

Integrated Systems Technology Employment Report

James Kamba

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After several years of employment in the electronics industry, James Kamba of Chicago Ridge, Illinois decided that it might be time to look for a more promising and stable career with a future. Although he was comfortable with his current position, he was unsure of the long-term viability of the industry. One of his first stops was Moraine Valley Community College (MVCC) in Palos Hills, Illinois. Kamba shared his concern with Michael Welch, an instructor at MVCC. Welch suggested that, if Kamba were laid off, he consider upgrading his skills and enrolling in the new Integrated Systems Technology (IST) training program.

Within weeks of that conversation, Kamba’s worst fears became reality – he was laid off from his job as an Electronics Technician at Boundless Technologies in Schaumburg, Illinois. Due to his previous inquiries at MVCC, Kamba was able to complete the necessary paperwork and go through the assessment process with the President’s Office of Employment and Training (POET) and enter the IST training program after only one week of unemployment.

Kamba soon realized that the IST program was a great fit that came along at the perfect time.

It seems that “timing is everything” for Kamba. Soon after completing his training, he received a phone call from Georgia Pacific in Chicago, Illinois and on October 3, 2003 he was offered a position as a Maintenance Mechanic for the company. Kamba had high praise for his instructors at MVCC and for the IST training program.

“The IST instructors are there for you even after you’ve completed the class. After receiving a call for the interview at Georgia Pacific, I wanted to refresh my skills on some of the equipment. The instructors let me come in and use open training stations to refresh my skills. They also answered some of my questions that helped prepare me for the interview,” explained Kamba. He further indicated that this impromptu refresher course was instrumental in receiving his job offer from Georgia Pacific.

Kamba suggested that he is using, on a daily basis in his new job, everything he learned during his



IST training. When asked how the training prepared him for his job, Kamba responded, “It helped me tremendously. Without the skills I learned in the IST program, there isn’t any way I could have gotten this job. All of the equipment in the plant is run by Programmable Logic Controllers. Just the other day, one of the PLCs went down and I helped troubleshoot and repair it,” explained Kamba. “I love my job!”

Referring to Kamba’s experience as a program participant, IST instructor Michael Welch explained, “Kamba was a very active participant who always put forth the extra effort to learn the details of a problem.”

It seems that Kamba’s employer is equally pleased. “James is working out very well for us. He is a quick learner. Even though he’s only been with us for a short time, he is already able to jump right in and troubleshoot our equipment,” explained Jay Darling, Kamba’s supervisor at Georgia Pacific.



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