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2021 Ones to Watch: Stephen Hibbard, Project Manager, Tech Mechanical Systems, Inc.

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Who is your mentor and how did he influence/help you in your career? My mentor is entrepreneurial and mechanical mastermind Bob Neilan. His belief in me granted freedom to fuel unimaginable professional growth. He taught me everything from running massive projects, managing unrealistic schedule expectations, to delivering the impossible with a smile. He is the hardest working person I have ever met. Every day I strive to meet his standard. Bob has embraced my vision for the future of the company and allowed me the freedom to implement systems and increase efficiency through virtualization technologies. His trust in me has fostered leadership qualities that I now exude with my teams.

How do you contribute to your community or your profession? I contribute to my community by teaching at night. Sharing life lessons learned through experience and saving others difficulty of learning the hard way provides its own rewards. Everything comes full circle.

How do you contribute to your community or your profession? The clearest example in my experience has been in identifying shortcomings of the traditional communication model - client>architect>engineer>general contractor>subcontractor. By bridging the gap, we have been able to include more of the client's needs at installation which may have been missed on initial consult. This shift cuts down on change orders to the client and provides higher overall satisfaction.

How do you keep your team motivated despite conflicts and obstacles? Strong leadership requires sacrifice. You have to be the first one to drop what you are doing to pick up the slack for the team. If that means starting early or working late, leading by example lets your team know that you are with them in the struggle against impossible schedules and tough conditions. Friendly reminders of appreciation as well as being accessible at any point in time to support your team has served me well. Be the one to take the blame regardless of fault and give your team the praise they deserve when attributed to you.

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