



AIST YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Michael Diana, Chief Operating Officer



What first interested you about the steel industry?

I was born and raised the son of a contractor, so working with heavy equipment was my first career/love. This love transferred into an interest in the steel industry after college because of the sheer industrial power of the equipment and technology. The industry as a whole had instantly excited me and after seeing it in person, I was hooked.

Describe the coursework and degrees that you have obtained. Did you participate in any of AIST's programs or attend AIST events as a student?

I obtained a B.S. degree in mechanical engineering from Penn State Erie, The Behrend College. This degree helped prepare me for the steel industry on both a manufacturing and pure science level. This degree stands out in my opinion because it allows you to learn a little bit of automation, programming, mechanical machine design, manufacturing, etc. You truly become a "Jack of all trades." I'm sad to say that AIST was an unknown entity to me in college, which is why I feel it is so important to spread the word of AIST to colleges today.

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

My passion grew even as a student thanks to a professor who came from heavy industry and furthered my education in manufacturing. As a part of my manufacturing courses, we toured Ellwood City Forge, which truly was incredible to witness. Once I graduated, steel was exactly where I wanted to be!

Did any AIST programs assist with your career advancement?

AIST was a great help in my career both with exposure and networking! Committees, chapters and AISTech are just some of the amazing opportunities this organization

has to offer; not to mention the multiple training courses I have been able to attend thanks to supportive managers/mentors. AIST is an excellent organization, and one that I plan to be involved in for the rest of my career! As the association has supported me, I will continue to support it so we can grow as an industry.

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

For any students interested in steel, my suggestion would be to get involved today and start with AIST. Steel is exciting, fun, explosive, innovative, technology driven and, because of technology, safer than it ever has been.

What are your plans for continued involvement in AIST?

Currently, I am the Young Professionals chair for the Electric Steelmaking Technology Committee, which is very exciting as the world moves toward an attempt at the electrification of steel processes. As my steel-specific experience grows, I hope to be more involved in attracting talent to AIST. I have a real passion for sharing my industry excitement with others and feel the best way I can assist AIST is to become a leader in attracting new talent!

What do you find unique and interesting about the steel industry? What do you enjoy the most about it?

What a difficult question to answer, because what isn't interesting about steel? If I try to narrow it down, I get the utmost enjoyment from the sheer power that it takes to form steel. But it's the people that truly make this industry what it is. Talk about some of the world's best and brightest, but also hardest working, personnel. The steel industry requires true "workers" and the people of steel make every day in the industry thrilling. ♦

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