Introduction

My association with IEEE started 38 years ago. As a new engineer with Hewlett Packard I was assigned to the semiconductor process development team. I read everything that IEEE put out on the subject and tried to attend IEDM every year. In years when HP would not send me, Donna and I scraped enough money together, so I could attend. The excellent publications and conferences made a real difference in my work and in the group's work as we passed around articles that were germane to what we were doing and shared what we learned at conferences.

I was lucky enough to work for several great companies. One was Motorola and the other was Hewlett Packard. Hewlett Packard was probably the world's best training ground for technical management. As a manager you went to classes and the company's founders, Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard, set an exemplary example for us to follow. There was little tolerance of behavior not deemed appropriate.

One thing that really stuck with me was the communication process that happened between upper management and the employees. Bill and Dave made it a point to communicate often to the ever-growing mass of employees. They talked about the company's successes, reminded us of our responsibilities and did not hide from obvious challenges that we faced.

This communication established a bond between management and the employees which led to an engaged and motivated work force. It generated a high level of trust and tolerance. In reflecting on my time with Motorola the same was true of CEO Bob Galvin as he had a very similar communication style.

Several weeks ago, I was explaining this to Jim Jeffries and he stated that was a long time ago. In his own way reminding me that my experience was dated. So, I called up a friend who was a director for Google, some would say the Hewlett Packard of today. They have a similar communication ethos as did HP except it has been updated using todays tools. Blogs between management and employees regularly take on difficult and complex topics. Upper management holds all-hands meetings that are built on an open mic and unscripted Q&A sessions. Google started with the assumption that employees have "a right to know" rather than the typical "need to know".

Google has had to modify its communication strategy as it has grown from the days that Sergey Brin and Larry Page were graduate students, but it still strives for openness and lots of communication between the executives and employees. Google continues to be ranked one of the best places to work.

What I contend is that the basics of employee engagement through communication, respect and appreciation are just as valid today as in the days of Hewlett and Packard. For our IEEE organization substitute the word member for employee. That is one of the reasons we are here today. I hope you get a lot out of the program this evening.