

Peter Cohen



Peter Cohen currently serves as the Partner Engagement Manager at Netflix, in which he develops relationships with internet service providers and technology partners across the United States and Canada. Prior to his time at Netflix, he worked at Amazon.com where he served as a Peering Manager. Mr. Cohen graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1991 with a B.S. in Speech Communication.

1. What is your favorite part about your current position? How did you get to where you are now?

I work at Netflix with ISPs (internet service providers) across the USA and Canada. Through an early interest in international travel and then business, I fell into it. One of my first jobs was at an ISP in the Washington, DC area that had some international customers. Because I had visited several countries, I became the de-facto "international guy" and ran with that. The next few jobs built upon that and 20 years and 50+ countries later that became my specialty. The best part of my position is working with a variety of cultures and people. That may sound cliché, but it really is fascinating to learn about how other people grew up and what it is like in their country. It can start with the food, cars and sports and then move to politics and other parts of their culture. I remember after a successful business meeting in Rome, my host kissed me on both cheeks and said, "you understand Italian culture."

2. What aspects of your education as a communication student have been most beneficial to your career?

Two things come to mind: group projects and public speaking. With group projects, this translates directly into real world experience with the many national and multinational projects and teams used to deliver a good or service to local markets. It is not just about getting along with your fellow students (which become your co-workers), but the understanding of cultures, time zones, and priorities needed by the group as a whole. With public speaking - this can be to 1 or a 1000 people, internally or externally. You are always "selling something," whether it is to your management, your team, your vendors or your customers. As a father, I'm trying to sell my two boys on eating more vegetables. Communication skills are everywhere.

3. What advice would you give to current communication students about the professional realm?

Keep close tabs on your online presence. The hiring manager's human resource's department is looking at LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and elsewhere for reasons not to hire you. First impressions do matter. Master the systems at your first career position. You can get more done on an uninterrupted 1/2 day Saturday than two weekdays. Each company will have its own specialized systems. Become the expert in them. Jump at the chance to move somewhere for a job outside of your comfort zone. Find a mentor. Learn a foreign language. Get a name brand company on your resume in the first 10 years after graduation.