



AIST YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

David Kober, senior sales engineer



What first interested you about the steel industry?

I was introduced to the steel industry upon starting my professional career and working on a project with a facility near Mobile, Ala., USA. After getting an opportunity to tour the facility we were working with on this project, the sheer magnitude of the equipment was one of the first things that impressed me. However, the unique combination of the scale of the equipment along with the elegant complexity of the technology used to automate and monitor these processes was what inspired me to learn more about the steel industry.

What did you do as a student that enhanced your passion or understanding of the steel industry?

I obtained my B.S. degree in mechanical engineering with a business minor from Auburn University. I had the opportunity to work as a co-op student at an engine assembly plant. During this time, I was able to complement my coursework in learning the different applications of various grades of steel. My experience in the development of mechatronic applications later enhanced my passion for the steel industry, as I learned the importance of steel to these applications.

Did AIST's programs assist with your career advancement?

The System Automation Fundamentals course was one of the first AIST training conferences I attended. It helped me to translate my background in process automation of assembly lines to processes and systems within the steel industry. The annual AISTech conference has had a positive impact on my growth within my organization. In addition to coordinating my company's involvement with exhibiting at this

event, I had the opportunity to present a paper as a part of the technical conference. This paper was then included in the December 2019 issue of *Iron & Steel Technology*. I was also able to present a patented technological approach to coil-tracking verification at the inaugural AIST Digital Transformation Forum for the Steel Industry in 2019.

What advice do you have for students who are curious about pursuing something related to the steel industry?

One of the first things that I attempt to convey to younger engineers who may be interested in a career in the steel industry is the impressive advancements in technology that exist within the steel industry. The steel industry is not the same as it may have been conveyed in the past or through traditional media channels, but rather it's a technologically complex and environmentally conscious industry with vast career opportunities. The unique challenges that are presented within the steel industry provide an opportunity for a long and fulfilling career.

What are your plans for continued involvement in AIST?

I was able to serve as the Young Professional chair on both the Digitalization Applications Technology Committee and the Southeast Member Chapter. I am currently serving on the Young Professionals Steering Committee to help facilitate the growth of young professionals within the steel industry as well as their involvement with AIST activities. In addition to the annual AISTech conference, I also plan to continue participating in Technology Committee and Member Chapter events as they have proven to provide tremendous opportunities for networking and professional development. ♦



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