

My way to the job part 2

Technical college

My employment as a skilled worker at Philips ended on August 31, 1978. The technical college began on September 6th, 1978, which means that in 1978 I only had 6 days of summer vacation. You know what it's good for. The technical college was called Werner - von - Siemens School and was named after the German electrical pioneer Werner - von - Siemens. The school building in Wetzlar was not very far from the train station. So you could walk from the train station to the school without stress.

The technical college consists of 2 school years, namely the 11th and 12th grade. With the secondary school leaving certificate, you can switch directly to the 11th grade and then acquire the technical college entrance qualification in two years. There is also the possibility of switching to the 12th grade after vocational training in order to achieve the technical college entrance qualification in one year.

For the visit to the technical college, I applied for student loans for the first time during my school education. I even received student loans, namely 51 DM. However, the monthly ticket for the train journey already cost 52 DM. There is very little left to live on. Fortunately, I had saved some money while working at Philips. Of course, I didn't want to lie on my parents' pockets. I was glad that I had room and board free. The subjects taught at the Werner von Siemens School were:

German

politics

religion

Sports

Major subject (electrical engineering)

mathematics

physics

chemistry

English

Mechanical engineering elective

Lessons in most subjects, especially electrical engineering, didn't offer us much new. Differential and integral calculus was only dealt with in mathematics. In mathematics, in contrast to training, we were also allowed to calculate with the pocket calculator and not with the slide rule. With one of ours E-technology teacher once read out the

result of an assignment during a class test. It was about calculating the power consumption of a conventional light bulb. Now the student has calculated 73 watts as the result and then added all the numbers after the decimal point that the calculator displayed, e.g. 73.497263 watts. With this result, the practical relevance is somewhat lost. Incidentally, the student had no professional training.

Another job really influenced me. It was about a six-month paper on the topic of consumer terror. Dealing with this topic was very interesting and showed how easily we are influenced and encouraged to buy by advertising and marketing measures of the companies.

Except for religion and sport, this year was very interesting for me.

There was still a lot to learn outside of school. A radio amateur from Weilburg attended the technical school in Weilburg at that time (1979). And there was a course on microprocessor programming. Then three students from the technical college went to Weilburg once a week in the evening. After the course we went to the pizzeria again.

The school ended with the exams and nothing stood in the way of attending the technical college.

Studies at the University of Applied Sciences Gießen Friedberg (today THM Gießen)

After the end of the technical college you had to look for a suitable technical college. Since I didn't want to invest my BAFÖG (I got the maximum rate) primarily in renting a student accommodation, only a school close to my home was considered. The choice fell on the FH Giessen Friedberg in Giessen. The distance between Weilburg and Gießen is about 40 km. There was also a good rail connection. So I applied in Giessen and was accepted. My former apprentice colleague also took the train every day.

There was something else I had completely forgotten. I should report to the armed forces to do my military service. If I had married a woman that year in college, I wouldn't have had to do military service. But finding a woman on the fly who also wants to marry you is very difficult for me. By the way, I never got married. Still got along pretty well with me..

The course in Giessen began on October 1st, 1979. I still had enough time to work at Philips for a few weeks.

Some of the lectures were very funny (we had to learn standard script and technical drawing) and, above all, very theoretical. About 2 years after I finished my studies, I met an acquaintance from the technical college. How do you talk like that, I asked him after his studies at the comprehensive university in Siegen. Then he said that he stopped before the end of the first semester because it was all too theoretical for him. Since he already had vocational training, he went back to his old employer I cannot confirm the claim that training is very practical at a university of applied sciences. One lecture that was new to us was computing. We were actually taught the FORTRAN programming language in the lectures and on the computer. We had about 30 terminals in one room for practical work on the computer. These were connected to the university computer center via data lines. Another computer was located in an air-conditioned room and was named PDP 11. In the next room there were 10 terminals, a printer and a plotter.

Some students voluntarily learned the programming language PEARL at PDP 11 about 2 years later. At that time, this real-time language was used on computers in urban systems such as traffic light controls, water and electricity supplies and the like.

Now came what had to come. The Bundeswehr invited me to take part in a replica. However, at that time the rule was that after 1/3 of the standard period of study, the student did not have to start military service until the end of the course. When the letter reached me I was already at the end of the 3rd semester and the standard period of study was 6 semesters. Now I had to send a certificate of study to the examination authority every semester and wait for the end.

From the 4th semester, the practical tests began (sometimes until 5:00 p.m.), which were then crowned by a multi-page test report. All reports were made in handwriting because there were no PCs and decent printers.

During this time a professor invited some students on a study trip. First it went to a television technology company in Darmstadt. Our professor worked here as a camera developer (television cameras) for years. Then we drove to Frankfurt to the Hessischer Rundfunk. However, the gentlemen from HR seemed to think we were business students. We learned all about billing and were introduced to the computer. The last stop on the trip was a shortwave transmitter between Frankfurt and Giessen. A red and white mast about 100 m high was provided for the antenna. We were told that it takes about a day to replace a transmitter tube.

From the third semester on, my colleague and I had a car pool with two students from Waldbrunn in the Westerwald. When it was my turn to drive, I was even allowed to take my father's car. I actually didn't want to put this strain on my old car anymore. When we were standing in the parking lot in Gießen on a Monday morning, one of the students from Waldbrunn said that they had a fun fair on Sunday and that there would be a morning pint today. We didn't have to think twice and drove back to Waldbrunn for a morning pint.

During my studies I also took an amateur radio exam. It was the B license, which entitles you to radio on shortwave. Morse code must be heard and given at 60 characters per minute. The whole thing for three minutes at a time.

The last hurdle to the end was a diploma thesis, usually with a practical part and a written elaboration.

Such work can e.g. be offered by a company or a professor writes out work that is then done at the school. I decided to do a job from a professor. The work was actually intended for two students, but I couldn't find anyone who wanted to work. It was about the design and construction of a multi-standard black and white Vidikon camera. Such a camera delivers images with different numbers of lines and frame rates. To build the camera, my professor gave me a lens, the image converter tube (vidicon) and an integrated circuit for generating different video pulses. I should have been surprised that my professor also gave me the prices of the individual parts (expensive).

Since I also wanted to document my work fairly properly, I needed someone to type the work for me. I thought of an acquaintance from old times who also immediately agreed. The problem was that the friend lived in Frankfurt during the week. So the practical work was done in Giessen at the FH and the written work in Frankfurt. And so I commuted from Weilburg via Gießen to Frankfurt, where I lived mainly on currywurst and pizza. Once, on the way to Frankfurt, I fell asleep in the car shortly before the Nordwestkreuz and only woke up after driving over a bump on a collision course on a truck. After I had overtaken the truck, the exit Nordwestkreuz was behind me. So I drove to Frankfurter Kreuz, turned there and back towards Nordwestkreuz, Miquellallee and Adickesallee to Richard Wagner Straße. By the way, we had worked a few nights in Frankfurt and were able to witness the beautiful sunrise over Frankfurt.

After the work on the camera was finished, a 20-minute presentation about the thesis had to be given. Before I was allowed to give the lecture in front of the assembled team (professors and students), my professor wanted to listen to the whole thing on his own. So I put a screen and an overhead projector in the television technology laboratory and gave the presentation. Since the whole thing was probably enough, I then gave the lecture in the lecture hall.

After all the work there was an oral exam of about 30 minutes and then we got our certificates and the diploma.

This ended my time at the University of Applied Sciences in Giessen and now the seriousness of life was waiting for me, my girlfriend. (That was the woman who wrote the thesis for me).