

A full-page photograph of a steel mill interior. A worker in an orange long-sleeved shirt, green hard hat, and safety glasses is working on a large, rusted metal structure. The background shows the industrial environment with steel beams and machinery. The AIST logo is in the top left, and the AIST YP logo is in the top right.

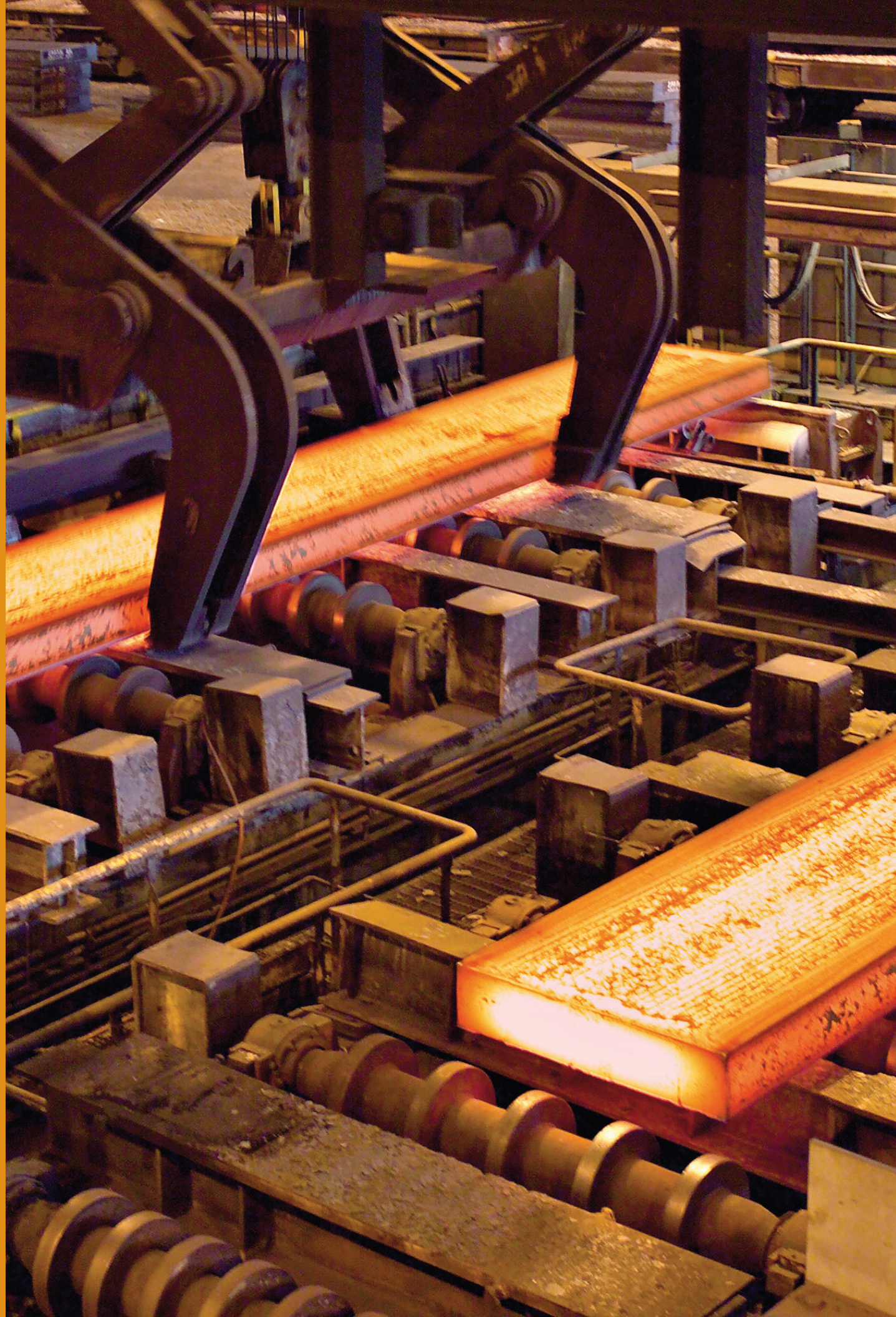
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BEST PRACTICES

Tips for Young Professionals Entering the
Steel Industry as Told by Your Peers!

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE



Background

The Association for Iron & Steel Technology (AIST) hosts a Young Professionals Roundtable at AISTech every year. The goal of the session is to provide young professional conference and exposition registrants a platform to connect and network with one another. At AISTech 2021, the theme for the breakout discussion was ‘Transition and Growth — Navigating Your Way with AIST.’ Young Professional attendees discussed the support they need to triumph through change and establish the foundation for successful careers.

Attendees were asked to reflect on a specific point within the early stages of their career, brainstorm resources that would have better supported them through that time and capture tactics they used to progress during that period.

From this group discussion, came unique insights and important lessons learned from young professionals that are in the early stages of their iron and steel career. It was a collective group of individuals passing along real-time advice to those that will come after them — the young professionals of tomorrow.

Purpose

We believe these young professionals’ advice will help future iron and steel industry newcomers anticipate speedbumps early on in their career before they even see them coming. We hope it’ll shed light on how one might be able to be a better employee, colleague and team member.

The advice may seem simple but doing the little things right can take you far, and we wish you a long and prosperous iron and steel career!



TIPS & ADVICE

We all learn in different ways. The attendees of the AISTech 2021 Young Professionals' Roundtable wanted to pass on these little pieces of advice, so you don't have to learn them the hard way. This list is intended to benefit you as you begin your new career.

Best of luck and remember — you have a friend who's looking out for you at AIST!

1. It's okay (and natural) to not know everything when you're first starting out. Be patient with yourself and accept the learning curve.

Ask a lot of questions. The only stupid question is the one that goes unasked.
2. Be a sponge! Do not try to become an expert right away. Seek exposure to attain a basic understanding of each area of steelmaking and learn the big picture — all the processes as well as the market.

As long as you learned something, you didn't fail. Just make sure you apply what you learned in future scenarios, so you don't repeat your mistakes.
3. Be a sponge! Do not try to become an expert right away. Seep exposure to attain a basic understanding of each area of steelmaking and learn the big picture — all the processes as well as the market.

Get your hands dirty — it's a steel mill!
4. Seek hands-on training — it is the best and fastest way to learn.



TIPS & ADVICE

5. Good communication is key.

Learn how to communicate and know your audience. Understand how to adjust your delivery/tone/communication style depending on who you're talking to. Learn how to communicate and know your audience. Understand how to adjust your delivery/tone/communication style depending on who you're talking to.
6. Teamwork really does make the dream work. Welcome advice and trust your colleagues — you're all working toward the same goal.
7. Build relationships early!
8. Make cross-functional connections.
9. Look for a mentor or mentorship opportunities to begin charting a career path.
10. Learn what you're passionate about.

Understand the expectations on both sides. Build personal relationships and recognize boundaries.
11. Know how to approach and interact with management.

Understand the expectations on both sides. Build personal relationships and recognize boundaries.
12. Know where you are! You still have a lot to learn and a long way to go, so stay humble and continue to absorb the knowledge and experience of those around you.
13. Put in the work — the more you make an effort, the more rewarding your experience becomes and the more you are rewarded.



14. Explore different strategies to learn (look at purchase orders, invoices, billing languages, etc.) and understand how data is collected in your area of work.

Get out of your comfort zone and get engaged in AIST. Connect with members — attend Technology Training Conferences and Member Chapter meetings. Immerse yourself in the culture to get the most return for your time and energy.

- Utilize the collaborative nature of the steel industry — learn from other companies' problems and solutions.
- Take some time to explore AIST.org and the many resources available — there are a lot!
- Utilize the Digital Library.

15. Know your limits.

Push yourself, but also recognize the difference between confidence vs. arrogance, and realistic vs. ambitious.



"I have been in the steel industry for about a year now, and it is a very exciting industry to be in! I love that I am always learning and am able to experience new things from the scrap yard all the way through finishing. At Gerdau, I am empowered to do anything that I want to do, and I am constantly pushed and challenged to grow not only professionally but personally as well!"

Brooke McLaughlin
Meltshop Facilitator, Gerdau Special Steel
North America Fort Smith Mill



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