



## 2020 Ones to Watch: Joel Thottam, ME Engineers

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Name: Joel Thottam

Company: ME Engineers

Title: Associate, Electrical Engineering

Education: Bachelors of Science in Electrical Engineering, Masters in Business Administration

Which project, deal, or transaction was the “game-changer” in the advancement of your career?

One of my very first projects as an engineer was a high-rise residential and retail mixed-use renovation project in Philadelphia. This project gave me exposure to many aspects of commercial MEP design, including MV incoming service voltage, generator design, low voltage design, fire alarm design, and lightning protection. I was lucky to be able to work directly with a world-renowned architect. Working alongside someone at such a high level of skill is one of the best learning environments there is. The opportunity to work on this project gave me knowledge about MEP design that I still use today.

How do you contribute to your community or your profession?

I participate in the ACE Mentor Program, which pairs architecture, construction, and engineering professionals with local high school students to teach them about working in the design and construction industry. Recently, I've been working with students from the Bronx. I'm part of a team that helps students design a project of their choosing over the course of the school year. It's extremely satisfying exposing these kids to our profession, and many go on to study architecture, construction, or engineering in college.

What led you to your current profession?

From an early age, I've helped my father fix and build things. Flooring, roofing, tile work, sheetrock, painting, plumbing, electric—you name it and I've probably helped him with it! As a young child, when others would ask for toy cars and videogames, I would ask for toy toolsets. I'd tinker with those for hours. When the time came for me to choose my major in college, my dad suggested engineering and I've had a passion for it ever since.

What do you like most about your job?

As an electrical engineer with ME Engineers I get the opportunity to collaborate on a variety of challenging projects with a highly skilled team. Many of my peers work on the same project type

over and over but I've been lucky to work on a variety of great projects—from 4 Times Sq. to Madison Square Garden, every week holds something new and exciting for me to exercise and hone my engineering skills. Although the work is challenging at times, it is also extremely rewarding to see one of my designs being constructed.

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