# Transcript: IT Podcast - EP 138 - MSITM Student Success Story - Lavender Boyles and Rick

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Speaker #1: Lavender Boyles

Speaker #2: Rick

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Lavender

Hi, this is Lavender, and I'm here today talking with Rick, a student in the MSITIM program, actually a graduate. He graduated a few weeks ago, and he's going to talk today about the impact WGU had on him and his career. Rick, welcome. Thanks for coming.

Rick

Well. My pleasure. Hi Lavender.

Lavender

Tell me a little bit about the challenges you had while working through the MSITM program.

Rick

The main challenge for me was finding the time to work on the coursework. I'm a slow reader, so any of the courses that had a reading component, which was basically all of them, took me a little bit longer to get through the reading portion of it. But it wasn't so bad because I found that everything that I was reading was directly related to my job, and so I was getting benefit out of it as I was going through the coursework. But I have a demanding job that requires a lot of my time, and it also incorporates after-hours work and on call, so managing my time was critical to getting through the course. Also, for me, a significant challenge came to my surprise during my second semester, which was in February of 2021. My employer announced a reorganization, and with that incorporated, was that I no longer had a position within my organization. They had restructured the company, and I had to apply for a job. It was from leadership level up from a supervisor level, all the way through director position, and at that time I was a supervisor, so I had to go through an interview process in order to keep a position with my company, and I had to alert my program mentor and my course instructor that I might not be able to attend the last semester of the program because I was getting a financial benefit from my employer to enable me to attend. So for a couple of months, I didn't know if I had a job. I did go through interviews, I did make everyone aware that I interviewed with, that I was in a master's program, which definitely impacted my interview. The end of it all, after a couple of months, I did find out that I actually was promoted. I did get a position, actually got my boss's position, and I do know that the degree program that I was in did have an impact on that position. That was a definite challenge going through the program. Thankfully, it worked out very well.

Lavender

Yeah, I remember it was iffy there for a while, if you were even going to continue in the program. I'm glad that it worked out well, and you were. Then my next question is about the benefits to your career that this program has had. Can you tell me a little bit about what you were able to learn here and apply to your job now?

Rick

Going through the program, it was a lifelong personal goal of mine. I had already been doing a leadership job as a supervisor, that the degree would have definitely helped me obtain that position, but I was already doing it. I have a lot of years of experience at my current employer, but I find that even from the very first class that I took, which was the technical communications course, I applied things that I was learning in the coursework for each course right away. The communications course really helped me with communicating through to the department, my leadership, and I applied it immediately, especially on e-mail. I was finding benefit every single course that I took. It was great. That's why I went into the program. I wanted to learn. I love learning. I definitely got out of it when I was [inaudible 00:04:30] it was great.

Lavender

That is good. You put a lot of time and effort into it, and I know you really agonized over some of those assignments and how you were going to get it done, so I really appreciate all the work that you did. What was unique about WGU that helped you get through this?

Rick

WGU, they definitely had a lot of support. The whole entire program, I got a lot of support from you, from my program mentor, and from my course instructors. In particular, one incidence really stands out. I was just about to take my first test, getting ready to get onto the video of me taking a test, I start freaking out, and I sent an email, and one course instructor, who I didn't even have at the time, Jerry, reached out to me and he talked to me for a few minutes and just had me completely relaxed, and as a result, I passed the exam without any problem. But with WGU, I didn't like the self-pace. I liked the completely online experience. Previously, all my coursework, obviously I had a bachelor's degree, was all in the classroom, so this was definitely different, and I did like going at my own pace. I could do my coursework late at night, which is what I typically was doing, or very early in the morning and on the weekends, so it was fantastic from that perspective. The other thing that I find very unique with WGU is when you started the course, you knew exactly what you were trying to learn, you knew what was expected of you, you knew what you were going to learn and know, and what was expected of the course. That was really great. I really enjoyed the program layout very much.

Lavender

Good. Excellent. Then, final question, what advice do you have for current students who are struggling?

Rick

As you know, I did struggle at times, and it was very difficult when I went through the reorganization to stay focused. That would probably be one of my highest recommendations, is stay focused, time aspect to devote. My coursework was very challenging, so I devoted time specifically towards just my coursework, which primarily was the late evenings or early morning and pretty much every every weekend, and there was times, especially before a test or something, or if I was nearing to get a task completed, I did take time off of work, that I devoted that entire day to just working on my coursework. That would be my highest recommendation. Then the other thing is keep organized. When I started the new course, I would print everything out, everything about that course, the rubric, what was expected, and I would read it really carefully so that I really understood what I was to work on, what the goals were, and that really helped. I reached out to my instructors many times. If I had questions, I would reach out to them and have one-on-one meetings with them, and that was really helpful. It definitely saved me a lot of time. I did attend all the cohorts that were available, and those were also extremely helpful. I did take advantage of some of the student services. The writing services really helped me with references, especially the APA format, and then I did reach out several times to the IT Technical Services and they helped me several times as well. There was a lot of support throughout the program. All you had to do is reach out for it, which I took advantage of, and it really helped.

Lavender

Excellent. Well, I'm so glad that you got through the program successfully, it has helped your career, has helped you on a personal level, time management, being organized, and that's always a good thing. It was great working with you and getting to know you, and I really thank you for coming here today and talking about your experience.

Rick

It's definitely my pleasure. I really enjoyed the program and I definitely got out of it what I was seeking.

Lavender

Well, thank you, Rick. You have a good day.

Rick

You too. Thank you Lavender.

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