

Alumni shine at Yahoo! Lockport

by Charles Greenley - Tuesday, January 11, 2011

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/8243/alumni-move-on-to-the-big-time-at-yahoo-in-new-york/>

As recent UW Oshkosh graduates and Yahoo! employees, they were already doing quite well.

But when Yahoo! gave Ashley Gauthier, Andrew Abraham, Matt Chisholm, Brian Sanders and Grant Best the chance to work full time at a new office in Lockport, N.Y., this raised their success to another level.

More than the average technician

It sounds like the typical computer science major's post-graduation story, except that it isn't for Gauthier, who is a service desk technician and incident management specialist at Yahoo! Lockport.

"I majored in history with a minor in Spanish and philosophy," said Gauthier, a December 2009 graduate. "There are a couple of us [from the Oshkosh group] who have different majors."

Gauthier said these varied experiences at the University, including her two years at the Oshkosh Yahoo! Service Desk, prepared her for the move to New York.

"The communication skills are irreplaceable," said Gauthier. "At Oshkosh you have to take general education classes, like English and speech; they help you more than you realize. And knowing Spanish is nice because I can do those work tickets as opposed to those techs who can't speak Spanish."

Thanks to this versatility, Gauthier juggles other tasks in her new position.

"I do incident management and service desk stuff like other techs," said Gauthier. "I also answer live chats and phone calls. I have special projects, like RSA token [a six-digit code that allows Yahoo! employees to work from home] ordering for all of Yahoo!, and I handle all the ordering for the offices."

Gauthier's role at Yahoo! Lockport—and her ambitions—are also expanding. She sees a bright future for herself at the 120-employee office, which continues to add more people.

"The longer you're here, the more responsibility you're given," said Gauthier. "There's always more room for growth. I'd like to help with training and documentation in the future, and I also would like to stay with incident management because it's a lot of fun."

A good fit

Abraham, a May 2010 graduate with a BBS in management information systems, took a more direct path to New York.

“The skills I learned in the MIS program at UWO were quite useful for my current position,” said Abraham. “I do minimal programming in my position, but the project management skills are very useful. Even though I am not a project manager I work with them frequently.”

Abraham started out with Yahoo! Oshkosh in 2008, and now provides IT support to all work-from-home employees, as well as Yahoo! offices in six cities, including Chicago and Detroit.

“My responsibilities range from replacing busted hardware to coordinating network and infrastructure upgrades,” he said. “Basically anything IT related in the offices I support comes through me, but a lot of the time I work in hand with other IT teams.”

Though Abraham has ascended from a service desk team member in Oshkosh to hiring contractors for on-site IT work at the locations he oversees in just two years, he plans to keep soaring upward.

“My career goal is to be an Apple Systems Administrator,” said Abraham. “Currently I am on schedule to start my MBA in September 2011 at the University of Buffalo and will be taking several Apple certification courses between now and then.”

Onward and ever upward

It all started for Gauthier and Abraham when they submitted resumes online, then had an interview at the UW Oshkosh Business Success Center (formerly called the Center for Community Partnerships).

“I received an email from Yahoo! with some info about the position and I submitted my resume and was then contacted by the BSC for an interview,” Abraham said.

After they both nailed the initial interview, the BSC recommended them to Yahoo!

“They [the BSC] e-mailed me saying ‘we think that you’d be a fit for this. Come in, have an interview,’” Gauthier said. “I had an interview with my boss’ boss, Maggie Rangel, and then a couple weeks later I got the job offer from Yahoo!”

While Gauthier and Abraham see their roles expand within a major global company, many current UW Oshkosh students are just a step away as they work at the Yahoo! Service Desk on Wisconsin Street.

Inside those walls about 30 students are providing IT support for the company and gaining the skills to move onto a career after graduation. The upshot for UW Oshkosh students is once interns move on in their careers more students will be needed to replace them.

The Business Success Center, formerly the Center for Community Partnerships, was founded in 1998 to give the public greater access to faculty, staff and students from UWO as well as community-based experts, offering customized training, applied research, survey services, business consulting and student internship programs to local businesses.

Students interested in internships can contact Chad Kopitzke at (920) 424-2041 or kopitzkc@uwosh.edu. Businesses and organizations can contact Doug Jarmusz at (920) 424-2366 or jarmuszd@uwosh.edu.