

Tracy Mack-Askew
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What makes a decision so interesting? A person never truly understands how impactful it can be until the decision is made. What if, when you were just a teenager, you made one choice that directly set the rest of your life in motion? That is exactly what happened to Tracy Mack-Askew, Managing Director-HD Vocational Platform Development, Daimler Trucks North America.

At just 17 years old, she was faced with the decision of a lifetime. She met a representative from General Motors (GM) who immediately recognized immense potential in Tracy and recommended she join INROADS. From that moment, she became a part of the INROADS family — before she even set foot on a college campus. As one of the youngest interns in the program, she was grateful for all the valuable knowledge shared. It helped her navigate college, and she later discovered just how many ways her life was molded through that initial decision.

As a senior in high school, she was accepted into the INROADS program and began the internship training process as well as met with potential sponsoring companies for interviews. Ultimately, she chose GM and began working there the summer before her freshmen year at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI). That summer was very unique for Tracy because she found herself in an unusual position of being accepted to RPI's chemical engineering program, but also being heavily recruited to switch majors to RPI's new management program.

Ever since she was a junior in high school, she dreamed of becoming an engineer; however, the opportunity to learn in a new program with the benefit of additional scholarships did seem intriguing. So, Tracy went on to major in management her first year of college. Still unsure of her major, she turned to her network at GM and mentors at INROADS to help her navigate this decision. Quickly she realized that her commitment to and passion for engineering was more important to her future, and she switched majors to mechanical engineering her sophomore year of college. To this day, she is positive of the decision she made to graduate from RPI with an engineering degree. Tracy stayed with GM for the entirety of her INROADS internship and accepted an immediate job offer with them after graduation as a Project and Designing Engineer, which led her to grow her career at GM for more than 15 years.

"I loved my INROADS experience; it was absolutely amazing. The training was outstanding, the interactions among like-minded people and the knowledge shared was incredible." She carried with her the great life advice she gained at INROADS and harnessed her natural leadership capabilities to "pay it forward" throughout her career by mentoring younger interns. She also took a leadership role as president of Detroit INROADS Student Association (DISA). This was an educational, professional, social experience where a group of about 70 students learned and worked with each other and adults at INROADS Corporate. Her decision to join DISA also led her to meeting her husband.

All facets of Tracy's life have, in some way, been touched by INROADS, which is why she urges interns to first and foremost enjoy the experience. "Take it all in and smell the roses." She believes relationships are the best thing you can take away from being an INROADS intern. "Interns should take it upon themselves to work on keeping those relationships because it is important to have networks."

Tracy's personal and professional life is interlaced with INROADS. She is grateful that her family (her husband and three children) has such strong ties to an incredible organization.