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Engineers are key to the telecom,
fiber optics and networking industry.

BY SANDRA H. SHICHTMAN



Kristell Janusz is senior vice president of network engineering at Astound Broadband.

JANUSZ IS IN CHARGE OF NETWORK ENGINEERING AT ASTOUND BROADBAND

Today Kristell Janusz works at Astound Broadband where she's risen to senior vice president of network engineering.

Her responsibilities span both coasts and include the voice network, GIS mapping, optical engineering, high-speed data network, and facilities. Six people, who manage a total of 84 employees, report directly to Janusz. She's currently working on a hybrid schedule, mostly remote, but with a weekly office visit and travels to other offices for meetings.

Typically, her workday includes evaluating vendor equipment, reviewing and approving designs for Astound's network, researching the latest technology, managing the budget, and making sure her team doesn't have any road blocks to complete their projects successfully.

"If they work in the field, then I make sure they have the right test equipment and tools for their job along with the training to use those tools," explains Janusz, who holds an Associate of Applied Science in both electrical engineering and telecommunications engineering and a bachelor's degree in psychology. She also holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, which she earned over the course of a few years while working at and traveling for Astound.

Janusz also sees to it that new supervisors receive the training they need to manage their employees.

"Interestingly, my psychology degree is sometimes used more than my engineering degrees in my current role as a manager," she reflects, adding about her team, "We're a close-knit group in engineering, having worked together for many years. We have weekly collaboration calls among the various engineering disciplines, and we always attend vendor meetings together."

Collaboration is clearly key to her work today. It was also a collaborative effort that paved the way for her to join Astound back in 1992. After applying and interviewing for an initial position there didn't



result in a job offer, a friend of hers told her about another opening at the company, which provides fiber and internet, digital television, and phone services.

“Many months later, a good friend worked for Astound, and he notified me of another open position and gave me the hiring manager’s contact information,” remembers Janusz, who was then promptly interviewed and hired.

What also helped her get hired was having some related work experience working on circuits, programming, and wiring before joining Astound. “Having that experience helped me to get hired at Astound in my initial position of transport engineering,” she recalls.

As a transport engineer, Janusz’s responsibilities included circuit design and optical engineering. A promotion to an installation supervisor followed, where she managed a few people who installed telecommunications equipment, including cabling and power equipment.

When her supervisor left the company, she applied for and was promoted into his position as manager of transport engineering, a role in which she supervised employees who were doing her initial job.

“That position grew and evolved over the years as I became a director, vice president, and, lastly, a senior vice president of network engineering, the position in which I’m currently,” she notes.

Janusz indicates that Astound’s philosophy has always been to promote from within the company. “There are many people in my organization who started in the position of technician, engineering, and drafting who are now supervisors, managers, and directors managing departments.”

What helps them move up the ladder at Astound is the company’s robust training platform that includes online training along with in-person training and that will reimburse for courses taken that are related to a person’s current field.

Astound offers a lot for engineers, according to Janusz, who further notes that the company is currently in the process of establishing employee resource groups.

Outside of the company, Janusz is a member of both the Society of Cable Telecommunication Engineers (SCTE) and Women in Cable Telecommunications (WICT), where she can network with other professionals and gain knowledge.

Search for open positions at Astound Broadband, headquartered in Princeton, NJ, at astound.com/about-us/careers. Connect on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X.

JOHNSON-LONG USES PRIOR EXPERIENCE IN HER LEADERSHIP ROLE AT CORNING

Ashley N. Johnson-Long, Ph.D. first learned about Corning, a technology company that produces glass products for industrial and scientific applications, including networking and artificial intelligence (AI), while attending a recruiting event at her alma mater, from which she earned a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering, when she spoke to two of Corning’s engineering managers.

Online research about the company preceded in-person and on-site interviews for Johnson-Long. “I was impressed by the broad businesses Corning served, its commitment to technology, the company’s values, as well as its potential for how I could apply my background.”

“Interestingly, my psychology degree is sometimes used more than my engineering degrees in my current role as a manager.”

That background included internships at a small engineering consulting firm, NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and at IBM.

“The diverse experiences I gained interning at a private company, working for the government, and conducting research in industry helped me narrow down the type of company I wanted to work for and the nature of the work I enjoyed doing,” she shares.

They also helped her clearly define a problem, challenge assumptions, exercise data-based decision-making, and enabled her to collaborate with a diverse group of people. Johnson-Long also earned both a master’s degree and a doctorate in electrical engineering.

She began her career with Corning in 2012 as a senior process controls system engineer working in its manufacturing, technology and engineering division. Subsequently, she’s held roles of increasing responsibility in two different divisions. These roles included applied advanced analytics lead, a role in which she led a group to solve data-intensive problems in manufacturing. She was also a new technology supervisor, a role in which she was responsible for new die technology development and deployment, as well as development of the die technology road map. She also served a new die technology and extrusion performance manager, a role in which she was tasked with forming a new group in the division to deliver capability improvements, and drive deeper integration and understanding of die/extrusion interactions.

Most recently, she was a plant engineering manager for integrated die manufacturing. In that role she was responsible for capability, cost reduction and capital portfolios, die design and new products, and technology synchronization for regional and contract manufacturing.

Currently, Johnson-Long is the chief of staff to Corning’s president and chief operating officer (COO). Some of her responsibilities include maximizing the effectiveness of the COO and COO’s office, and ensuring appropriate alignment and execution across Corning’s businesses, Corning International, and Corning’s operations functions.

She feels she’s benefited from the training, mentoring and coaching she’s received. “I’ve grown the most when I’ve followed up with my mentors and coaches on how I’ve applied, and how I can continue to apply, learning from training. They’ve been my sounding boards and challenged me when I wasn’t stretching enough.”



Ashley N. Johnson-Long, Ph.D. is the chief of staff to Corning’s president and chief operating officer (COO).