Greg's Corner — Life's Circle of Fun

Greg Harris , Vice President of Marketing, Jameco Electronics

Life has a way of coming full circle. As kids, our focus is all about fun. At some point, however, most of us turn serious. In fact, we turn on people who have too much fun and think of them as "immature." By the time we become seniors many will shed their seriousness, and while some could be labeled as "eccentric," most are just having fun.

I spent a long weekend recently talking to Jameco fans at the annual Maker Faire in San Mateo, California. One thing I heard consistently is that many people don't have time for pure fun in their daily life. Since the Maker Faire is a celebration of fun, it was a little hard to argue with the importance of the concept, but clearly many of us are frustrated that fun is not a daily priority.

At the risk of disagreeing with so many of the loyal Jameco fans I met, I think there is no reason to put off some serious fun until the retirement years.

The Maker Faire, in its sixth year, drew over 100,000 people and encourages the shedding of corporate seriousness to celebrate the making of things less mundane and just for the fun of it. I couldn't have asked for a better place to meet Jameco customers.

After two days of talking to customers who, quite frankly, were longing to have more fun in their life, I started to think about the importance of having fun in life.

As a young man coming out of college I had two job offers. I struggled to decide which job to take. I was presented with two very different industries in two different geographies with two very different titles working in two very different organizations. One seemed fun; the other, not so fun.

How did I decide? I followed the money. One paid $3,000 more a year and that tipped the scale. As a cash-poor college student, it may not be surprising that my entire career strategy hinged on a few thousand dollars, but as I progressed in my career, I found myself thinking less with my head and more with my heart. Having fun at the office became increasingly more important.

There is nothing better than finding a way to have fun at your job. Now I can't say that I had the courage later in life to tell my wife, "Honey, I decided to take the job that pays less because it seems like I would have more fun." But in fact, that's what I did.

I realize not everything and every job can be fun. If fun at work is impossible, then in my opinion fun at home becomes critical. I suspect that Makers at the Maker Faire must have horrible jobs because it was clear that most have gone way over the top in pursuing fun outside of the workplace.

The faire is there to celebrate the wackily inclined and to inspire the rest of us to reprioritize taking time to have fun.

The typical Jameco customer was drawn like a moth to light when they saw bag upon bag of electronic components. It was easy to see that there was a project or a longing just by analyzing the glint in their eyes. But what came out of their mouth were concerns about time. While I understand the guy who complained about the rigors of caring for new-born twins, there were few who could articulate why they haven't made fun a higher priority.

Personally, I'm committed to fun and while talking to Jameco fans was certainly fun, I had even more fun taking pictures. The Jameco team works hard every day to make fun an important part of every day. It's clear that employees who are having fun work just a little bit harder.

As a customer I hope you'll notice a little bit of chuckle in our step. Having a good laugh or encouraging a wacky new electronics project are all part of what we love about working at Jameco.

Life is too short. The time for fun is now. How could you disagree?

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Do you need a recommendation for a fun project? Do you have an example of a fun electronics project? Write me [1] *and I'll do my best to connect people with fun projects to those that need a recommendation for fun.*

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