



# ART- THE FUL ENGINEER

ENG ALUM  
DESIGNS DISTINCTIVE  
CAREER PATH

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**J**anice Ozguc never does anything halfway. When she developed an interest in art conservation, she set up her own business in her apartment. And when she wanted to take a budding fascination with science to the next level, she enrolled in the College of Engineering's inaugural Late Entry Accelerated Program (LEAP) class. Since then, she has melded the worlds of art and engineering into a dynamic career that continues to evolve at the pace of technology.

LEAP gave Ozguc the opportunity to attain her third BU degree—she had previously earned a bachelor's in art history and a master's in the history of art and architecture. Her initial interest in art conservation and restoration was rooted in materials science, a field that appealed to her passion for science and engineering. She wanted more training, but without an engineering undergraduate degree, she was leery about diving headfirst into a full-time materials science master's program. In the early 1980s, eager to enter a new phase of her career, she enrolled in LEAP even though at the time electrical engineering was the only master's degree track for LEAP students.

Established more than 30 years ago to support women who wished to transition into the engineering profession, LEAP was, and remains, a unique master's degree program for students with bachelor's degrees in non-engineering fields. After taking some foundational undergraduate engineering courses, LEAP students transition into one of several master's degree programs. It now attracts men and women from a wide array of academic backgrounds, from math and science to the humanities to business to—as in Ozguc's case—the arts.

"Entering the LEAP program and graduating with an engineering degree opened up a world of opportunities," she says. Upon graduation, she decided to move to Japan and accept a position at Mitsubishi designing semiconductors.

"The people on my team used to say that a 5000x magnified semiconductor was a work of art, but it wasn't exactly the type of artwork

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I was used to. It wasn't like the art hanging in the Museum of Fine Arts," Ozguc recalls. (And although her newfound passion for technology and engineering moved her career forward, she always maintained her love of the fine arts—she collected Japanese art prints and became an amateur photographer.)

After two years of technical engineering at Mitsubishi, she moved on to applications engineering and then technical marketing. "Technical marketing for semiconductors is not like writing press releases; it's still very technical," she explains. "It's about where the market is going, what you need to do to be competitive, what kind of cells you need to develop for your semiconductors. It was still using my engineering background even though I wasn't designing semiconductors anymore."

It was when Ozguc began moving into the start-up space in 2003 that she was able to finally move toward a career that melded engineering and art. One of the latest of several start-ups that she cofounded was a company that specialized in developing mobile apps for the social photo-sharing segment. Ozguc helped spec out not only the look and feel of the app, but also all of the technical aspects. She also noted that in the start-up world, employees need to contribute to all aspects of the business, so, in addition to many other tasks, she was also curating the social media content for her budding companies. Since dipping her toe into start-ups, Ozguc has now completely immersed herself in that world and enjoys the fast pace, accelerated business plans, and the excitement of creating a new product that consumers will love.

"I really credit LEAP and the type of training that I received in the program for helping me make all of those transitions in my

career from art history to semiconductors to applications engineering to technical marketing then into the mobile app space," she says. "Engineering gives you an amazing skillset, a way of thinking, a way of adapting to changes and being able to morph into different things."

Ozguc has always been a proponent of building a career where she could combine both her appreciation of art and her talent for engineering; her most recent business endeavor, Through My Eyes Media, is the closest she has gotten to fully interweaving the two. The brand-new consulting company will focus on curating social media content for individuals and businesses with a concentration on developing engaging Instagram accounts for clients.

"Instagram is the new web homepage," Ozguc says. "As a business, if you don't have a compelling Instagram feed, somebody is not going to use your company. And it has to be something that speaks to them and not just an arbitrary collection of photos."

Through interviews, she gains an understanding of how clients want their brand to be portrayed and then uses her expertise in marketing, consulting and photography to create an online presence for the clients.

"I think a lot of companies—especially start-ups—try to do too much," she says. "I always ask companies who their target market is to help them focus on what the market wants and then lead them to translating that into their technology. And I think those types of questions come from what I learned through the discipline of engineering because it's a very methodical and strategic way of thinking."

Ozguc sometimes calls herself a Renaissance woman, after an era she sees as reflecting her life's goal of "a masterful blend of art and science." And she's proven that she can translate her skillset across industries and disciplines.

"I started in the arts at BU as an undergraduate," she says. "When you come from a completely different background like that and then are able to learn engineering through LEAP, that jump gives you the confidence to say, 'I can do that' to just about anything." ■