3M Cuno: Co-op Job Summary (Fall Semester 2008)

I had the fortunate opportunity of working for the R&D department of 3M’s Cuno division. Cuno specializes in producing water filters for food service, residential, and industrial applications. I was assigned to Mark Stouffer’s media development group at Cuno. I thoroughly enjoyed my co-op experience not only because of the interesting projects, but for the interesting people and innovative ideas.

My main project focused on researching and developing “ion exchange” (softeners) filters for their foodservice. In order to give you a better idea of what a typical R&D co-op does at Cuno, I have compiled a general list of what I had done over the course of the semester. I conducted a literature survey on ion exchange, suggested innovative new ideas based on the survey, built a test stand measuring scale production in water, determined the limiting properties of the filter, and finally evaluated different media types and designs for the filter assembly. Although this process may seem overbearing, it really was not. Spread over several months and working with dozens of employees happy to give help, the project enlightened me to real-world experience and teamwork with other employees.

Additionally, other projects came up that dealt with different areas of product development. You may think that having other projects would interfere with the main project. Quite the contrary, the other projects gave you another chance to test your knowledge, but also another way to add variety to your experience. One such case was designing a “straw endcap”
for a reverse osmosis membrane. As a chemical engineer, this gave me the opportunity to learn the basics of the Solidworks CAD program and design a part that will be used in future filters. Another interesting project I dealt with was continuing research on a consumer filter similar to Brita’s water pitcher. Both of these designing projects were a great experience for me because I know that my designs may affect thousands of water-drinkers in the future.

Since 3M is a global company, I also felt my work at Cuno impact R&D teams around the world. Specifically, a representative from 3M China asked me for help on assembling a new test stand in China. I wrote a document offering suggestions and details about assembling one. Furthermore, I worked on a project to help the United Kingdom on analyzing environmental impact of Cuno UK’s products.

My co-op experience was not all about working either. Often other co-op students have trouble dealing with housing contracts, but headaches are prevented with Cuno’s offering of free housing. Moreover, the housing was very well furnished and was located only 20 minutes from Cuno’s headquarters. The apartment was located in Rocky Hill, CT which has wide assortment of strip malls and a great restaurant selection. Even Hartford is located only 12 miles away. Furthermore, Rocky Hill is directly between Boston and New York City and are within 2 hours of Rocky Hill.

Overall, I liked my co-op experience at Cuno. The best part of the job was meeting the community within the company. Everyone at Cuno is always willing to help. If you have any questions regarding Cuno, please let me know!