



# TAKING BUSINESS TO SCHOOL:

# SIEMENS

It's no secret that one of the best ways to determine if prospective employees will succeed is to create a way to observe, evaluate, train and support them early in their careers. Siemens, a German-based company, has brought one of that country's most successful workforce training models over to Charlotte, North Carolina.

## The Story

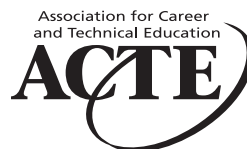
Siemens is not unlike many businesses when it comes to its workforce. An increasing number of baby boomers are retiring and the skills needed to succeed are changing. This is creating a critical issue for the company when it looks at its current workforce and its needs for the future.

This is especially true in Charlotte, North Carolina, where the company has been expanding and developing new product lines. Since early 2011, Siemens has nearly doubled its manufacturing space in Charlotte and hired nearly 750 new employees.

Although the initial hiring of a skilled workforce presents its challenges, ensuring that the company has a steady pipeline of talent was even more of a concern. That is why Siemens teamed up with Central Piedmont Community College (CPC).



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## STUDENT SUCCESS STORY

### How it Works

In 2011, Siemens piloted the German apprenticeship model in Charlotte. Through a highly selective process, the company chose six high school seniors to participate in the program through which they would work at Siemens, attend CPCC, and if successful, be offered a job upon graduation.

To select the participants, Siemens joined a local area partnership called Apprenticeship 2000. It is through this partnership, which includes Blum, Inc., Chiron, Ameritech Die and Mold, Pfaff Molds, Sarstedt, Daetwyler, and Timken, that companies recruit local high school students. Interested students turn in their transcripts to their high school guidance counselor who works closely with the partner companies to make sure the right students are paired with the right opportunity. High math and English grades are important and the students must have a minimum GPA of 2.5 along with excellent attendance and behavior.

Selected students then go through further screening, including a technical math test, a mechanical aptitude test, and some additional employment tests. If they do well in the screening process, they are invited into a six-week summer internship where they work at a partner company and take two summer classes at CPCC. At the end of the summer, the partner companies make their selections and students are offered an apprenticeship opportunity.

In its first year, 2011-2012, Siemens invited its first six apprentices through this program. In August 2012, the company invited an additional six apprentices. Each apprentice is a full-time student at CPCC and when he or she is not in class, he or she works on-site at Siemens with an assigned mentor. Upon completion of the apprenticeship program, each student will graduate with a degree in mechatronics engineering and have full-time employment with Siemens.

### The Business Case

According to Siemens' Technical Training Manager Pamela Howze, the company created this opportunity because of two factors: 1) The company felt it would begin to lose its long-time workforce as those individuals retired; and 2) It wanted to create a pipeline system that would ensure a steady influx of new talent.

Siemens estimates that it will spend \$170,000 per student over the four-year apprenticeship program. While

### Douglas Rodriguez

When 16-year-old Douglas Rodriguez learned about the Siemens-CPCC apprenticeship program, he almost had no choice but to participate. "When I told my parents about this program, they were more excited than I was," said Rodriguez. "They kept telling me to try harder and harder to get into the program."

The owner of a repair shop, Rodriguez's father knew that a program like this would give his son the skills and education he needed to have a successful career. But it was Rodriguez himself who had to make the commitment. It is a decision he has not regretted.

Now 17, Rodriguez works full-time at Siemens while continuing his postsecondary studies. "This program offered a free education and a guaranteed job," he said. A far cry from where he might be had he not participated: "Looking for colleges and going into debt."

While this opportunity has taught Rodriguez the necessary technical skills he needs, the learning has stretched beyond the classroom. "The three most important things I have learned are to be absolutely sure when making a decision, to stay focused while on the job, and how to effectively manage my time," he said.

Because of the technical and employability skills Rodriguez has learned through this program, he is way ahead of his peers in education, experience and earning power. "My friends are jealous of my opportunity and they want the same," he said.

That jealousy is sure to grow when Rodriguez finishes his degree debt-free, has a well-paying job, and can take advantage of other Siemens programs to continue his education. "This is a unique program that has given me a great future," said Rodriguez.



DOUGLAS RODRIGUEZ WITH CPCC INSTRUCTOR JOHN MUHLBACH IN THE CPCC MACHINING LAB.

the investment may be considered large by some, Siemens believes it is a solid investment in not only its workforce, but the future of the local community.

Siemens does not require the apprenticeship participants to sign any sort of employment contract. Rather it believes that the program, along with the culture and benefits of the company, will entice participants to remain with the company for their entire careers. "It is our responsibility to create a working environment in which these students will want to stay," says Howze.

## LEARN MORE

Siemens Energy

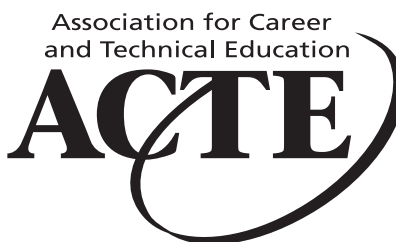
[www.energy.siemens.com/us/en/charlotte/charlotte.htm](http://www.energy.siemens.com/us/en/charlotte/charlotte.htm)

Central Piedmont Community College

[www.cpcc.edu](http://www.cpcc.edu)

Apprenticeship 2000

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