The Real Value of Crestron Masters

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This year Crestron celebrated its 15th Masters event. As a regular attendee, I have had the opportunity to watch this event flourish from an attendee perspective, as well as a content and venue perspective.

Through the years, the Masters event has transformed the value and learning experience for students. Initially, training and education were primarily Crestron-instructor led "inside the classroom." However, today we see a greater emphasis on peer interaction "outside the classroom." For a group of techie programmers, there has been a noticeable growing interest in the value of networking and

forming relationships, while helping each other tackle challenges through either shared experience or advice.

As a business owner with a programming background, I'm pleased and pleasantly surprised, by the amount of sharing and collaboration that currently goes on among programmers. In my current role, I attend many business meetings, conferences, and networking events to increase knowledge, identify business opportunities, and build relationships. In doing so, I have learned the importance of getting out of my shell and directly engaging with others to gain more knowledge, insight, and validation through shared experiences. I find the social interaction to be overwhelming at times, but the opportunity to make connections, exchange information and offer insight to be a significant value.

In my experience interacting with those on the technical side, I have found that programmers or other technical professionals can be quite protective of their knowledge and don't want to share what they have learned through investing their own blood, sweat, and tears. I have always felt that there was an expectation of having to earn the knowledge that your peers would not freely offer or provide help until you gained their respect or proved yourself to them.

The increased adoption of social media (which is also ironic because most programmers or technical people are not considered to be social), has brought networking, sharing, and support to the forefront, Crestron Masters. And it continues to be reinforced through Facebook groups, LinkedIn connections, and Twitter conversations. There are multiple Crestron Facebook groups and the #AVTweeps community on Twitter has become a supportive community.

Additionally, peer-to-peer learning continues to be a part of the event itself, as more programmers reach Diamond level certification and are required to become a part of the instruction as well as the learning.

What all of this says to me is that programmers need to be part of a team, a supportive community, or both, to maximize their effectiveness. The result provides a benefit to the programmers themselves, as well as their employer, clients, and Crestron. Additionally, the idea that in-person events like trade shows and conferences are losing momentum is challenged by the concept that peer-to-peer interaction may be as big of a takeaway as all other aspects of an event.

In closing, I would like to point out that when evaluating the cost of attending or sending a team to Masters next year, be sure to remember the long-term value that just one conversation, connection, or new relationship could have on your future. Realize that, if you are not participating in these types of events, you are not only missing from the many advantages of formal industry training and education but also the opportunity to connect with the active community of top-level experts in your field.

For more information on Crestron Masters, check out A State of Control 34.

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