

## ▪ RISING PROFESSIONALS IN COST ENGINEERING ▪



### SPOTLIGHT ON **SUNNY GOKLANI**



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**S**unny Goklani is a project controls professional, with a masters in civil engineering from Texas A&M University, and a student of business analytics from Wharton Business School.

His experience includes project planning, strategy, and controls; for projects across various industry sectors and around the world including residential, commercial, industrial, infrastructure and defense ranging from \$0.4M-\$2.7B with varying contract types and delivery methods. His work is a means to manifest his vision of integrating complimentary disciplines to generate positive impact. He particularly derives his passion from integrating an engineering mindset and project controls principles with business strategy, data analytics, market insights, and technological innovation.

Sunny was born and raised in Ahmedabad, India. He pursued his bachelors in civil-construction from CEPT University (Center for Environmental Planning and Technology), where in addition to receiving awards and scholarships for his academic performance, he also served as academic secretary in student council. His experience at CEPT, taught him a lot about what leadership, specifically on how to form a vision, build a team, and deliver on details. During project training, he worked with L&T (Larsen & Toubro) toward construction of world's third largest open-die forging plant, in Hazira, Gujarat.

He started supervising field execution and over time helped the the project manager with formulating execution strategies based on actual

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performance. This effort led to productivity enhancement initiatives, which delivered splendid results. Over a span of just three months, efficiency of RMC plant operations improved by 46 percent and productivity of driven cast-in-situ piling jumped 23 percent. He presented the results to the regional leadership at L&T and proposed integrating field-level data analyses into the practice of project delivery. This experience solidified his interest in the field of analyses and strategy, which in project based environments, is held dear by project controls.

The pursuit for higher academic standards in

project analyses led him to Texas A&M, College Station; where he got his Master's in Civil Engineering, while also embracing courses from schools of business, technology, and public policy. Besides academics, he also served as Vice President of the Indian Graduate Student Association (IGSA), where his multiple achievements led to the organization receiving the highest honor of 'best student organization on campus' award from the university (competing with 800 organizations).

He applied various academic concepts in his internship with Jenkins Custom Homes, where he worked to establish and run an integrated project controls system with specifications, on a portfolio of 13 luxury custom homes in Austin. Upon graduation, he moved to Philadelphia to work with Amec Foster Wheeler, where he got an opportunity to lead project control efforts for an AFCEC project at Cape Canaveral.

He has now led planning and cost control efforts from concept-to-completion for two US Air Force (USAF) and National Park Services (NPS) projects; and completed both ahead of schedule and under budget, while also achieving exceptional client ratings. He has also led project control efforts for eight proposals worth \$500M+ with a win rate significantly over industry average. He takes pride in having developed and introduced process improvement tools, for smarter schedule updates, cost trend analysis, visualization techniques for financial forecasts, etc.

He is currently working on a space technology project with Lockheed Martin, where he manages cost control efforts, and briefs senior management on program's cost and schedule performance. As a part of the sophisticated program, he currently works with Primavera P6 (schedule), Deltek Cobra (EV), and Acumen Fuse (analytics), in addition to in-house cost control applications and cloud based project management solutions.

His manager, Jim Sobkowiak, EVP PSP, introduced him to AACE International, through a regional symposium in 2015, attending which opened the practice of project controls to him through a network of accomplished project controls professionals. Relevance of AACE's technical resources and quality of network led to his increased participation, while he also volunteered to take up organizational responsibilities. He took an active role by supporting the Rising Professionals Committee (RPC) in 2016, and served as the program chair for the Region-2 TCM Symposium in 2017. He was recently appointed as the chair of the Rising Professionals Committee (RPC) in April 2017. He is very excited to welcome new members to the RPC team. He looks at RPC as a think tank that can mold the shape that practice of project controls will take tomorrow. With technology advancing at lightning pace, he thinks this is the most opportunity time ever, in the timeline of the profession, to be involved in the committee.

Sunny was also very excited to be at the AACE Annual Meeting in Orlando from June 11-14. He particularly looked forward to the technical sessions showcasing application of new technologies in project controls, and the opportunity to discuss emerging themes with those who have implemented them first hand. He also presided at a discussion session and a roundtable on the 'Future of Project Controls and the RPC.' These meetings served as an agora that brought together the ideas about the future of project controls with professionals who are passionate to be at the driving seat for change.

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Specific to project controls, he looks at it being the means of using analytical skills to achieve strategic business goals. With the same data set, there are virtually unlimited ways to spot and analyze trends, and he believes the key to getting analytically creative in the process is to design implementation of passive learnings from various seemingly unrelated disciplines. In closing, therefore, he suggests to read different genres, acquire complimentary skills and sharpen your expertise on things you love to do outside work. They all come together, in the way you look at things, including project data. Outside work, he's personally into public speaking, creative writing, photography, equity research, comedy, theatre, and poetry. ♦