



Product Commercialization Co-op at The Hershey Company

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STEP Project Category: Internship
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Project Description

I was the product commercialization co-op at The Hershey Company in Hershey, PA during the fall of 2018. As an engineering co-op, I worked on the startup of a production line to produce our newest product, and have also implemented my skills and learnings in the food technology labs and the pilot plant to determine why certain products were not processing as expected.



Motivation

I have always been very career focused, looking for internships and co-ops since the beginning of freshman year. Having a lower GPA, this was a bit more difficult. But, after readings about Hershey and their ideals, I had to apply to their engineering co-op positions. As it turns out, Hershey was impressed by my work thus far, and has decided to take a chance on me. This chance, and overall experience, allowed me to truly determine that industry is the right path for my future.



Why Transformational

After completing this project, I realized that I want to pursue a career in the food and beverage industry. Throughout this co-op, I was able to combine my passions for both engineering and research to make a positive impact on the company. In the food and beverage industry, I will be able to continue this path while working in a less harsh environment than a research lab — it is much easier to work with chocolate than hazardous chemicals.

Hershey provided many opportunities as a first rotation co-op which not many companies do. They also had different resources within the company to make sure minorities — such as women engineers — felt included and had a support group behind them. This experience illuminated the fact that these are the types of ideals and programs I would want the company I work for to have and will be sure to look for in future interviews and career decisions.

What was Learned

At Hershey, I was able to aid in the start-up of our newest product: a mash up between Hershey chocolate and Reese's Pieces. I was able to see the process from the making of the chocolate to the packaging of the final product. There were a multitude of people and talents that were needed to aid in this start-up, and it truly showed that it didn't matter how smart you were or what your GPA was, but how you applied your intelligence and skills.

Always willing to get my hands dirty and figure out how something works allowed me to be of assistance on the production floor. This led to being asked back to the production plant to aid in troubleshooting a problem on a different line. These skills also led to pilot plant work. In the pilot plant, process equipment and design are tested to determine the ideal parameters for the production of new products and the optimization of current ones.

