

I Am a Volunteer and I Do...

Richard Beasley



What activities have you undertaken as part of your volunteering

I am actually a “serial volunteer”. I started in around 2009 helping to organise talks for the Bristol Local Group, and eventually chairing the small organising committee that arrange around 6 2 hour events a year. I have been involved in a number of working groups, most notably on Systems Engineering competency. Firstly working on issuer 3 of the INCOSE UK competency brochure (in 2009-10), and then on the (international) Competency framework on which I was a lead author. This took much longer – 2011 until its initial publication in 2018. I also was involved in the first development of the SE body of knowledge, helping to author sections on “organising to do Systems Engineering. I also (2019-20) helped as an assessor of CSEP applications

I have also taken on a number of leadership positions. I was honoured to be asked to be President of INCOSE UK, which meant being on the UK council from 2012-2018 (President-elect, President and then Immediate Past President for two years each). During this

time I was MC of the INCOSE IS 2016 when it was in Edinburgh, representing the “home” chapter. Last year I became Deputy Director of Services for INCOSE, a position on the INCOSE board of directors, and from Jan 2021 for two years I will be the Director of Services.

As I said – I am a serial volunteer

What Originally inspired you to volunteer for INCOSE UK?

A sense of “giving back”. INCOSE is a volunteer led organisation, and I have got (significant) benefit from its activities, as I feel it is incumbent on me to help ensure the same opportunities are available to others. Not only is this about giving back, but also because I strongly believe in INCOSE’s mission to enable “a better world though a systems approach”.

What do you feel you get out of your volunteering?

This is more “selfish”, but beyond the benefits of INCOSE membership I have gained

1. It has helped my career progression in my company. To advance to a senior specialist role I need to be “recognised, nationally and internationally in my technical specialism. By being active on working groups and taking on a leadership role in a professional society like INCOSE that need has been well established
2. My work on the working groups has enabled me to deep, widen, and validate my knowledge. Working groups force you to reflect on your knowledge, and pick up an amazing amount from the other experts in the group.
3. I have got to know INCOSE better, and so am able to get more value from it by “knowing what’s going on”. I have been able to influence the activities to include issues that are important to me
4. It is personally rewarding. By being more involved you can build a closer and larger group of Systems Engineering contacts. Not only do I have a large number of contacts to work with / ask advice of on Systems Engineering contact, through my deeper contacts with other like-minded volunteers I have gained a number of personal friends

Do you have any advice or feedback to offer anyone who is considering volunteering?

Volunteering with INCOSE has been both professionally and personally very rewarding. I have learnt a lot, been proud to “give back” and see INCOSE advance with some small help from me, and have met and become friends with an incredible, generous, diverse and very smart group of other INCOSE volunteers from around the world.

Yes, it does require commitment and effort beyond the working day, but for me at least it has been immensely rewarding.