

Congratulations on launching a magazine to cover a neglected area of applied science. In addition to general career and business articles, *The Industrial Physicist* should address some of the key areas of physics that are simultaneously critical to fast-growing industries and ignored in academic publications. Examples related to my own product lines include nanoscale electronic devices, specialized devices for satellites and other rugged environments, photonics technology, propagation and noise in cellular telephone and personal-communications service bands, the physics of human speech and statistical pattern recognition. Other industrial practitioners could certainly offer their own lists of critical topics where state-of-the-art information is hard to acquire. Good luck with your endeavor!

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The appearance of this new magazine, *The Industrial Physicist*, is good news for us, the applied physicists. Now we can have the warm feeling that AIP and its member societies recognize the significance of their industrial members and not just the academic ones, as it often seemed previously. Secondly, this magazine may be able to foster the employment of physicists in industry (and elsewhere) and improve the image of physicists as inventors, innovators and practical problem solvers.

In today's climate of diminishing headcounts and the need to improve the bottom-line in industry, jobs are scarce and, compared to engineers, physicists find it ever more difficult to find jobs. Furthermore, salary scales for engineers are frequently higher than those for physicists for comparable jobs. Perhaps there is some level of prejudice in industry that physicists don't perform as well as engineers in many industrial positions. However, by training, physicists are very adaptive to new environments, critical-minded and good at solving

problems. There shouldn't be disadvantages for physicists seeking industrial positions.

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I am a physicist and APS member who, after the usual grounding in academic research, has worked in industry for more than ten years. The nature of my work has slowly shifted from the pursuit of new physics to the exploration of advanced technology and now to the focused development of potential products. This career gradient from physics to engineering is fairly typical I understand. Also, it seems to be accepted that the mean of the APS membership is drifting this way. We hear our colleagues at prominent industrial labs—institutions that in the past provided an opportunity to pursue basic research—tell us they must “become relevant” to their companies’ businesses. One must accept this shift as a fundamental reflection of changes in U.S. society.

As industrial physicists, our ability to pursue our work in the manner required for archival publication is reduced by the pressure from other goals. Also, our freedom to engage in the public arena of ideas can be limited by the proprietary nature of our work. On the other hand, we gain the opportunity to apply our physics training to important industrial problems that can lead to new or improved products and understanding and, hopefully, to the betterment of people and the environment.

The AIP, APS and other AIP member societies are to be commended for the recognition of this shift in the activities of their members by initiating *The Industrial Physicist* and by the recent formation of the APS Forum on Industrial and Applied Physics. This at least attempts to support physicists who may be engineers by profession, but who still maintain an intellectual and, yes, emotional connection to physics.

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