

Deon Hamilton

Global Account Manager

Siemens

When Deon Hamilton was hired by Siemens in 2007, he was the only Black sales engineer on the industrial side of their sales department. Although he was grateful to be a part of a great organization, there were times when the pressure felt immense. Fast forward 14 years later and he is a Tier 1 Automotive Global Account Manager for Siemens. How did he make it to where he is today?

“It was very overwhelming at times. I felt like the world was on my shoulders,” admitted Hamilton. “But thankfully, some of the core spiritual aspects of myself really played a part in helping me get through that. The aspect of faith, knowing that God has me here for a reason, knowing that I wasn’t here by accident, but that I was intentionally placed here to do great things. It gave me more confidence to push past some of those negative feelings.”

While Hamilton was finding hope in the divine, experienced employees at the company also mentored him. “I will say, I have had some awesome people within Siemens offer advice to me along the way. But at the end of the day, it came down to my personal faith.” Realizing that we all have a responsibility to give back, Deon has sought ways to serve the community and help build bridges between corporate America and the inner city — particularly with LIFT.

He explains that there were several reasons Siemens wanted to partner with LIFT. “LIFT’s location right in Detroit, is pretty crucial for me and the automotive industry that I help serve,” explained Hamilton. “I was born and raised in Detroit, and the fact that there’s a state-of-the-art facility in Detroit, whose mission is to

prepare the workforce, of today and of tomorrow with access to new technologies relevant to manufacturing just resonated with me. That resonates with Siemens overall, in terms of what we’re trying to do, and the challenges that we see in our industry.”

Seeing the possibilities in his hometown for both students at LIFT and the company that he works for gives him a sense of pride. Most notably, the partnership is an example of two entities involved in manufacturing in different ways, and with the same view of what the industry needs.

“Overall, being a part of LIFT and their mission, the fact that their mission aligns with our mission, to really help this next generation as we move into this next era of digitalization within manufacturing is critical,” continued Hamilton. “There are a lot of common points between both organizations.”

According to Hamilton, what makes LIFT unique among the other manufacturing training organizations around the country that Siemens partners with is their well-rounded focus on both education and workplace development. Another defining feature is the fact that LIFT has students and professionals working under the same roof, using the latest in Siemens technologies.



“LIFT has manufacturing equipment on their floor, to help roll out some of these new technologies within digital manufacturing,” said Hamilton.

Hamilton sees the changing technologies in the industry as an opportunity to attract younger workers to replace the many baby boomer employees that are retiring. He is concerned that there will not be enough new employees to fill the gap, which is why he and Siemens are so dedicated to ensuring LIFT attracts youth at an early age.

“There are a lot of organizations that are emphasizing coding to elementary and middle school kids. Learning to write code is becoming more and more important, because these are the jobs of the future,” he emphasized. “We really need to educate and capture the hearts of the younger generation, so that they desire these types of careers.”

Exposing kids to new technology will make Hamilton’s job much easier in the long run, because he likes to hire people who have a variety of experiences. The engineers of today must have multiple skill sets, with the knowledge of how and when to apply them.

“The ability to be agile is becoming more critical, because things are changing so fast. And if you have a wide range of experiences, a wide range of handling different problems, as opposed to specializing in one area, it makes you more marketable as a person in our industry,” Hamilton explained. “It makes adapting to these new technologies a lot easier, because you’re not so focused on one particular area. You develop the capacity to engage on multiple different levels, multiple different areas.”

With Siemens, Hamilton mentors younger employees by inviting them to meetings so that they can see how he conducts business. He sees LIFT as an opportunity to do that for the younger generation, especially with students coming from the same inner-city neighborhoods that he grew up in. When he was the only Black sales engineer in sight, he believed that he was divinely placed there for a reason. The more he is involved with LIFT, the more he sees why. “That’s something that I’m passionate about,

and I look forward to working closely with LIFT and Siemens as we carve out mentorship opportunities to impact the lives of inner-city youth.”