like you and ponder over the same, and feel depressed.

Just remember you are hearing the same stories of despair, because you are sitting with those people who have those stories of depair, and because those who got a job, do not have the time to sit with you and share their stories of positivity. Look around you people are getting a job, they are getting interview calls.

At our institute itself, if I observe, around 60% of the students have got the job, and one thing common to all of those you have cracked the job interview is 'CONSISTENCY', day in and day out, they used to learn something, try something new in FEA, repeat their previous work, read fundamentals, and just keep on revising and learning.



Remember cracking interview is more of a matter of confidence, and confidence comes through practice.

Ultimately it is a simple equation

$$\begin{aligned} & \text{Good FEA Projects + Masters Degree = Strong Resume} \\ & \text{Strong Resume + Persistence = Interview Calls} \\ & \text{Interview Calls + Interview Calls... + Practice = Confidence} \\ & \text{Confidence + Updated Learning = Strong Fundamentals} \\ & \text{Strong Fundamentals + Good FEA Projects = Job} \end{aligned}$$