

Millwood, Inc.

CSIS 4893 Advanced Internship

Kurt Ketcham

8/2/2007

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Company Description	5
Position Description.....	6
Discussion	
Internship Experiences.....	7
Personal Interaction	9
Problems and Opportunities.....	10
YSU/CIS Background.....	11
Strengths and Weaknesses	12
Conclusion	13
Future Learning.....	14
Appendix A	
Work Schedule.....	15
Appendix B	
Resume.....	16

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Tim and Dennis for their guidance and leadership during my internship at Millwood, Inc. Their knowledge and instruction have helped me grow not only as a person, but as an IT professional. Under their tutelage, I have been able to increase my knowledge about the information technology field.

It is my goal to one day become an IT professional in a similar position as that held by my leaders at Millwood, Inc. Their time with me has brought me one step closer to finally realizing that goal. Not only has it been a privilege to work at Millwood, Inc., it has been an honor that I will be forever grateful for.

Introduction

The CSIS 4893 Advanced Internship course is designed to be an academic and industrial experience in which the student works in a position in the area of computer information systems, information technology, or computer science for a semester. I was provided the opportunity to participate in the course during the summer semester of 2007 at Youngstown State University. For the course, I was able to use my existing employment at Millwood, Inc. as my internship. I have been employed at Millwood, Inc. since September of 2005 as a help desk technician.

During my time at Millwood, Inc. I have been tasked with numerous problems and opportunities that have led me to increase my knowledge and respect of the information technology field. All of the issues I have been tasked with have provided me a deeper understanding of how a help desk works and operates. My experiences have also given me insight as to how an IT department functions in a smaller business. While the company may be smaller than most international corporations, it still suffers from the same technical hurdles and troubles.

It has been both an opportunity and an experience to perform my internship at Millwood, Inc. The tips and techniques that I have learned will undoubtedly serve me well in my goals for the future. While the work involved was sometimes tedious and uneventful, all of the work was worth the effort as you can learn more things from working in the field than you ever will while sitting in a classroom.

Company Description

Millwood, Inc. is an industry leader and innovator of unit load and packaging materials products and services as well as a lead supplier of lumber, pallets, and related wood packaging materials worldwide. Both independent, small business facilities and Fortune 500 companies have relied on Millwood, Inc.'s pallet management expertise to provide strategic sourcing initiatives for over 40 years.

The latest technology in packaging systems, material handling applications, industrial wood products and pallets has made Millwood, Inc. a popular choice for companies selecting an international integrator and manufacturer. Millwood, Inc. handles stretch and shrink wrap film and equipment, new and recycled pallets, packaging system integration, case packaging, and manual and automated strapping machinery. The heart of Millwood, Inc. is its new and recycled pallet industry. With 18 pallet manufacturing and recycling facilities spread across the northeast coast and the Midwest and two corporate headquarters based in the Youngstown, OH vicinity, the company is able to serve a large region with many customers.

What began as a small family operation has grown into a large player in the shipping materials industry. Within the past decade, Millwood, Inc. has grown by leaps and bounds and has further expansion plans on the horizon. From an IT perspective, the company's IT department was started in the mid-1990s when Tim purchased an old Macintosh to assist the accounting department in their day-to-day activities. Currently, the company has over 250 computer users connected to top-of-the-line networking servers with high-speed internet connections at each facility with expansion plans under development.

Position Description

Since September of 2005 I have been working as a help desk technician within the IT department of Millwood, Inc. With this position come the typical responsibilities associated with any help desk technician: answering troubleshooting calls and e-mails, computer maintenance, computer upgrades, server maintenance, user and e-mail management, and a host of other things. For the most part, these duties have changed little since pursuing my internship at the company. I am still utilized in the same capacity and more.

Due to the size of Millwood, Inc. and its stretch across certain areas of the United States, it is sometimes necessary to travel to our facilities for computer service and instruction. The company is also implementing and integrating new and improved systems and hardware slowly but surely. It is my job to lend a hand wherever I can in these areas. While such implementations and integrations may not be my specialty, they all relate to the IT field and participating in work associated with these projects assists in my overall understanding of how IT departments function and gives me an introduction to some corporate software and hardware that may have, up until now, been foreign to me.

Thanks to my education and personal hobbies, I have excelled in certain areas of support. My background in networking has come in quite handy as I have been tasked with not only physically running network cables on many occasions, but with troubleshooting numerous networking issues such as internet connectivity.

Internship Experiences

Over the course of my internship at Millwood, Inc., I have had many experiences from which to learn from. The most common task that I experienced during my internship was troubleshooting printing issues within the organization. Due to our unique networking setup, printing can sometimes be a difficult task. Millwood, Inc. began utilizing terminal servers roughly a year and a half ago and the use of these servers is ever increasing. While we have rolled out thin clients (to connect to terminal server sessions) to a few of our plants, most of our facilities use standard Windows XP Pro PCs to connect to our terminal servers, which run Windows Server 2003. All of our servers are hosted at our corporate headquarters in Girard, OH. This means there are typically no print servers on-site. So, users must send print commands from their TS sessions at their PCs to the server which sends the print job back to the printer (basically one giant round trip). Because of this setup, print spoolers occasionally die and printer disconnects can occur. I am usually relied upon to correct all of these issues.

Being young and willing to drive anywhere has allowed the company to send me to some of our plants for servicing and instruction. My biggest trip during my internship was to our Columbus, OH facility to swap out some broken thin clients for custom made thin clients out of regular PCs and to convert some users to new thin client machines. I have also assisted in setting up a completely new network at one of our plants before.

There have also been moments of technical emergency at the company that have required my assistance to overcome. About midway through my internship we were attempting a router upgrade in the middle of the workday. While the upgrade itself went smooth, we wanted to increase bandwidth on our internet connection from a single T1 to a bonded T1 connection using

two T1 lines. Due to some errors on behalf of our network programmer and our ISP, some technical errors occurred. I was able to use skills learned from my time at YSU to help troubleshoot and correct the issue.

There are also times when being a good researcher has paid off. An example was when several of our users were getting e-mails bounced back to them with errors coming from our Exchange server saying there was a communications error with the destination server. Through my research I was able to discover that the budget registrar GoDaddy.com had began running its own private blacklist server and was blacklisting any e-mail server that did not have certain security credentials. With my research and assistance we were able to rectify the issue for our users.

A big part of my job is to setup new computers for use by our users. This includes not only new computers, but formatting and configuring older computers as well. When I originally started at the company, our users were utilizing computers as normal PCs with full access to Windows XP. Since I started my internship, we have began converting users over to thin client computers. While we have purchased actual thin clients for our users, it is cheaper to take an old computer, format it, install Windows XP Pro, and strip it down to a custom thin client. For all intents and purposes, these custom thin clients work the same as regular thin clients and are more flexible than regular thin clients. We use a program called pcAnywhere to remotely take control of computers for troubleshooting purposes. Regular thin clients will not allow us to use this program, but with our custom thin clients we can use the program to see what is on the users' screens to expedite the troubleshooting process.

Personal Interaction

An interesting aspect about being a help desk technician is that you will interact with more people than you really expect to. I can remember working for a corporate service center with a different company many years ago. The service center handled service calls from all of its customers, which happen to be all of its DSL customers. I personally found the experience very undesirable due to inadequate training and simply not understanding the subject matter.

While the Millwood, Inc. IT department is much the same as that corporate call center, it is very different. While people still call me with their technical issues, I am typically dealing with the same people every day. Our end users comprise a fairly small group of about 250 users. Over the course of my time at Millwood, Inc., I have likely spoken to most of these users via the telephone or e-mail. For the most part, turnover is low for any of our users that use a computer, so I am always dealing with the same people. This makes troubleshooting their technical issues an easier process.

At the corporate office, I primarily deal with my boss, Tim, and fellow technician, Dennis. Tim serves as a supervisor for both of us and usually hands us larger tasks to tackle over the course of a day, week, or month. While Dennis may be equal in status, his experience and age have yielded him much knowledge that he has been more than willing to pass along to me. With their assistance, I have been able to understand IT like never before.

Problems and Opportunities

As I stated earlier, many issues have arisen in my time with the company for my internship. While the typical problems include printing issues and computer setups, being able to tackle these mundane issues has proven my ability to keep up with day-to-day tasks that may not always be on the leading edge of exciting. There have also been times that can be classified as emergencies when my presence is simply appreciated because I can just be a helping hand. It is in these circumstances when I stand to learn the most.

In the middle of these extremes are the interesting and intriguing issues that tend to pop up from one day to another. These have been as simple as data conversion to things as complex as the assisting in coordinating software integration. These experiences are traditionally unique in nature and help to reinforce my understanding of different topics. There has definitely been plenty of problems and opportunities for myself over the span of my internship with the company and I have attempted to solve the problems and seize the opportunities to the best of my abilities. So far, it has paid off with praise and recognition coming from my superiors.

YSU/CIS Background

During my time at Youngstown State University, I have been heavily pursuing a four year degree in Information Technology. The curriculum has revolved around not only hardware and software, but resource management as well. I have spent much time in networking courses, especially portions of the Cisco networking curriculum. This networking experience has proven quite handy during my internship which leads me to believe that a good understanding of network basics will assist me greatly in the future.

Courses in various programming languages and considerable time spent understanding databases have been quite helpful. These courses gave me a basic understanding as to how Millwood, Inc. worked before I ever realized it. Database management is a large key to the company's growth and being able to understand how the databases work has been quite helpful.

The resource management aspect of some of my courses has given me a greater understanding of what my boss goes through on a daily basis. While resource management is not necessarily my cup of tea, I have a much better understanding of what it takes to excel in the corporate world that makes up IT. This has given me insight as where to focus my abilities in the future.

Of course, the basic hardware courses that YSU has offered me will always serve me well. Understanding how a computer operates when dealing with hardware and software is something that is primary to an IT professional. Without such a background, I would not be able to succeed in the field.

Strengths and Weaknesses

While my overall experience at Millwood, Inc. has been very positive, there have been times where I am sure I have not lived up to my full potential. When I first started with the company, the help desk was a one man operation that suffered from delayed response times. Since beginning my employment we have solved these response time issues and that has allowed us to move on to bigger and better things. A downside is that since the company's technology is running much more efficiently nowadays, there tends to be days when there is really not much to do. One of my weak points is that on days such as these it can be difficult for me to find work to do.

However, something will inevitable pop up and make my day interesting again. I may not be the most knowledgeable person when it comes to the company's technology, but I have proven my worth time and time again. I have a willingness to learn which has allowed me to slowly take on higher responsibilities within the IT department. Not every technical issue will be solved in fifteen minutes either. I have been known to remain very patient during the course of troubleshooting to reach a resolution. OF course, being resourceful has helped as well. There are sometimes issues which no one in the office has much of a clue about, so being able to dig up resources about whatever issue it may be has become a valuable asset.

Conclusion

While I have been employed by Millwood, Inc. for almost two years now, my experience during my internship with the company has proven extremely valuable. There has been many experiences from my internship that can be considered mundane and there are those which can be considered heart-pumping. It has all been a big experience that has proven enlightening.

The whole internship has given me new insight into the IT field in general. Every moment spent at Millwood, Inc. has taught me something new and different that I would never have learned sitting in a classroom. If anything, the internship has proven that on-the-job experience will always decide who stays and who goes in a business. A class can only teach you so much, but job experience can teach you so much more.

While my internship may be nearing completion, my tenure at the company is not. I am expecting to continue to work for Millwood, Inc. for some time to come. They represent a family not seen in the modern corporate world and its impact has affected me and how I live my life. While my experiences from my internship may serve me well in the future, they are currently serving me in a great capacity at Millwood, Inc.

Future Learning

Future and continued learning are always a consideration, especially when you live and work in the IT field. The first step for me is to continue my progress towards my four year degree and I am almost there. Certifications in various areas of IT will, of course, increase my worth to a company. So, pursuing different certifications is a definite possibility upon graduating from YSU. Whether I stay at Millwood, Inc. or if I move on to another company, I will likely be continuing my education in some form. Each company uses some sort of proprietary software that will require training and education on. Also, technology is ever-evolving which means I will likely spend a lot of time with whatever company upgrading their hardware over time.

Appendix A – Work Schedule

1st Six Week Summer Semester

- Monday: 8:00AM to 10:00AM and 1:00PM to 5:00PM
- Tuesday: 1:00PM to 5:00PM
- Wednesday: 8:00AM to 5:00PM
- Thursday: 1:00PM to 5:00PM
- Friday: Off

2nd Six Week Summer Semester

- Monday: 1:00PM to 5:00PM
- Tuesday: 8:00AM to 5:00PM
- Wednesday: 1:00PM to 5:00PM
- Thursday: 8:00AM to 5:00PM
- Friday: Off

Appendix B – Resume

Kurt Austin Ketcham
5525 Cadwallader Sonk Road
Fowler, OH 44418
(330) 637-8910
KurtKetcham@neo.rr.com

- Objective** To obtain an entry-level position in the Information Technology Field with advancement based upon performance and/or education, while attending Youngstown State University.
- Education** Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio
Currently Pursuing Bachelors of Science in Information Technology
Minor: Geographic Information Systems
GPA: 3.65 (on 4.0 scale)
- DeVry University, Columbus, Ohio
Dates of Attendance: July, 2003-February, 2004
Major: Computer Information Systems.
- Trumbull Career and Technical Center, Warren, Ohio
Dates of Attendance: August, 2001-June, 2003
Program: Information Technology College Tech Prep
- Course Highlights** A+ Certification coursework
Adobe Illustrator CS2
Adobe Photoshop CS2
Cisco Networking Academy Program
HTML/JavaScript
Macromedia Director MX 2004
Macromedia Dreamweaver 2008
Macromedia Flash 2008
Microsoft Access 2003
Microsoft Office 2003
Microsoft Visio 2003
Perl
PHP
Visual Studio .Net
- Related Experiences** 2005-Present
Millwood, Inc.
986 Tibbetts-Wick Road
Girard, Ohio 44420 Phone: (330) 539-5460
Supervisor: Tim Light
Job Title: Help Desk Technician
Responsibilities: Computer troubleshooting, computer maintenance, server maintenance, user account maintenance, and technology inventory

2003

Trumbull Career and Technical Center Adult Training Center

1776 Salt Springs Road SW
Lordstown, OH 44481 Phone: (330) 824-2588
Supervisor: Frank Fuller

Job Title: Web Site Development

Responsibilities: Designed web site for the TCTC Adult Training Center

2002 – 2003

Living Lord Lutheran Church

851 Niles-Cortland Road NE
Warren, OH 44484 Phone: (330) 856-5302
Supervisor: Pastor Tim Mentzer

Job Title: Web Site Development

Responsibilities: Designed and maintained web site for the church

2002

Trumbull Career and Technical Center

528 Educational Highway
Warren, OH 44483 Phone: (330) 847-0503
Supervisor: Debbie Williams

Job Title: Technical Consultant

Responsibilities: Web site development, and computer hardware/software technician

Honors and Awards

Dean's List, 2003-2007
3rd place Business Professionals of America State, Web Site Design, 2003
1st place Business Professionals of America Regional, Web Site Design, 2003
Eagle Scout, 2002

Activities

High School:
Boy Scouts of America
National Honor Society
National Vocational Technical Honor Society

References

Tim Light
Millwood, Inc.
986 Tibbetts-Wick Road
Girard, Ohio 44420 Phone: (330) 539-5460
tlight@millwoodinc.com

Dennis Rettger
Millwood, Inc.
986 Tibbetts-Wick Road
Girard, Ohio 44420 Phone: (330) 539-5460
drettger@millwoodinc.com

Michael Cox
5457 Warren-Sharon Rd
Vienna, OH 44473 Phone: (330) 856-9471