

Navigating Career Success - Thriving in the AI Revolution

Richard Kirby, LA G '71

AI-Enabled Business Coach



The Talk: This Tau Bate Talk is designed to help engineers and other professionals respond strategically to an employment market being reshaped by artificial intelligence. AI is presented not simply as another tool to learn, but rather as a fast-moving force that will materially alter job requirements and career pathways.

Citing workforce projections—including McKinsey’s expectation that within five years 10% of current job types will disappear and 59% will require significant re-skilling or up-skilling—this talk invites participants to confront reality and choose: embrace emerging technologies to prosper, or risk falling behind.

Part One: AI and the Profession of Engineering

AI is examined in historical context alongside earlier transformative technologies such as IoT/connectivity, 3D printing, and robotics, poised to touch nearly every engineering and other business discipline. The practical value AI can offer engineers (speed to information, idea generation, iteration, automation, etc.) will be discussed alongside the human responsibilities that remain essential: setting goals and constraints, applying domain knowledge, validating outputs, managing risk, and judging quality.

Moving beyond “chatbot use”, participants will be introduced to building a knowledge stack—a synergistic set of capabilities across data, models/systems, and workflows. A conceptual learning loop will be presented as a repeatable structure for maintaining continuous relevance as AI tools and systems evolve. A brief case study will highlight how a focused objective drove Richard to leverage AI and achieve accelerated business results.

Part Two: Career Growth Perspectives and Strategies

The second segment shifts from technical knowledge and job performance to long-term career momentum. While AI-enabled technical excellence will be necessary, it will not likely be sufficient for many seeking sustained advancement and career satisfaction. Emotional intelligence is introduced as an underutilized differentiator supporting leadership, collaboration, influence, and career mobility.

Participants are encouraged to intentionally shape an AI-era professional brand by clarifying their niche, highlighting proof of value, and other activities. The talk challenges unproductive career habits (waiting for promotions, endless résumé edits, indiscriminate job applications, etc.) and suggests alternative strategies for accelerating income and other career goals based upon the actual results of Richard’s clients. The talk closes by returning to its purpose: empowering participants to “make things happen” in their careers—starting now. Q&A follows.

The Speaker: Richard Kirby is a self-proclaimed contrarian who believes we all have the potential for much more than our current achievements. He views the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” as a perpetual challenge, encouraging ongoing career reimagining. His current mission is to help others become more aligned and level up so they achieve more in their careers.

Richard joined Tau Beta Pi (LA Gamma) while earning a B.S. in Electrical Engineering at Louisiana Tech. After graduation, he advanced two levels in systems engineering during his first seven years, then chose a career re-direction becoming an engineering training manager at a Fortune100 corporate training center. He loved the work, but the future opportunities were limited. Choosing to escape engineering, he moved into marketing—his “gateway career drug,” as he calls it—which led him to cross over to the dark side (as some engineers might portray it) into sales management.

After 10 years in regional and national sales management, a major recession turned his billion-dollar employer upside down. Abruptly shifting from a peak earnings job to free agent at a career crossroads, Richard considered the options of returning to corporate America or paving his own path. He reflected on his seven successful job changes and three notable shifts in profession—while increasing his income in all but one instance—and chose to become an executive career consultant for high-income and C-level professionals. More recently, he has also expanded his practice to coach small business owners.

So, what’s his current answer to “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Building his side gig: combining AI with more than a decade of his career-program intellectual property to create online career training for Gen Z — and other highly motivated professionals.

Richard was a registered Professional Engineer for 20+ years, is a Tau Beta Pi and Eta Kappa Nu alumnus, and is an active member of Mensa USA and the Georgia Career Development Association.

Registration link: <https://tbp-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/kyl2CEWcQNeVuluVz9W37w>