



# AIST Young Professionals



## Maggie Russell

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### What first interested you about the steel industry?

My first encounter with the steel industry was actually my interview with Gerdau Long Steel North America Charlotte Mill. After my tour, where I got to see the furnace in operation, I was hooked! I knew I wanted to work in the meltshop and learn more about this process. I still to this day think that the meltshop, from the EAF to the caster, is one of the most interesting processes.

### What has been the biggest benefit (or benefits) you've experienced being involved in AIST as a young professional?

I think attending AISTech was one of the best things I did early on in my career. The technical papers are always helpful and informative, but the networking has been invaluable. Everyone is ready to help you solve the problems you are facing. The

connections I made at AISTech have helped me professionally (learning about new technology, helping me solve a problem within the meltshop) and have given me many friends across the industry.

### Have you had any mentors that have assisted with your career development so far? If so, how did you identify them as a mentor, and what impact have they made thus far?

I have had both formal mentors in structured programs and informal mentors where the relationships developed organically. I have received helpful advice from all of them. In the organic relationships, I would usually identify someone with a skill set I needed to improve upon or someone with a career path that I was interested in learning more about. I would typically start with asking them for advice on my situation/career and a relationship would grow from there. In the first couple years of my career, I really appreciated the advice from mentors on how to navigate relationships, how to have difficult and open conversations, and how to handle politics in the workplace.

### What advice do you have for students who are curious about pursuing something related to the steel industry?

Get involved with AIST! Getting involved with AIST will give you an avenue to learn more about the industry and more about what the day-to-day of a career in steel would entail. It will also give insight into the many different career paths available. Being involved with AIST will give you opportunities that you may otherwise miss, for example getting to meet many people in the industry and being able to ask them questions. And the best part is that there are many ways that students can participate at no or little cost.

### What do you find unique and interesting about the steel industry? What do you enjoy the most about it?

The first thing I love about the steel industry is how exciting the steelmaking process is. It really makes for interesting days and an engaging career. I feel



lucky that I have found a career path within an interesting process where you can learn something new every day. I also love how open the industry is to sharing best practices and new technologies so that we can all move forward together.

### Do you have advice for Young Professionals just starting out in the industry?

My two pieces of advice would be to take advantage of opportunities that arise and don't be afraid to show confidence and promote yourself. I began in the meltshop in 2016 and in 2022 I was given the chance to move into a sales position at another company. I gained this opportunity through positive connections I established, my proven results, and my work ethic. Most careers do not run on a linear path and you never know where a connection or opportunity might lead. ♦

### Are you a steel professional age 35 or younger?

Join the new AIST Young Professionals Membership Committee to expand your network and connect with peers.

For more information, visit [AIST.org/membership](https://AIST.org/membership) or contact Jessica Mortimer at +1.724.814.3070 or [jmortimer@aist.org](mailto:jmortimer@aist.org).

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