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Profile of Yvette Dominguez

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Yvette Dominguez has spent 15 years in the communications systems engineering industry. At Space Systems/Loral, she is the manager for the Payload Design Engineering Section whose charter is to provide payload design and analysis and flow down of system requirements to hardware. Yvette performs front-end design risk mitigation for various satellite programs and has previously acted as payload manager. Prior to that, she served as a payload subsystems engineer at Hughes Space and Communications for several years. She has a BSEE from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and is a proud recipient of the 2008 SSPI Future Leader

Award.

1) How did you get started in the satellite business?

In high school, I had an interest in engineering and space and thought the satellite industry was a great way to cover both interests. During my senior year in college, the aerospace/satellite industry was recruiting heavily and I felt this was my opportunity to pursue my interests.

2) How have you been involved in changes brought about in or by this business (innovations, technologies, services)?

Space Systems/Loral manufactures satellites which serve multiple missions and coverages, provides high power applications, and services high frequency bands. I have been lucky enough to design, analyze, and test these types of satellites.

3) What do you think was the greatest event/situation/opportunity you experienced?

My greatest experience as a whole was the first time I completed a payload from inception to delivery - design and analysis phase through system level integration and test, then finally to in-orbit test. In satellite manufacturing at SS/L, you cannot take any shortcuts. Everything you do must always be highly reliable, meticulous, and redundant. My role allows me ownership to provide a fully validated product thus giving me a great sense of accomplishment.

4) What was the greatest obstacle?

My greatest obstacle was one that initially stretched my skills. I was new to the company and very green as I was just transitioning to payload systems engineering. I was immediately assigned to monitor a European payload subcontractor. Not only was it a technical challenge in terms of payload systems design and integration, but it was also a new challenge to actually manage a subcontractor. There were cultural differences to deal with and export control laws to adhere to. I also spent nearly 6 months in Europe monitoring the subcontractor which was a bit challenging to my personal life. However, with solid support from my team and other company resources, I was able to successfully deliver the payload compliant to performance and schedule. As a result, I gained technical and management skills and great partnerships with teams here and abroad. I would not trade the experience.

5) What do you see happening in the next five years in this industry?

I think there will continue to be a global need for satellite communications providing more digital broadcasting and to even more remote areas.

6) What advice do you have for women interested in entering the industry?

Do not limit yourself. There are many opportunities in the industry as there are so many different disciplines and aspects to building a satellite. My advice is to not just gain practical technical skills, but to also cultivate interpersonal skills with peers and management. Be open to new responsibilities and challenges early on and if possible, find a mentor.