



While still trying to figure out what I wanted to do after high school, I stopped in and listened to a Blum representative at the vocational school I was attending. After my orientation on the Apprenticeship program, I decided to try it out and I haven't looked back. I've learned many new things along the way that I will never lose, no matter what happens in the future, or where my career takes me. I have always loved building, fixing, and learning new things. The Apprenticeship program and my career at Blum have permitted me to do so. Free college tuition and a paycheck allowed me to attend college and take care of myself. The first year of the apprenticeship is all about the basics. Students are introduced to the company and taught basic metal fabrication and safety. The second year students build on this knowledge and learn to machine and a little about teamwork. In the third and fourth years the students are geared up for and transitioned into their individual trades (i.e. machine technician, electrician, etc.). In this program the students with the best overall grades at the end of their fourth year are offered a free trip to Austria, which is where Blum is headquartered. If for some reason you cannot go, or do not want to, it is not required that you do so but I found it to be a real eye opener.

For three years after the apprenticeship I was a Machine Technician and responsible for maintaining the machines that make our product. This position included keeping the machines running to specified efficiency levels, keeping product quality in spec, designing or coming up with the initial design for ways to increase the efficiency of a machine or make it easier to work with, performing routine maintenance on the machines to insure their longevity and putting together new machines or taking them apart as they come and go. As a Machine Technician you might have to travel to Austria to learn a new machine that may be coming to the United States which you may be responsible for. Again if you cannot go for some reason it is not required.

Without the Apprenticeship program it would have taken many more years of experience somewhere else to even begin to learn what I know now. I am currently a Product Manager in the Marketing department. I am responsible for some of our products such as our concealed drawer runners (TANDEM and SOLO) and their additional features (i.e. SERVO-DRIVE) as well as new product launches, side projects and research. I have to know all the technical information and specific applications for all the products I am responsible for and must have general knowledge of all our other products. I am also responsible for supporting our customer service/sales department, helping with trade shows, and developing Marketing tools.

- Chris Muck
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