

WORKING IN TARANAKI



Pratik Bhavsar

Course

Completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Project Management at Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki in 2017

Work

Junior Project Estimator/Engineer Technician at Carac Group, Eltham

Why Taranaki?

Pratik Bhavsar loves taking opportunities. A friend who had studied cookery at WITT encouraged him to apply for WITT's Post Graduate Diploma in Project Management. Pratik wanted some management skills to add to the engineering degree he had earned back in India. Pratik is a massive cricket fan and there was no way he was going to study anywhere where cricket was not an important sport. He was pleased to find that many people in New Plymouth enjoy cricket (nearly) as much as he does! Other pull factors for him were New Plymouth's mild climate and its growing range of bars and clubs. So, he traded the hustle and bustle of Mumbai for the beautiful beaches and the spectacular snow-covered views of Mt Taranaki in 2017.

Getting work ready

His first move in New Plymouth was signing up for Old Boy's Cricket Club. With that done he set an immediate goal of getting a job while he studied. Pratik admires Indian cricketering legend M S Dhoni, both as a cricketer and as a person. He has taken Dhoni's belief that "the process is more important than the result and that the result is just a by-product of the process" to heart. Pratik knew if he was to achieve his desired result of becoming a project manager, he had to follow a process of much smaller steps.

One of his first moves was to get an International Qualification Assessment (IQA) of his Indian degree from NZQA (to find out more about IQA, go to www.nzqa.govt.nz and search for 'International qualification assessment'). The next step was to get a New Zealand employment history. He looked for work on SEEK and TradeMe. He was willing to consider jobs, outside the engineering field he had trained and worked in back home if they could add a skill to his CV that he may need after graduating from WITT.

Focusing on process also got him his start at Carac. Pratik was one of a number of WITT students who went on a class visit to Carac's plant in Eltham. By the end of the visit Pratik had asked Carac General Manager, Mike Doyle, if he could carry out the 200-hour investigation WITT expected of him, at Carac. Mike didn't get back to Pratik straight away but remembered him when an opportunity did arise.


Mike set Pratik the task of increasing the capacity of Carac's zinc plating facility. Pratik knew that they could not change the time that it took to zinc plate the metal products, but he could make the movement of the components around the facility more efficient. Pratik completed his investigation, analysis and report well inside the hours he had to log for his course, so Mike challenged him to go ahead and implement the changes he recommended. Pratik's changes increased the amount of zinc plating Carac produced by 40%. Having seen what Pratik could do, Mike offered him a full-time job in December 2017. Pratik's focus on the process of maintaining his grades and meeting his course requirements has led, just as M S Dhoni predicted, to a great result.

Life in the workplace

Pratik had some experience working for Bosch in India. Bosch produced a narrow range of products on a huge scale. Pratik has found that work at Carac is very different. Pratik likes the informal nature and variety of work he does at Carac. He has enjoyed being able to take a client's brief and use his skills to design, manufacture and finish a product that fits their needs exactly. He is proud of the patents that Carac owner and founder John Burling, known to all as JB, has gained for his inventions and loves sharing stories of Carac's work with family back in India.

Pratik is learning many new skills in his job, including providing cost estimates for new clients.

Pratik is very respectful of the management team at Carac and is grateful for the chance he has been given. Pratik says JB and his wife Yvonne make him feel like family. He appreciates the way Mike or JB will take him aside when they need to discuss aspects of his work. This makes him feel good about his decision to work in New Zealand and at Carac in particular.



Pratik loves his new life, is making friends and is keen to stay in a place he sees as “unique”. He hopes to settle and keep spreading the word about Carac’s innovative products around the world.

Top tip for jobseekers

- ▼ “Remember M S Dhoni, your focus shouldn’t be on gaining permanent residency. Break your overall goal into smaller goals. Focus on maintaining your grades, passing your course, developing transferable skills and getting experience in New Zealand workplaces. Do these things and getting a job and gaining residency will be easy.”

Top tip for employers

- ▼ “International students are keen. We have proved we can learn new skills by adapting to a new place and culture. We are used to working harder than expected because we face so much competition back home. Give us a chance and you won’t be disappointed.”

WORKING IN NEW PLYMOUTH



Subhradip Chatterjee

Course

Completed a Bachelor of Applied Hospitality & Tourism Management degree at Pacific International Hotel Management School (PIHMS) in 2019

Work

Front Office Duty Manager at Novotel New Plymouth

Why Taranaki?

Subhradip Chatterjee left his home in India as soon as he finished high school. Coming from Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal and India's second biggest city, Subhradip knows all about customer service. Kolkata prides itself on the warm welcome given to the tourists who flock to its many historic buildings. He had considered a career in science, but seeing how tourism was growing globally, he knew he had to be part of it.

Subh now brings a touch of Bengali hospitality to Taranaki. He sees enrolling in PIHMS' three-year course, with its two extended periods of work experience, as "the perfect decision". It gave him a great introduction to New Zealand's billion-dollar tourist industry. Subh lived in both Auckland and New Plymouth during his studies. New Plymouth's lower living costs were one reason why he stayed on in the city after graduation. When he's not working, he enjoys New Plymouth's unspoiled natural environment. He often walks on the Coastal Walkway, a path famous for its spectacular views of Taranaki's west coast.

The openness of Taranaki's people is another thing he really enjoys. People in Kolkata are more reserved, so Subh finds the friendliness here remarkable. He says the way he is treated by New Zealanders, right from his first contact with them, is the platform for the excellent relationships he is developing.

Getting work ready

Subhradip's first two years at PIHMS were spent on campus. Living in a simulated hotel and experiencing all areas of hotel operations while he was studying helped him learn quickly. His industry placements provided valuable front line and customer facing experiences for his CV. Subh also worked for the 20 hours a week his student visa allowed. Working for Burger King and the Devon Hotel added to the skills he was gaining from his hospitality studies. Even though the work was similar to what he had done on his PIHMS work placements, working for different organisations opened his eyes to new ways of organising and delivering quality customer experiences.



The large number of Indian students at PIHMS meant it was possible for Subh to spend all his time with other people from his home country. So, in his third year Subh made the decision to board locally with a Kiwi family. He did this to broaden his experiences of New Zealand culture. He finds the Kiwis he meets to be very humble and caring. Subh learned many things from his Kiwi family and was impressed by the way his family would do anything to help him out without expecting anything in return. He believes volunteering and pursuing your hobbies are great ways for international students to build their networks and experience New Zealand's unique culture.

Subh has learned that job seeking in New Zealand is unique too. He recommends preparing for your post study job by having good references, a checkable work history and preparing a CV and cover letter that shows you have researched the organisation you want to work for. He told us:

“Back home your exam scores were crucial to getting an interview, here they are only part of the equation. That said, don't forget to stay on top of your studies. Getting good grades is important here too!”

Life in the workplace

Subhradip got a part time job at Novotel New Plymouth about the same time he went boarding. He spent his first 9 months at Novotel New Plymouth working a combination of day and night shifts while he studied. Kiwi employers should remember that international students may come from cultures with more flexible working patterns. As Subh says, “I am not too worried about shift work – that’s part of my culture.”



After he completed his degree in late 2019, Subh changed his visa to the post-work study visa. Graduating with a New Zealand degree he can now stay in New Zealand for a further three years.

With his immediate future secure, Subh accepted a full-time job as Front Office Duty Manager with Novotel New Plymouth. The hotel has people

from all around the world on its staff, so Subhradip is learning about a range of cultures, as well as sharing his stories of India and its people. For Subh, it’s great that he’ll get an opportunity to share his passion for customer service for a couple more years yet.

Top tip for jobseekers

- ▼ “Make connections and build your professional network. After my work experience at Novotel Auckland Airport, I felt confident enough to contact the manager at Novotel New Plymouth via LinkedIn asking for a job. I was invited for an interview, and I am still there now.”

Top tip for employers

- ▼ “International student graduates bring an understanding of customers from their home countries, that a local person, no matter how well trained, can’t match. You may also benefit from the different values and attitudes that we have grown up with. People from India don’t have the concept of ‘unsociable hours’. We expect to work at nights or weekends. We excel in industries where great service is needed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.”

WORKING IN NEW PLYMOUTH



Sharmik Bavishi

Course

Graduate Diploma in Operations and Production Management
conjoint Graduate Diploma in Project Management. (2017-18)

Work

Designer at Armatec Environmental

Why New Plymouth?

Sharmik is happy to make his own choices. Growing up in Mumbai, blessed with supportive parents, Sharmik could have followed his friends to the USA or Canada for study. However, the lure of New Zealand's mountains and beaches was strong. Sharmik exchanged the hustle and bustle of Mumbai for a gentler life in regional New Zealand. The opportunity to live in a small city like New Plymouth, the availability of internship roles, and the fact that WITT would allow Sharmik to complete a double major, helped make up his mind.

Sharmik was very pleased with what he found. He loves the varied environment of Taranaki and is a fan of the many beaches along the Surf Highway, south of New Plymouth. Sharmik appreciated the lower living costs in the regions. He managed his costs by finding part time work within a month, cooking his own meals and using a bicycle rather than a car. Sharmik's clever choices meant he saved money while he was studying – unlike many of his Kiwi classmates.

He chose to join an established flat (house share) so he could learn more about his new country from people who had lived here all their lives. He was delighted by how accepting his flatmates were of his vegetarianism and surprised and delighted that they were willing to try cooking new dishes to share.

Getting work ready

Sharmik knew before he arrived that his visa allowed him to work up to 20 hours a week while he studied. He believes that all international students should have jobs while they learn. His experience shows that having a job while you study provides more benefits than just reducing the costs of studying. He learned about working life in New Zealand while he studied. He was able to put things he learned in class into practice in real life. He also learned about how New Zealanders interact with each other at work.

Sharmik started his job search by cold calling and dropping off his CV, but he found the lack of success he had with these tactics was discouraging. He got some advice on his CV and cover letter from WITT staff, who encouraged him to cut his CV to two pages. He also found out that New Zealand employers will expect you to show passion for a position, as well as the usual qualifications and work experiences he would highlight for a prospective employer in India. You have to show the employer that you want the job and you are enthusiastic about the opportunity to work for them.

Life in the workplace

That's not the only difference between working here and working in India. Sharmik loves the fact that a 40-hour contract means that you stop work after 40 hours. He is not expected to work many more hours than he is paid for, as he might be back in India. During his study, Sharmik's employer, Armatec Environmental, let him work his hours around his studies and didn't ask him to work more hours than his student visa allowed.



Once Sharmik moved to a Post-study work visa, Armatec offered him full-time work. He is often asked by his Armatec workmates about aspects of life in India. The diverse backgrounds of his co-workers mean that lunch breaks become a time to learn more about each other's cultures. Under his new visa he could be sharing and learning at Armatec for another two years.



Top tip for jobseekers

- ▼ “Be patient! Settling into a new country takes time. When you’re looking for jobs, pay special attention to the company values section in the job advertisements. This tells you the type of person they are expecting will apply.”

Top tip for employers

- ▼ “The fact that we can only work up to 20 hours a week while studying means that we international students are the answer when you can’t stretch your resources to a full-time position. The experience we gain will make it a win-win proposition.”

WORKING IN PALMERSTON NORTH



Cindy Nuong Nguyen

Course

Completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Business at Massey University in 2019

Work

Asset Management Officer at Palmerston North City Council

Why Manawatū?

Cindy Nuong did her research before coming to New Zealand. “When I was still in Vietnam, I researched education in different places. I decided on New Zealand because of the good education system, friendly citizens and the beautiful nature.”

Her decision to come to Palmerston North and study at Massey was easy. She wanted to live in a smaller city where the lifestyle is quite peaceful and the living costs are manageable. She had already found out that the Massey business course had a good reputation.

Now that Cindy lives in Palmerston North, she loves the short commute times, the multi-cultural mix of people in the city and the nature around her. Cindy says “I love to be able to see nature out of my window”.

Getting work ready

Cindy is a very methodical person, and she applies this approach to everything she does, making sure that she has a plan and she follows it.

While she was studying, she had a part-time job, working at a sushi shop. She also volunteered (and still volunteers) with the Massey Guides, Massey University Students’ Association, Manawatū multi-cultural centre, and Manawatū

Networks of Skilled Migrants. This helped her to develop her skills, her networks and relationships with many different people, and get used to living in New Zealand.

When Cindy started her course, she had to select some elective papers. To make sure she chose wisely she booked an appointment with an adviser at the Massey University Career Hub. She asked the adviser what types of skills were in high demand and chose elective papers that would match those skill needs and build on her undergraduate degree and prior work experience.

When it came to job hunting, Cindy focused her job search. She only wanted to apply for jobs that required the skills she had developed through her experience and study. But when she first started looking she found it hard to understand what job titles or positions would suit her and she ended up spending time on unsuitable job searches. To ensure she didn't do this again, Cindy applied her research skills. She got advice from workshops, club meetings and experienced advisors and took the time to figure out the best key words to use when searching for job advertisements.

Cindy explained that when she applied for jobs, she would adjust her cover letter and CV to focus on what the employer wanted - "That's something I learned - every job application needed its own unique cover letter and CV."

Cindy also worked hard on her CV. She found a format that got it down to one page - as she decided that employers who have multiple applications don't want to read long CVs.

Cindy found the job search sites 'Seek' and 'Massey Career Hub' were the most useful for her.

Getting her job

Even though Cindy was very methodical about searching for job opportunities on websites, she first heard about her future job from the club she volunteers at - with great encouragement from other club members! Once Cindy found out about the opportunity, she was able to find the job description and apply for the job.

Her carefully planned approach of identifying what she wanted to do, focused searching, networking, and applying for the right types of jobs paid off!

Top tips for jobseekers

- ▼ Volunteering can help you improve your skills and develop relationships with people, which will help you in many ways.

Cindy says, “For me it was important to study hard and get good grades, but I still wanted to volunteer so I could develop my network, share my kindness, show my respect to local multicultural people and develop my skills to integrate well into the local community.”

- ▼ Use the opportunities that are available to you.

Cindy says, “If your university or education organisation runs workshops (to help you with job hunting) you should go and do them.”

Top tips for employers

- ▼ Remember international students have experience with adapting to different situations.

Cindy says, “Our background gives us an advantage in multicultural working environments. It is easier for us to integrate and we will work respectfully and well with other cultures.”

- ▼ International students who have studied in New Zealand (especially a student who enjoys volunteering while studying) have experienced Kiwi culture and developed skills to help them live in New Zealand.

Cindy says, “Those students can fit in easier than you would expect.”