

Strengthening IEEE's connections with industry

Blog 1

Join me in discussing how the IEEE can create stronger connections with industry at our next town meeting at 8 AM PT on July 20, 2021. Register for this event here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/2116262350266/WN_Rf_oXJLPQmGOhB9A-OuAYw

Declining Industry Connections with the IEEE

The organizations that would become the IEEE were founded by people who used technology to create wealth, employment and a better way of life for many people. These founders and early members included Thomas Alva Edison, Alexander Graham Bell and Nikola Tesla. The practical application of science is what engineers do and applying scientific methods to meet human needs is what technology-oriented businesses do.

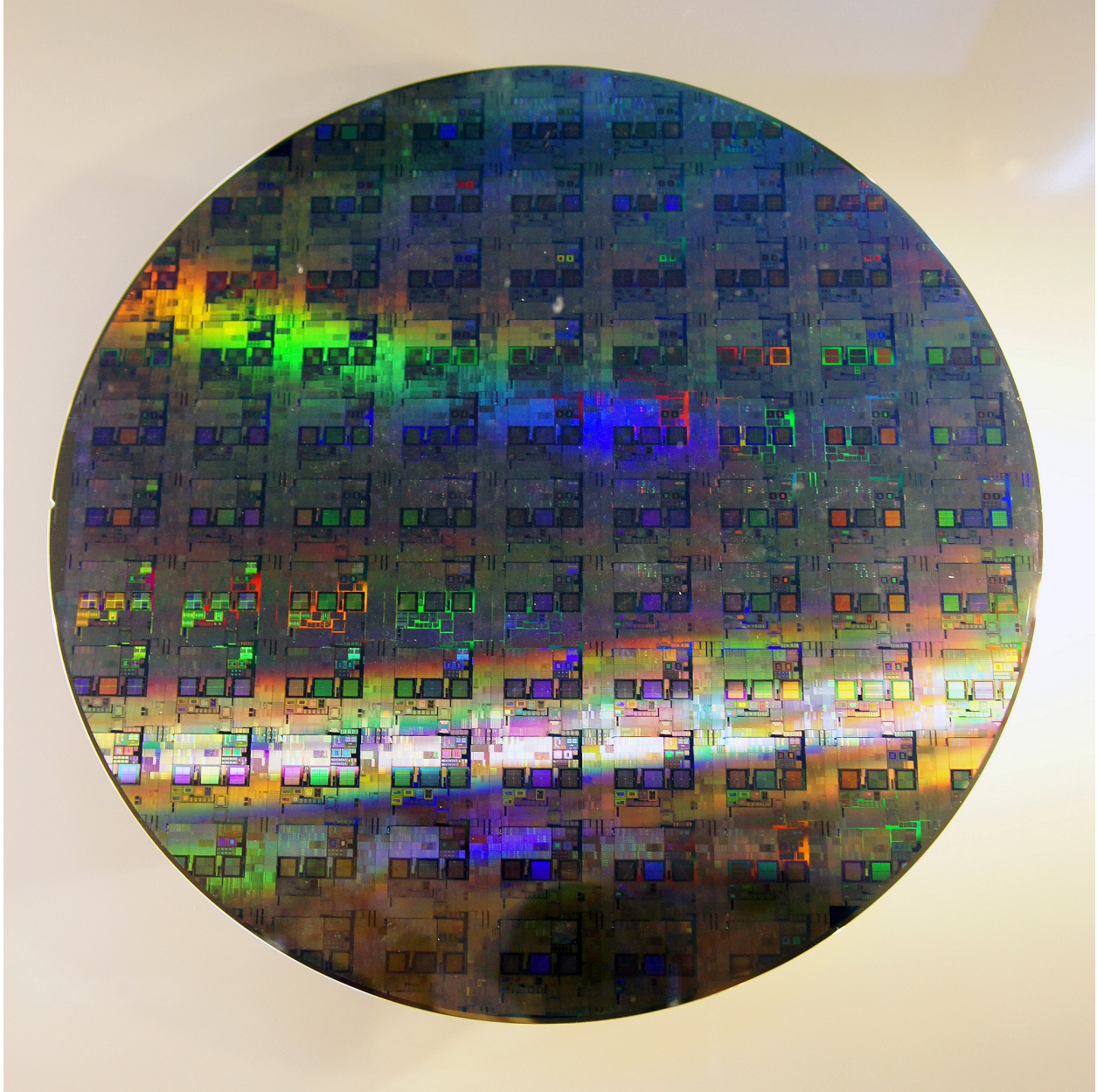
Technology oriented industries were strong supporters of engineering societies in the past and IEEE needs the support of these industries and companies today. Much has changed in the technologies that support modern businesses and the way companies run, the services that they offer and the relationship between engineer employees and the companies that they work for.

IEEE has lost a significant percentage of its industry membership over the last 20 years. This loss of industry members reflects changes in the engineering profession, the companies that employ engineers and the ability of the IEEE to provide the value to these companies and their employees that they were able to provide in the past.

IEEE has a strong connection to its members in academia and that connection is the basis of much of the revenue coming into the IEEE. However, if IEEE continues to lose its connections to industry, IEEE loses its relevance to the people and organizations who generate wealth from technology. Industry supports the work at universities and hires the students trained in universities. For IEEE to provide the greatest value for its academic members, it also needs to maintain strong connections to industry.

How can IEEE increase its usefulness to modern companies? How can we increase the perceived value of IEEE membership for company employees? For instance, can IEEE do more to help our industry members with their career development, finding work, etc? Should IEEE play a bigger role in industry trade groups, at industry trade shows? These are all important questions that we need to answer. Industry engagement with the IEEE is critical to create greater value for IEEE membership and for the future of the IEEE.

Blog 2



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Improving IEEE's Connections with Industry

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IEEE has lost much of its connection to modern industry. Many people in industry see IEEE as primarily an academic organization focused on research rather than the practical applications of technology. Research is important, but it requires funding. Much of that funding comes from companies. If IEEE is to retain its value for both its academic as well as industry members

it must provide value for companies and its members in industry as well as its academic members.

What are some ways that we might attract industry and members from industry back to the IEEE? Here are some ideas. Consider developing new types of electronic information services. For instance, could we use machine learning capabilities to help members find the most useful information for their particular interests and needs—maybe this could be a very personal magazine/journal that spans all the publications in the IEEE, picking articles or parts of articles that could help that member with a particular question or problem.

Learning from the pandemic, we should consider continuing the virtual element of many conferences. These can attract more people to our events, including folks from industry who otherwise wouldn't have the time or budget to travel to an IEEE conference. Also, since the costs for virtual events are much less than physical events, virtual attendees can pay a lower registration, also helping to attract more participants.

Some other ideas, some being tried, include: greater IEEE participation in various industry trade shows, participation of IEEE and IEEE members in industry-wide activities (this could, for instance, leverage folks from the Roadmaps group in the IEEE Future Directions Committee), creating new types of standards that provide value for modern industry and creating IEEE local groups within companies in a section and doing things like promoting IEEE senior membership and fellow nominations from that company.

I am eager to hear your ideas and any good experiences you have had in creating greater value for industry and members from industry from participation in the IEEE. To achieve its full potential, IEEE must have value for those who put technology into practice as well as those who develop new technologies.