



How Vermont HITEC changed my life



By A Former HITEC Student

(WEDNESDAY, September 6, 2017, 5:18 PM) -- My life has changed so drastically over the past year in a way that I never imagined. As a twenty-three year old male I was in a weird spot in my life. I wanted more out of my job but wasn't quite sure what that looked like or how to obtain it. My junior and senior years of high school were filled with challenging events that prevented me from going to college or thinking that I would ever be successful in college. I felt stuck.

I had been working in a job making minimum wage for several years. I needed a change so I decided to apply for a manufacturing job at a well-known local company, Vermont Precision Tools. This position included full benefits and a promising income. It also came with the expectation that I had the necessary technical and mathematical skills. This all seemed very intimidating and unrealistic for someone like myself who didn't feel like I had any of those skills. Let's face it, the only thing on my side was the desire to be successful. I thought I might be setting myself up for failure. I started with this company at an entry level. I had no college

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degree to back me up and, quite frankly, I was clueless when it came to machinery. I spent a long two years learning bits and pieces here and there. The hands on experience was great but still I was lacking a full understanding of the equipment and the foundational knowledge needed to truly be successful at my job.

In the midst of this struggle an opportunity that sounded too good to be true planted itself right in front of me. Vermont Precision Tools was growing and was talking about an expansion to keep up with demand. With the expansion would come an increased demand for educated employees. Vermont Precision Tools understands that their greatest asset is the employees so they teamed up with Vermont HITEC. There was a lot of talk about what Vermont HITEC was going to do for us as a company and after two successful programs there was no denying its positive impact.

This program is an intensive eight-week course with curriculum designed to cover absolutely everything students will need to be successful when they become employees. As an existing employee of two years, I was witnessing all these newly hired people come onto the shop floor using proper terminology, feeling confident about measuring equipment and prepared for machinery use. It was unbelievable how quickly we could train these new hires. The HITEC program made such an impact that the company decided to offer an incumbent program. This gave existing employees the chance to apply and interview for a seat in the classroom. I knew that this was my chance. I wanted this opportunity so badly.

On the first day of class my head was pounding and I felt completely overwhelmed by the amount of information delivered. By the end of the first week, I was solving mathematical equations that I would have never imagined I could solve. By week three, I was writing programs from scratch. By week 6 I had made it through algebra, trigonometry, print reading and so much more. This program not only gave me the education I needed, but it motivated me to construct a schedule and a routine. I found more time in my day and I was filling it with productive and healthy habits. I built a relationship with my instructor and project leader allowing me to communicate my career goals and be guided in the right direction. I gained team building skills with my co-workers and challenged myself to step outside my comfort zone. By week eight, I was feeling confident for the first time in my life. Three months after graduating the program I was confronted by upper management with a potential job offer. I had been selected to be a teacher's assistant for the next program. Not only did I receive college credits, a pay increase and great friendships from this program, but I received a phenomenal opportunity to build a future I had never imagined was possible without a college degree.

Presently, I am about to enter the start of another program as an instructor in training. The HITEC program transformed me from someone who was unsure what his future would look like to a person who is intrigued, knowledgeable and eager to share this opportunity. I cannot put into words all that comes from a learning experience like this...it is truly life and career changing. I encourage anyone who is reading this to make that first step toward that future you could not even imagine. Opportunities like this are few and far between so don't let this slip by.

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No prior experience or education is required. Go to www.vhitec.org to apply to be a part of this next program and opportunity to work for an amazing employer who believes in their workforce!

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