



Going the Extra Mile: University of Rhode Island Engineers in the Global Workplace

John M. Grandin

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This volume tells the story of 15 graduates of the University of Rhode Island International Engineering Program (IEP), each of whom completed a language degree along with his or her full engineering curriculum and spent an entire year abroad as part of a very rigorous undergraduate program. Based on extensive interviews conducted by the now retired creator and director of the IEP, the resulting series of personal case studies seeks to define what these former students gained through their international study and internships, and what difference their experiences abroad have made for their lives and careers. What additional skills did they acquire over and above their pure engineering knowledge? Do they use their new language in their work today? Have they advanced more quickly in their careers as a result of their international preparation and cross-cultural expertise? What can we learn from them now that they are established in the workplace and being asked to look back and reflect on their international preparation? And what might this mean as higher education plans for the curricula of the future? Author John Grandin, who has received numerous awards for his work as IEP Director and Professor of German, hopes that this study will be of interest to all persons concerned with adapting higher education to the realities of today's global workplace. The volume addresses engineering educators, language educators, international program officers, college and university deans, provosts, and presidents, but also students wanting to be sure they are ready for a highly competitive marketplace. The stories told through this collection of case studies are impressive and it is clear that each of these alums has maintained an IEP identity in the workplace and believes that "going the extra mile" as an undergraduate has enabled them to raise the bar personally and professionally and to achieve at a higher and more meaningful level than originally envisioned. The volume tells of young engineers working on the cutting edge in the global automobile industry, the defense and aerospace industry, the chemical industry, and the machine tool industry; it tells of transitioning from bioengineering to the study of medicine and training in vascular surgery, or of addressing sustainability issues for a major corporation located in 37 countries. But it also tells of richer lives, international relationships and marriages, lots of world travel, and the mobility and flexibility to work with team members in many nations across the globe.

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