WKEXP 901 Work Term Report

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July 29, 2018

Work term 1

Computer Engineering Software Co-op

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1 Overview

ATB Financial, or Alberta Treasury Branches is a financial institution in Alberta, Canada. Established in 1938, ATB Financial is a crown corporation with 50.7 billion dollars in assets.[1] ATB has over five thousand team members who support the one hundred and seventy-five branches, one hundred and forty-two agencies, three Entrepreneur Centeres, a Customer Care Centre, and mobile and onine banking. These services serve over seven hundred and forty thousand customers. [1, 2]

ATB Financial has a rich work culture. (maybe the 11 ATBs part fit in better somewhere else.)

I joined ATB Financial through its ATB 101 program, with about one hundred other students, fifty in Edmonton, and fifty in Calgary. ATB 101 is a program offered by ATB Financial for summer students of various disciplines. In addition to the work done by each individual in our regular positions, there are events which introduce us to the company's culture. Furthermore, we are put into teams of about ten individuals to solve actual business problems. This functions very similarly to a case competition, except that it runs for four months.

I am a developer working on the future ATB Online for Business Website. My team falls under the transformation umbrella, which makes up a large part of the ATB organization. Its purpose is to "reimagine banking" [3]. Specifically, I'm a part of the digital transformation team. When one thinks of a bank, programming is not usually in the list of things that comes to mind. However, technology plays a huge role in today's world of banking, and online banking is one of the many aspects of banking in the digital world today.

2   Learning Opportunities

In the short time I have had working so far for ATB Financial, the organization has presented countless exciting challenges and learning opportunities. From day one, I was put outside of my comfort zone, presented with the challenge of getting accustomed to a new operating system. Having seldomly used macOS before, there was a bit of a learning curve. Even though macOS is designed to be "user friendly", there are some nuances to get used to coming from a Linux or Windows environment. As soon as compliance training was over, I was given the opportunity to take online courses for almost two weeks to familiarize myself with the technologies that I am working with now. I took refresher courses on JavaScript, and then I moved on to learning about creating web applications using React and Redux. React is a JavaScript framework developed by Facebook, which enables the creation of web UI with reusable components[4], and Redux is a state container for JavaScript apps[5] which works nicely with React. While coding at ATB, I have learned to program and organize my code in ways that are simply not taught in traditional classes.

In addition to coding, I was introduced to the practice of agile workflow. The idea of agile is to work together in teams, fail fast, and to regularly reflect on things as a team.[6] In the spirit of agile learning, the ATB 101 program allows students to further improve their skills by working on a four-month "capstone project" As mentioned before, the ATB 101 program presents real business challenges that we learn to solve in groups. My team's goal was to reimagine rural branches. The goal was to figure out how we can drive a better customer experience by incorporating arts and culture in rural branches, as other banks abandon these communities [7]. In our team of ten people, we had meetings two times a week, as we worked together on coming up with a solution. At the end, each team presents the challege they worked on and the solution they came up with. This process is wildly different from my regular role, which allowed me to improve on my skills outside of programming.

3 Work Preferences

Overall, I really like how ATB is structured. The ATB 101 program is an opportunity to expose students to the rich work culture at ATB

1. prefer management style similar to ATB where trust is given

2. I like the challenges given by ATB, where everyday I'm learning something new and I hope to always continue learning

3. I like the hands off management style where you are responsible for showing up to work on time, keep track of your hours, and take breaks when you should

4. I'm in computer engineering, I don't see myself working in a plant or out in the field surveying anytime soon.

References

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