



## **INCOSE Spotlight on David Walden, ESEP**

Interviewed by Sandy Young, [info@incose.org](mailto:info@incose.org)

Name: David Walden, ESEP

Title: Owner and Principal Consultant

Organization: Sysnovation

Place of Birth: Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Current Residence: Shakopee, Minnesota (October through May)  
and Pentwater, Michigan (June through September), USA

Domain: Consulting and training in all domains

Studied in college: Undergraduate: Electrical engineering, Graduate: Electrical engineering, computer science and Management of Technology (MOT)

Year joined INCOSE: 1994

Roles in INCOSE: Lead editor of the INCOSE Systems Engineering Handbook, liaison to ISO/IEC JTC1/SC7 Working Groups 10 and 20, former certification program manager, former chair of the Corporate Advisory Board, founding member and first president of the North Star Chapter in Minnesota

Years in systems engineering: 30-plus

### **1. Why did you become a systems engineer?**

I started out at McDonnell Aircraft as an electrical engineer in the software department (they only hired “engineers” at the time, not computer scientists ...). However, I found my passion led me to be concerned with avionics systems at a higher level, and I quickly moved into the avionics analysis department to work on fire control and data fusion algorithms. Since then, I have been fortunate to have been the lead systems engineer on numerous complicated and complex systems.

### **2. You have quite the engineering family. Will you please share all the engineering connections in your family? Which ones are involved with INCOSE and/or systems engineering?**

I was actually the first person on my side of the family to get a college degree. However, my wife, Beth, comes from a family of mechanical engineers. She, along with her father, mother, uncle, all three of her brothers, and one nephew are all mechanical engineers from Valparaiso University. We have been blessed with three children (two girls and a boy) who are also all engineers from Valparaiso University (two mechanicals and one electrical, in case you are keeping count ...).

My daughter Erika has been to a few Crossroads of America Chapter meetings in Indiana and my son Joseph has been to a few North Star Chapter meetings. Beth is involved behind the scenes at Sysnovation as the CFO and in many INCOSE-related activities, including the Great Lakes Regional Conference (GLRC). She is

also part of the INCOSE spouses' group that gets to do fun stuff while most of us are in meetings at the International Symposium and the International Workshop.



3. **What is the biggest challenge you face?**  
Keeping the Sysnovation CFO happy.
4. **Why should someone consider INCOSE's Systems Engineering Professional Certification?**  
INCOSE's Associate Systems Engineering Professional (ASEP), Certified Systems Engineering Professional (CSEP) and Expert Systems Engineering Professional (ESEP) certifications are recognized throughout the world as the standard for systems engineering professionalism. Earning any level of SEP can help set you apart from your peers. Now go out and get certified! (Full disclosure: I was the INCOSE certification program manager from 2007-2013, and I teach a certification prep course. However, I truly believe certification is an important piece of our discipline.)
5. **Anything to add?**  
I look forward to welcoming many of you to GLRC11 in Minnesota this October!