

## **EMPLOYER CASE STUDY**

### ***CDE Ireland Ltd***



Founded in 1992, CDE Ireland Ltd is a dynamic and rapidly expanding company. The company has a formidable track record in the design and manufacture of tailor made equipment for the sand, wastewater, materials handling and quarrying industries. Their areas of expertise include sand washing, dust washing, lignite removal, construction & demolition waste recycling and various areas of waste water treatment.

With a combination of substantial industry experience and a team of dedicated, highly skilled engineers, CDE has established itself as global market leader with a reputation for high quality, hi-tech products and a service level second to none.

#### ***You recently joined the IAESTE programme (2009) and took 3 trainees in your first year. What attracted you to initially employing IAESTE trainees?***

As we look to expand our business into markets where English is not the first language it is essential that we develop the required language skills to allow us to communicate effectively with customers and distributors in these new markets. We have a long history of working with the excellent Universities in Northern Ireland to attract Mechanical Engineering graduates to our team but unfortunately Mechanical Engineering and French / German / Spanish etc is not a well known degree combination. This necessitated that we looked to Universities with a reputation for producing high quality Mechanical Engineering graduates in markets that would allow us to meet our requirement to improve the language skill base within the company.

Our three trainees carried out the following:

- **German Trainee** – assisted our Senior Designer in 3D modelling and development of a pump station for our AquaStore water tank; also provided basic German lessons to other employees
- **Tunisian Trainee**– worked on the development of a sensor for settlement tanks; Worked as interpreter on a live project in Tunisia
- **Spanish Trainee**– continued the sensor project and provided Basic Spanish lessons to other employees

#### ***What do you think is the main advantage of taking on an IAESTE trainee?***

The opportunity to work with them individually over a placement period allows you to get a much better feel for the type of person that you are dealing with – not only in terms of their professional and technical capability but also in relation to how they fit into the engineering team. Our medium to long term aim of involvement with the program is to develop a number of engineers that we can then set to work for us in their home country to help us develop our business. This requires a particular skill set that the placement approach offered by IAESTE allows us to evaluate more fully that would not otherwise be the case.

***How did the students fit in to the workplace?***

We were very impressed on all three occasions with the way that the students integrated with the rest of the team. We have a fairly active social committee and each of the students participated freely in the events that we organise which definitely helped them feel like part of the team.

***What did your IAESTE trainees work on during their placements? Were there particular projects you gave them?***

We had 3 placements over the year. Our German student worked on our out water tank product line. He assisted a senior designer in developing a water tank pumping station and designed it in 3D. He also provided German lessons to members of our sales team to assist in starting presentations in the native language.

Our student from Tunisia worked on developing a sensor that was required for our settlement tanks and also modelling a screen for our layouts. She also assisted in live projects as an interpreter. She also wrote letters in Arabic for other live projects that used that native language.

Our Spanish student also provides Spanish lessons to members of our work force. She also designed settlement tanks in 3 D for production.

***Have the trainees come with the relevant academic knowledge to carry out the work?***

All 3 students have been high calibre students who were able to understand engineering applications and provide value added input to each project they were assigned.

***Has the trainee brought any new knowledge/perspective to the work?***

The students came with a lot of un-biased ideas that gave a fresh look at how we design and do business. CDE take a very active roll in teaching and providing excellent experience and opportunities to each of the engineers that work here

***What would you say to a company considering hosting an IAESTE trainee?***

The company could trust that the calibre of the student that you would receive would be excellent and that all you need to do is manage the student like any other placement. IAESTE do an excellent job of looking after the students in every other way. It was a very easy method of injecting a foreign element into our work-force as our focus on exports markets is our main strategy.

***What have you gained from participating in the scheme?***

Our core reason to do this was to bring foreign engineers into our workforce and get a feel for how to get strong engineers from other countries. This was done very successful and will continue to embark in further placements.

***I believe you had offered one particular trainee further employment after their placement was over, can you tell us more about that and why you decided they would be beneficial to your company?***

One of our students spoke four languages fluently. Whilst on their placement there were a number of project managers who took advantage of the trainee's language skills to overcome hurdles in project management that were previously in place due to linguistic barriers. The engineer also showed a very confident ability to present to upper management and also was able to progress engineering projects. These skills bring a new dynamic element to our engineering team.

***Any other comments?***

The IAESTE process makes bringing in foreign students very manageable and takes the workload and detail away from employers. They are interested in high calibre students to exchange to the benefit of the companies. As we grow as a company we focus more and more on export markets, added this element to the companies workforce can only help us deliver our projects in the future and possible open other markets and opportunities also.