Challenge yourself at ICT Group

DIEDERIK'S CHALLENGE:
Put my passion for technology to good use for as many clients as possible

Diederik van der Rhee, Software Engineer/Machine & Systems

Two years ago, Diederik came to ICT Deventer for his internship followed by a research thesis. He studied electrical engineering which was mostly geared towards knowledge of hardware systems. At ICT, however, the conversations he had with colleagues and his OM (operational manager) challenged him to take up embedded software design, something he also developed an interest for during his education. "I was mostly interested in LabVIEW, a programming language that enables engineers to write code. ICT offered me the opportunity to become involved in a related project. I enrolled in a few courses and earned some certificates, I think it is safe to say I'm a LabVIEW expert now."

ICT smarter solutions

Network

"In school, I learned a lot but I hardly knew anything. I learned very little about software programming, everything I know I learned at ICT. At the beginning, the learning curve is steep, not only professionally. The first thing I had to work on were my networking skills within ICT Group. The more people you know, the more you'll hear about interesting projects that are about to start and could use an extra pair of hands. With this information, I would see my OM and she would get me in. In my experience, ICT offered me plenty of space to explore what I enjoy doing professionally and to become involved with interesting projects."

Project on location

"My first big project was with a manufacturer of heating systems. I started with an assignment to validate the functionality of the new display, in particular the alignment of the protocol between the processor of the kettle and the processor of the display. Next was a LabVIEW assignment to develop the interface between TestStand and the test hardware. It was especially important to structure the communication with the hardware in a framework. And finally, I used LabVIEW to program a manual test application for the engineers of the Research and Development unit. I really enjoyed that assignment because I was making a reliable tool for professionals who will be using it everyday. The tool required a nice User Interface which is quite a challenge in LabVIEW. This programming language is made for practical use, not so much for aesthetic purposes."

Professional development

After a year of working on several assignments for the same client, Diederik wondered what else he could be doing at ICT. He made a deliberate choice to work for ICT because of its extensive project portfolio with renowned clients. "It is my goal to work on a wide variety of projects with as many different companies as possible. The variation will keep me sharp. My OM suggested to switch to a new project even before I could raise the issue. The fact that she is looking out for my professional development, makes me feel acknowledged as an employee and that's nice."

New challenge

Diederik is currently working on an a project with a manufacturer of production lines, seriously big industry. He is assigned to the Vision department of the unit that makes tire manufacturing systems. These systems carry camera's to record the production process. "It is my job to make the recorded images interpretable. The software needs to be able to recognize a deviation in the application of the rubber strip beyond the allowed number of millimetres and initiate the appropriate action, i.e. stop the machine. I work in a Linux environment with the programming language C++, perhaps not very embedded this time. But I'm still programming with limited space and memory available, so the challenge is certainly comparable. Part of my job consists of making new applications for camera's in new positions. Another part is the improvement of existing applications but the majority of my time is spent on providing support to end-users around the world. I have to go to Canada shortly to provide on-site support, another great opportunity I think."

Impact

"My challenge is to make reliable software applications for our clients. It's great to know that the R&D engineers of my first project are very content with the tool I made for them. I'm currently testing an improved version of the Vision software that will make the camera's function even more stable and reliable. This kind of impact makes me happy. Moreover, I appreciate the opportunities for personal development at ICT and the guidance from my OM and Business Unit manager. The chance to work with LabVIEW, even without any experience, learning networking skills and how to communicate with clients, taking courses and workshops at ICT Academy, it's all invaluable for my career. It take pride in the fact that day in, day out, I'm happy to go to work."

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