

PWP Alumni Story



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My official job title is “Technical Writer,” but I do so much more than what that title implies. I work for a company called Rosenbauer America and we manufacture fire trucks. We’re located just north of the Twin Cities in Wyoming, Minnesota. I am the only one with my unique position (although we are expanding as our company continues to grow), and I was originally hired to compile manuals for each truck. These manuals are used to train fire fighters on how to operate their truck, which is a vital part of fighting fire.

Our company headquarters are located in Austria, and many of our truck designs and components come from there. The manuals that come with each component are translated into English by Austrian Rosenbauer employees. And if you’ve ever talked to someone whose primary language is German, then you know that their English is very proper and not what we call “Americanized.” So another part of my job is to edit the manuals from German English to American English. I find this part of my job fun and interesting, and I’ve become somewhat of a liaison between the Austrian and American plants.

On top of all that, I took on the role of filming and editing instructional videos on how to operate the firefighting apparatus. I am also responsible for photographing the trucks before we deliver them to the fire departments and while they’re in production so that customers can see the progress of their trucks.

While I was at UW-W, I was asked questions like this countless times: “*What are you going to do with that degree?*” I’m sure many PWP students have heard the same at some point. Many people don’t see it as a practical degree to pursue, but I will tell you right now that I would not be where I am without it.

The job I have was originally posted internally, meaning they only wanted to hire from within the company because the job requires a decent knowledge of fire trucks. My brother-in-law is actually an engineer here, and he reached out to me to tell me about the job. I was working as a receptionist in Milwaukee at the time, and I had been searching for something new that would utilize my degree. With little hope, I sent them my résumé. To my surprise, I received a call an hour later.

They hired me out of 74 other candidates who already had a knowledge of fire trucks because I offered something no one else did. I didn’t know anything about the trucks, but I had professional and technical writing experience, and that was what mattered the most. The other responsibilities added to my job have been given to me because I proved that I had the skills to take them on. I can present myself professionally in person and over emails (which is more important than you realize), edit extensive manuals, and use Photoshop. I didn’t initially know anything about filming or editing film, but my coursework gave me confidence in learning new techniques to achieve various purposes, so I adapted to that and learned quickly.

My degree and the training I received was the reason I was hired at Rosenbauer. And I absolutely love my job. Believe me, fire trucks are just as exciting now as they were when I was 8 years old.