Plant tour: Rockwell Automation

On November 21st, the IIE Student Chapter of the University organized a tour of the Rockwell Automation plant located in Eden Prairie, MN. This plant designs and manufactures DC Servo Motors. Two faculty members and five students were present for the tour.

Donald Hebig, plant manager, conducted the plant tour. First, he took us to the training room and gave a brief overview of the company and its logistics. He told us about the history of the company and how they are moving on from their legacy models to new models. He also described what role an Industrial Engineer plays in the whole process.

After the overview we were given safety glasses and steel-toe shoes and were directed towards the shop floor. Donald showed us the whole plant and explained the whole process of manufacturing the stator housing, rotor shaft and the final assembly. He first showed us the manufacturing and assembly of the legacy models (H and F motors). And then he showed us the making of the next generation motors (MP motors). He also showed us other areas like paint-shop, packaging, return goods and test engineering laboratory.

After the shop floor tour we again went to the training room. We had a lot of questions and Donald answered all of them patiently. He answered all of these questions from the perspective of an Industrial Engineer. He explained how CIP (Continuous Improvement Plan), 5S, Lean Manufacturing and “Poka Yoke” is playing a part to make Rockwell Automation world class. It was also nice to know that teams made up of both managers and operators from the floor implemented all these programs. It was a very informative session and we all got a glimpse of what we would probably do after we graduate from the University.

We would all like to thank Donald Hebig for taking us through the plant and explaining to us the whole process. It was a very good experience to see how a manufacturing facility operates.