

Bradly T. Kemp

### **How would your life be improved by winning this career makeover?**

I represent the future of the Fox Valley. After graduating from high school in the U.P., I moved to the Fox Valley in the early 1990's hoping for a better life. At the time, I did not feel college was "my thing". I hoped to land a manufacturing job at a local company and work there my entire career until it was time to retire, like my parents and grandparents did. After a brief stint working for my brother-in-law's fence company, I started working at J.J. Plank in January of 1996. My son was born that same year and we made a home and a life in Menasha.

I have worked for the same company now for 11 years. We are a company that manufactures rolls for paper machines and completes service work at paper mills across the United States. Over the last few years, we have seen a noticeable drop in sales and service orders. In the shop, guys have had their hours cut to 32 hours a week. While it might not seem like a lot, that's a 20% pay cut. I am a reliable employee, I've never taken advantage of my sick time, vacation time, and I've contributed to my 401(k) as much as I can. Now I'm 33 years old with only experience to put on my resume but no formal education to back it up. I know that I can make a big difference and I'm not afraid to work hard.

Receiving this career makeover would be a life changing experience for me. Not only would it make a difference for me personally, but I could set an example for others in the same situation. The lifeblood of the Fox Valley is paper, and for career blue collar guys like me, adjusting to the 21st century economy is tough. I truly believe that I can pay it forward, and if just one or two other guys from my workplace see that I can do it, they will have the confidence to go back to school too. UW Fox Valley would be a great place for me to learn the skills I need to find a new job: it seems so basic, but even learning how to type a paper on the computer is a skill that I don't have. I can do the basics, but UW Fox Valley can provide so many life-long skills that will last far beyond the semester of tuition. This career makeover provides not just the funding, but the connections to jump start the rest of my career.

If awarded this makeover, I am prepared to continue my education after the first paid semester by taking out student loans and applying for grants to invest in my future. My associate's degree will be worth every penny.