

6/6/2014

Dr. Burton,

I hope you are having a wonderful day and a great summer!

I saw your message on LinkedIn. Thank you for taking the time to write me, it was very nice to see your message there.

My experience at BNSF has been wonderful and overwhelming at the same time. I really appreciate the knowledge that you transferred us in preparation for the real world, especially the one related to SAP. I have to say that without that basic knowledge, the past few months would have been even more challenging.

When I arrived to the company, very soon I realized that SAP is a complete separate world from the rest of our IT department. Many IT employees within the company are looking for opportunities to get a position in our area, so I feel blessed that I landed here so easily.

The first SAP course the company provided was AC050 Business Processes in Financial and Management Accounting with the New General Ledger. After that they hoped I was ready for some customizing courses such as AC200, AC201, and FSC020.

This first year I have been learning from many, many people here. I was asked to join the Project Systems team, learn everything I can about production support, and then move to small enhancements. I was not familiar with PS at all, and soon enough I realized that this is a very complex SAP module. It is especially complex because the company decided to customize SAP to fit the company business processes, including the connection to several legacy systems that feed SAP and that SAP feeds, too.

Part of the challenge here is that I could not use all my time for learning SAP and providing production support, so a few weeks after I joined the company I was assigned to my first project. My job was to analyze the way that issues are reported, analyzed, and fixed. I was supposed to bring a fresh pair of eyes and detect any opportunities for improvement for this process. When I provided my report, I was asked to add KPIs such as Mean Time to Repair and Mean Time Between Failures.

My last project was to analyze the month-end close process and provide a report with opportunities for improvement. I started this project at the beginning of the year coordinating workshops with the Finance Department to learn what they do for close and how they do it. I spent a lot of time just learning the close process in SAP while I was listing all the pain points that the users were providing during the workshops.

We have been tracing jobs, re-indexing tables, changing parameters in some jobs to improve performance, and meeting with those that have a lot of experience with the implementation of SAP here at BNSF. Also, for last month's close, I updated the close dashboard that we use during close and a MS Visio flowchart that shows the process by day.

A couple of weeks ago, I started my very first customization project. They gave me a small, easy one, but I still was able to learn the process on how to make a change in the development environment, test it, move it to the quality environment, test it again, and finally get the BPO approval to move the change to the production environment. It is very interesting how the process works.

As you can see they keep me busy, but I think they are pleased with my performance this past year. I was promoted to Systems Developer as of June 1st, and there is a lot of projects that they want me to get involved with.

During this past year every time I learned something about SAP, Business Objects, MS Visio, MS Project, KPIs, and the importance of understanding business processes, I always told myself

"That is what Dr. Burton was talking about" or "This is why we were learning this in Dr. Burton's class". I believe that your classes, from all my ACU classes, have been the ones with the most value for the real world, and for that I want to thank you.

My life in Fort Worth is great. I love living in the city (I live 7 minutes away from Downtown), and being close to so many great places to visit and to the airport! My mom came to visit again from Costa Rica last Christmas, and she wants to come again soon.

My wife and I will be traveling to Italy for 2 weeks this summer, and I am really excited about it because I have never been in Europe, and Italy has always been in my wish list of places to visit.

Well, I think this is all I had to say. I just want to encourage you to keep shaping the student's future by sharing your knowledge and experiences. As an IS major, I can say that you are doing a great job!

Please let me know if you are in Fort Worth some time!

Blessings,

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Bryan Rodriguez