



ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTING
ENGINEERING COMPANIES
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Young Professionals Committee Guide

A guide by the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies
British Columbia's Young Professionals Group



Young Professionals Committee

So, you're thinking about starting a Young Professionals Committee (or maybe a Grad Group, or Early Career Professional Board... you pick, but we will refer to it in this document as a YPC). Before you dive into the details of your YPC structure, roles and initiatives, take a step back to reflect on why you are starting a YPC.

Below we have listed some common "whys" that might align with your needs. Each of these "whys" points to subsequent sections of this document which contain ideas and experience that will help you tackle initiatives targeted to that "why".

Why are we starting a YPC?

- To foster connectivity and a sense of community between YPs at our company
- To help YPs obtain their professional accreditation
- To encourage and provide opportunities for YPs to improve their soft skills
- To give back to the broader community
- To improve the technical expertise of YPs
- To impact our business

The following sections lay out the next steps for starting your YPC, from writing a business plan through to ideas for events and organization structure.

GETTING OFF THE GROUND

Getting your YPC off the ground can seem like a daunting challenge, but it will be well worth your effort. If there is nothing in place yet, you have the opportunity to break ground at your company. Grasp the bull by the horns and get ready for some hard work! We recommend following these steps in the order shown but be open to chasing opportunities as they arise.

Find a champion

Once you have determined what you are trying to achieve by starting a YPC, your next step is to find support within your company. From experience, you will be most effective in getting your YPC off the ground if you have the support of a senior staff member. This person (or group of people) should be someone you trust and can bounce ideas off. They can provide comments on draft documents you produce as well as serving as a sounding board. Use them to help convince other members of the senior leadership that your group will add value to the company.

Write a business plan

Your senior leaders will want to see how much money you expect your YPC will require, as well as what value you will provide to the company. You can provide this information in a business plan. Your business plan could contain the following information:

- Introduction (What the business plan is about?)
- Current status (Is there anything similar at your company at the moment?)
- Key issues (Why is there a need for the group?)
- Proposed YPC (How many people will be on the committee? What are their roles?)
- Budget (Do you need money for activities? How much? Will staff use their own time to plan or attend events or do you need a downtime code/allowance?)
- Value provided (How will the company improve once the group is up and running?)

Remember that you will be held accountable for meeting the goals set out within your plan. Another important consideration is just how busy the senior leaders at

your company are – you should focus on making your business plan as clear and concise as possible. Aim to keep the document to two or three pages.

It is a great idea to ask some other YP's to get involved to help you through the development of the business plan. This will ensure you are putting forward ideas that represent a wider group than just yourself.

Take the idea to senior leaders

Once you have a supporter (or supporters) and a plan, it's time to approach the senior leaders at your company and pitch the plan. Depending on your company size, this might be you asking your CEO for 15 minutes of their time or talking to the executive administrator to be allotted some time at the next company board meeting. Talk to your senior leader champion to determine the best path forward within your organization. Good luck!

IDEAS FOR RUNNING YOUR GROUP

This section gives advice on activities you might want to organize with your group, approaches that have worked well in existing YPC's and other miscellaneous information. They are arranged following the same "whys" in the introduction to help you see what might be most applicable in your company.

Foster connectivity and community between YPs at your company

Focus on communication and networking:

- Publish a YP focused newsletter or posts on your company's intranet portal
- Host team building events (like a pub night or sporting event)
- Set up a communication team (through Yammer, Slack, Teams, etc.)
- Create a buddy program

Help YPs obtain their professional accreditation

Focus on sharing information:

- Create study groups
- Develop an info center
- Provide mentorship or a mentoring program
- Host lunch and learns
- Provide information on external courses
- Explore existing programs, if applicable (such as EGBC's Member-in-Training Certification Program)

Encourage and provide opportunities for YPs to improve soft skills

Focus on development plans:

- Host networking events
- Provide info on internal / external training opportunities
- Train managers to provide feedback
- Encourage participation in external organizations like Toastmasters

Give back to the broader community

Focus on volunteering:

- Participate in local events
- Fundraise
- Reach out to local universities
- Promote volunteering on industry or technical committees and groups

Improve the technical expertise of YPs

Focus on training and knowledge sharing:

- Develop a technical mentorship program
- Host webinars or lunch and learns
- Create a program for YPs to shadow more experienced leaders
- Share information about internal / external courses and training programs
- Create a forum for documenting lessons learned

Impact your business

Focus on innovation and senior leadership:

- Have YPs attend / present at board or senior management meetings
- Help YPs understand the business
- Have a forum for YPs to share their ideas
- Host networking or internal mixer events

Tell us how it went!

If you have used this guide, please give feedback on it to any ACEC-BC YP rep. We'd love to improve it as people learn and grow, making sure that it contains the most useful information possible. If you learnt any lessons while starting your YPC that you think others could gain from, help us pass those on.