Systems Workforce Summit 2026

Systems engineering in practice

From design to flight

Jon Reijneveld

Chief of Engineering and Co-founder, The Exploration Company



Engineers learn from the full product cycle

Design. Build. Integrate. Test. Operate. Improve.

Let engineers experience the impact of their decisions during operations.



Ownership must cross team boundaries

Leaders must give engineers authority and support.

Early tests develop engineering judgement



Tests provide information that discussions cannot.

Let’s build these competencies intentionally

Universities	Complete projects with access to experts. Build, test, get user feedback, improve.
Employers	Keep engineers hands-on with hardware. Give them ownership and decision authority.
Industry, customers and certification bodies	Add proven capabilities in successive vehicle blocks. Qualify changes. Reuse valid evidence. Align contracts and deliveries with feature readiness.

Develop systems engineers who make the whole system work.