

Zodiac Testimonials

Brittany McKinney

Since 2012

Training Supervisor and Learning Business Partner

I originally started at Zodiac as I had two friends that called me and said, "You really need to come work out here. The benefits are amazing. It is not super hard work. It is entry level." I said, "You're crazy. I have never used a tool before and I can't put things together." I can train a horse but I've never used a tool. They said that there is good training at Zodiac and the ability to learn. So, I took the opportunity to go for it. I had been in the restaurant industry for eight years before I came to Zodiac. I didn't have any experience and I just decided I was going to go for it because I like a challenge and I like to learn new things. And that I did. I learned a lot and moved around as much as I could to learn more because that is my personality. I was able to take off and be really successful here.

I started as an entry level assembler B – just the very basic position that you can have. I had no college or degree at this point. About 8 months into my assembler role I was approached with an opportunity to become a trainer. I still did not have a solid bachelor's degree although I had some education. I actually love learning so much that I have a culinary degree. I decided that if I was going to continue to progress with the opportunity as a trainer I should go to school. We have an amazing tuition reimbursement program here. It is fabulous for anyone looking for a program to be able to go to school, still work and be paid to go to school by your company. I don't know many companies that do that. It is an amazing program that I absolutely recommend. I was a trainer for a couple of years while I was getting my bachelor's degree and when I graduated from the University of North Texas I was promoted by my wonderful boss to a training supervisor.

Jaris McClain
Since 2013
Manager, Project Engineering

We make, design and manufacturer aircraft seats. I think the neatest thing that we get to do is identify and resolve customer problems. The customer has a need for a product. We are able to take that, and transition it and develop it into a product and then manufacture it. Sometimes it is a difficult challenge that we have to overcome to meet all the technical requirements to be able to deliver and produce a product but that's fun. That is what we do day in and out.

I would tell students: First – figure out what you like to do, what your talent is and try to steer yourself towards those talents, what you are naturally drawn to. Second – study hard, but also be willing to learn how to learn. That can be difficult sometimes. Keep a learning attitude outside of school so wherever you are, wherever you go, you are always willing to take in new information, learn new things as that is how we grow. Third – be willing to work hard. So whatever you end up doing, wherever you end up going, within manufacturing or outside of manufacturing, be willing to get your hands dirty. That comes with learning. Also be willing to think out of the box. Don't always accept things for what they are. Look for opportunities to improve yourself as a person and a professional and to improve your business and the product.

Eric Williams
Since 2011
Fabrication Supervisor

I've had the opportunity to work with some fantastic people here at Zodiac. I think the thing that stands out the most is how everyone cares about what they are doing. What we build here is important. The people here truly care about their job. It is a very good work atmosphere. I'd have to say the people here is the favorite part of my job.

I would tell students, just get your foot in the door for manufacturing in general. Manufacturing is in everything that we see. Everything that is built comes from some sort of manufacturing. Whether it is something physically built with hands or operating machinery, quality engineers or manufacturing engineers, fabrication is in everything. Be open-minded and you can turn this into a career and not just a temporary thing. Fabrication and manufacturing has been a career for a lot of people for a lot of years in our community.

Fred Hughes
Since 2012
Senior Manager of Assembly

In the automotive industry I was spending a lot of time away from home plus had the daily commute. When I came home at the end of the day my wife would have the Gainesville Daily Register out and she had circled jobs for me to look at. She said if you live here, why don't you work here? I started to look in the area and was able to join the team at Zodiac Aerospace.

At Zodiac we have the Community Involvement Committee which is a great committee. It is funded by all the employees here. Employees can donate a portion of their paycheck weekly and the committee gets together to decide how to distribute the funds. We give to great organizations in the area supporting those in need including our schools like Callisburg, Gainesville and Lindsay.

My favorite part of being in manufacturing is that my decisions impact the bottom line every day. So you have an opportunity to not only influence all the employees you have but also influence the company and the direction we are going.