

LEGO® Retail

By Cody Rodrigues



Almost every child that has played with LEGO® bricks at one point or another has said that he or she wants to work for the company. Probably not with those exact words, but usually they want to work in the form of a master builder or set designer. I was one of those children.

Although I played with other toys, there was something about building with LEGO bricks that set itself apart from the other toys in my collection. My addiction (for lack of a better word) really took off around ten years old when I inherited my two older brothers' collections. From that point on everyone in my family knew me as the LEGO guy and knew exactly what to get me for my birthday and Christmas. Usually kids put away their LEGO sets around 12 or 13 years old (the dark

ages), but I'm fortunate enough to say I never experienced one. I kept right on building through high school, and although I wasn't part of the AFOL community at the time, I knew of its existence which made building at the age of 15 or 16 a little easier.

Around 16 years old, maybe a little earlier, I fell into and was diagnosed with depression. It was a really tough time in my life and I remember not having the motivation to do anything. The worst of it lasted for maybe 3 years but during that time I remember I still had the desire to build with LEGO bricks.

By that time my collection was large enough to build my own city and that's what I did. As silly as it sounds, my enormous quantity of LEGO bricks presented me with the opportunity to build a world that was better than the one I found myself in at the time. It was and continues to be a form of therapy for me and really helped me to get through the roughest years of the depression.

It's for that reason combined with the company's values and culture that I decided shortly upon entering college that I wanted to work for the company. I used to say it as a kid, but we all did. As a kid saying that, it holds little weight, but when I decided, both my family and I knew that I was serious about it. I ended up majoring in Spanish and business management with the hopes of working with either HR or in some capacity in a Spanish or Portuguese speaking country.

I currently have one year left in college and can admit that I am extremely nervous about what is to come. Most people when deciding on their major decide on a particular career, I however am deciding on a particular company which makes it all the more nerve wracking. Despite those nerves from time to time, I still have faith and work hard so that I one day find myself working for The LEGO® Group.

With that all said, I got to thinking early on in college what I could do to better my chances with working for the LEGO® Group. I'm fortunate to have been born and raised in Connecticut given that it is here where the LEGO® Group's North American headquarters is

located. I figured one of the best things I could do was do work in a LEGO® store, but upon entering college (2013) there weren't any LEGO stores in the state. However in March of 2014 a LEGO store opened up in the Danbury fair mall. Danbury is a quick twenty minute drive from my house, but it's an hour drive from my school so that wouldn't work. I got lucky a few months later when they opened the LEGO store at Westfarms Mall located in West Hartford.

While it's a 40 min drive from my house, it's only 5 minutes from school. I applied during the last quarter of 2014 and got the job.



Being an AFOL certainly wasn't the reason I got the job, but it helped that I was already knowledgeable about the company's history and product.

Coming on around the holiday time was good because it got me quickly acclimated to the job responsibilities and working retail in general. I'll say this though, it took me a little while to come down from the initial excitement and awe of working in a LEGO store.

Don't get me wrong it is still amazing, but it was hard to believe that this is where I worked for the first few weeks. It goes without saying, but, within those first few weeks and in all honesty ever since getting the job, my LEGO collection has grown quite a bit.

The responsibilities of the job are similar to any other retail job: Provide an enjoyable retail experience for the guests, assist the guests, restock, etc. Although it may seem like a normal retail position, it's more than that for me because I get to go to work after classes and be somewhere where I really care about the company and product, and I hope that shows.

The best part of my job is getting to meet people who are fans like myself. It's one thing to meet other AFOLS like myself but to meet kids and teenagers who are just as passionate about the LEGO brand as I was is the best because you see a little part of yourself in them.

Of course my thoughts on the company have changed since starting to work there. I can only speak for myself here but as an AFOL I was aware of the company, its values, and it's reasoning behind certain things but I didn't put too much thought in it beyond that. Now that I'm both an AFOL and an employee I see things differently.

I'm obviously invested in it more in the sense that it's my job, but on another level I'm more invested in the company because I want to see its continued success.

Working there has helped me to gain a deeper appreciation for the company in a way I might not have as just an AFOL.

One of the reasons is that now I'm exposed to the things that we do on a daily basis and I see that we give a lot back, and it really makes me proud to work for the LEGO® brand.

Another area that has changed is as a fan I might have been quick to jump on the bandwagon and criticize the LEGO® company for certain things, for example: Selling out of product, limited quantities on a certain product, and other consumer (or shopper)-related concerns, etc... But now as an employee I see things in a different way because I've been better shown all the different operations that go into making the product and getting it to the customer.

Overall the change in how I look at the company is positive, there are obviously things that I think we can do better on all levels, but that's part of the growing success, constantly pushing to improve while staying true to our beliefs and really proving that only the best is good enough.

This past November I celebrated my 1 year anniversary working for the company and I'm looking forward to many more.

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