

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## Daniel Gao

PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION(S): **P.Eng.**

CURRENT ROLE: **Associate, Structural Team**

LOCATION: **Victoria**

YEARS WITH RJC: **12**



Flexibility, collaboration, imagination are the guideposts on Daniel's professional journey.



75 Years

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**He chose engineering over computer science when facing the educational fork in the road, but the latter is still very much a part of Daniel's professional life. He sees the potential to marry the two for his own growth, and the firm's as well. In fact, Daniel believes the more varied the backgrounds and interests of everyone on the RJC team, the brighter the future.**



His path as a kid seemed to point to a career in computer science. Instead, he opted to study mechanical engineering at the University of Victoria—Pivot #1. On graduation he applied to RJC's Building Science and Restoration team but was hired as a drafter by the Structural team—Pivot #2. Daniel initially hoped to get back to mechanical work, but saw opportunity to progress, figuring “things that move” vs “things that don't move” from an engineering perspective share more similarities than differences. He steadily moved within the structural team from drafting to design engineer then project engineer before taking the role he holds today.

Daniel is an Associate with the structural team. He actively provides training, leadership, and technical support for the team in addition to his project work. His focus is seismic design; most big concrete and tower projects go through their group. He credits flexibility and collaboration for the team's effective rhythm—so many different backgrounds and specialized skill sets, but everyone is willing to jump in where needed to get the job done. Case in point: at one point Daniel even held “IT guy” responsibilities for the team recognizing the job needed doing and he had the skills.

This collaborative philosophy means they're able to effectively manage multiple jobs simultaneously. And they have a process in place—through the Vancouver Island Structural Technical Group—to capture and share learning. Daniel credits the mistakes for so much learning; he advises young engineers to not fear them but view them as opportunities for growth—in the vein of, “you'll never make the same mistake twice.”

Daniel's programmer sensibility is naturally curious about applying process optimization to engineering work, so he is co-spearheading a process improvement and best practices effort. He dreams of some day using his computer science skills to create a program to take over the uniform parts of the job, freeing engineers up for more creative work. He sees massive potential there with deep learning and AI technology, applying data science and predictive analytics to their work. He points to RJC's 75 years of experience and the gold mine of data that lies in it.

The lesson we can learn from Daniel? You can take the engineer away from the computer science career, but you can't take the computer science thinking away from the engineer. And we're better at RJC for it, when we embrace all the unique skill sets and attributes that team members like Daniel bring to the table.



75 Years