

Bridging the gap between Germany, Mexico, and the U.S.

Freeing up communications logjams between Berlin and Querétaro: Febo Romero will see to that now

Behind every success there are people. SiemensWorld visits employees and introduces them. This time we met Leonardo Arturo Febo Romero y Maya in Berlin.

**His job: Sales engineer
His workplace: until April 2008
Berlin. Now: Querétaro, Mexico**

Tomorrow will be his last day in Berlin. Leonardo Arturo Febo Romero y Maya is about to give his final presentation. In the afternoon, the certificates will be handed out in a brief ceremony, and then the first of his classmates will be off to their home countries – back to China or India. Febo Romero will also soon be heading home to Mexico. Once there, he will take a week off and then – after a year away – he will return to his job as a sales engineer.

But for this university-trained electrical engineer, “back to work” does not mean simply starting up again where he left off in his home city of Querétaro in central Mexico

12 months ago. That’s when he left the high voltage manufacturing department of the Power Transmission (PT) Division in the Energy Sector. After all, the 28-year-old did not spend the last year in Germany to improve his already excellent knowledge of German and English. He and his 17 colleagues from other Regional Companies in the Energy and Industry Sectors were participating in the first run of the “International Employee Development Year” (IEDY) at the Siemens Technology Academy in Berlin, where they prepared themselves for new responsibilities in middle management. Febo Romero’s goal: He plans to create links to Siemens units in the United States in order to place new products from the Querétaro high voltage switchgear plant in the North American market. “I’m certain that my IEDY experience will be very useful in this,” asserts the sales engineer.

In the first semester, he was equipped with the theoretical tools: Project, quality and process manage-

ment, communication methods, and intercultural cooperation were on the agenda. The seminar participants worked together to solve problems oriented toward real business processes. And this Chinese-Indian-Mexican-German teamwork not only advanced them professionally. It also drove many prejudices past the point of absurdity; and many misunderstandings that might originally have carried the seeds of conflict became in hindsight only a reason for laughter. The IEDY graduates will not totally lose sight of one another in the future. The lowering of culturally-based barriers to communication and the forging of international networks are not only welcome side-effects, but the express aim of the course.

Romero spent his second semester, the practical phase, in the Berlin high voltage switchgear plant, which like Querétaro is part PT. Thomas Dalstein, head of that unit, played a major role in helping initiate the IEDY project. “I analyzed the processes within the internal connection between the loca-



For now, he is just looking forward to Mexico: Leonardo Arturo Febo Romero y Maya

tions in Germany, Mexico, and Brazil,” the 28-year-old Romero said. “I am taking home not only new knowledge

about the potential of software tools like SAP or CADIM, but I now also understand why there is a logjam at many points in the communication between Berlin and Querétaro. Back home I will definitely be a sought-after resource in future coordination processes,” he added.

Strengthened by his experiences, the sales engineer can take up his new challenges with confidence. His success would bridge gaps in two directions: between Germany and Mexico and between Mexico and the United States. And he could even imagine some sort of mentoring for future IEDY participants. A successor has already been identified from his department for a subsequent course. But for now, he is looking forward to a vacation, seeing his family again, and reconnecting with his personal network. He has not been home for a long time. Two of his friends have gotten married during this time, and he was unable to attend the weddings.