

PS Asks

Cameron Clark

PS: Tell readers a little bit about your educational background and how you came into your current position with Echostar.

Cameron: A lifelong aspiration has been to go into management at the corporate and/or regional level because of a fascination with making changes and improvements to processes and programs. After I finished a business degree at Oregon State, I found myself recruited as a young manager in a large-scale manufacturing facility using Spanish to manage operations and safety. After leaving safety for a period to complete a master's program, I was again recruited as a regional safety director in construction, again, primarily using Spanish. While looking for even more growth opportunities, I found EchoStar to be a great fit. Training offered by ASSE and the Rocky Mountain Education Center have been critical in my professional development.

PS: What prompted you to join ASSE and get involved as a volunteer?

Cameron: A great mentor of mine, Ray Clement, introduced me to ASSE and urged me to get involved as a student and volunteer. I feel that learning is contagious and ASSE offers opportunities to develop as well as give back by developing and mentoring others.

PS: What has been the most rewarding part of being an active ASSE member?

Cameron: The vast benefits of being active in ASSE are difficult to verbalize; however, a desire to dedicate myself to the profession is a shared passion with other members in ASSE. There is a faster learning curve while staying involved in ASSE that has developed my talents and expertise.

PS: You are a proponent of the Society's annual conference. How many PDCs have you attended and what have you gained professionally by attending these annual events?

Cameron: So far I have only had the opportunity to attend Safety 2010, but plan to attend many more in the future. My article in the Young Professionals in ASSE newsletter published in December 2010 goes into great detail on the "do's and don'ts" of attending the PDC. [Attending PDC] is perhaps one of the most effective ways to immerse yourself in the industry, find out what others are doing that does and doesn't work, make friends through networking, and rededicate and reinvigorate yourself.

PS: What advice would you give a person new to the Society/profession about how to get the most out of PDC?

Cameron: My advice is: DO: Attend the pre- and post-conference events, approach your instructors, be active and present, choose sessions wisely, be proactive and in control. DON'T: undermine your abilities by being insecure, attend only familiar topics, overwhelm your schedule, step outside your comfort zone, miss the night activities, be overly critical because no conference anywhere is perfect.

PS: Are you attending Safety 2011? If so, what are you looking forward to most? What topics are you hoping to learn more about while at PDC? And, why?

Cameron: Yes, one thing that I'm looking forward to is meeting other professionals who hopefully are in a similar industry as me. I would like to finish my certificate in safety management, as well as find best practices by others that I can implement in my own organization. Topics that I would specifically like to learn most about are electrical and radio frequency safety.

PS: As a young professional, how do you feel your ASSE membership has helped to improve/advance your career?

Cameron: ASSE membership has helped me to learn what is expected of a safety professional. Also, how to provide the kind of expertise and knowledge that other managers are looking for without necessarily being externally driven to act. I've also learned to communicate more effectively, step outside of myself, and to learn the safety profession and what industry standards are and how they are to be interpreted and implemented.

PS: How do you see yourself playing a role in the profession 20 years from now?

Cameron: This is a tough question. I see myself as an ASSE PDC presenter and/or perhaps an instructor in a newly formed program or curriculum teaching young professionals not just about safety, but how to manage and lead a safety program.

PS: Following on that, what advice would you give your fellow SH&E professionals about getting the most out of their ASSE membership?

Cameron: My advice to others would be to be as proactive as possible. To be happy and enjoy the profession, we must be quick on our feet and ready to learn and adapt. Networking in all areas (strategically, operationally and personally) is essential. Be hungry to learn and anxious to develop yourself.

PS: What additional tools/resources would you like to see ASSE provide to younger SH&E professionals such as yourself?

Cameron: I think that more mentoring opportunities would be appreciated on a national level, a special interest group level or even on a chapter level. If more experienced safety professionals were given incentives or just inspired to mentor younger professionals, we would see less turnover in the industry and better prepared young professionals.

PS: Who have been your mentors in the SH&E profession? Talk about their influence in your career to date.

Cameron: Some mentors of mine have been Ray Clement, Mike Dees, Craig Sure, William Murray, Robert Robertson and Rick Zellen. Their influence has been substantial over the past several years. They have provided me with learning opportunities and have made the job very enjoyable and rewarding. I silently thank them on a regular basis for their kindness, patience and concern for my learning and development and look forward to returning their favors in the future.

PS: If you could ask a question(s) to a more experienced SH&E professional, what would you ask?

Cameron: How can safety professionals better position themselves as organizational risk and internal safety consultants?

PS: How do you stay informed about industry news?

Cameron: Sources of information for me have been Professional Safety, BLR reports and e-mails, OSHA.gov, ASSE special interest group newsletters, and my ASSE Denver Chapter.

PS: What do you view as an important or “hot-button” current issue within the industry?

Cameron: The hot topic right now is how to improve leadership skills in safety, communication and internal organizational networking. SH&E professionals must learn to lead. Even the best safety professionals with poor leadership skills will find themselves realizing only short-term and short-lived success.

Cameron Clark is the U.S. regional uplinks safety manager for an international broadcasting corporation specializing in satellite operations, teleports and fiber network used for video and data distribution and backhaul by commercial, government and military customers. He has almost 7 years’ experience in safety and health in construction, manufacturing and general industry and holds a B.A. from Oregon State University and an M.A. in organizational development from Azusa Pacific University. Cameron also has more than 10 years of Spanish translation and training experience.