

CHRISTINA'S STORY



GETTING STARTED

GC: How hard was it to get in? How did you prep for your application and interview?

C: I found getting in to be fairly simple and straight forward. If you're determined and know that coding is something that you're passionate about, the application and interview process is a breeze. I made sure to spend a lot of time on my answers for the application so that whoever was reading knew that I was dead serious about making a career change! I also made sure to reiterate those things during my in-person interview at Grand Circus. I also made sure that I didn't rush into the decision, enrolling in a bootcamp is a huge investment so I waited somewhere around six months before deciding to take the plunge. Grand Circus wants people that want to be there so if you're on the fence or not completely ready to commit, that's what will inevitably shine through.

GC: What was a life or lifestyle change you had to make in order to meet the bootcamp commitment?

C: I made several changes to attend bootcamp like, making myself into a morning person and taking a leave from my job for eight weeks. I also had to become comfortable with not having the time to see my friends and family as often. Luckily, my classmates and I really leaned on one another and became each other's new family.



CAREER CHANGE

GC: The job search thing – does that really work? Why or how did it work for you?

C: I landed a tech job a few days after the 60-day post-graduation mark, but lots of my classmates landed jobs within the first 30 days! Grand Circus is really great at checking in on you often to see if there's anything they can do to assist with your job search. They have several connections and they encourage you to use them. There's also extensive soft skills training, technical interview training and job office hours while you're in bootcamp and once you graduate. Grand Circus does a lot to help you land a job but in the end, it really comes down to how hard you work at it [the job search].

GC: Why do you think your employer hired you?

C: My employer has hired three Grand Circus graduates and they have excelled in their positions at the company. They have a really good relationship with Grand Circus and I think that's why they weren't afraid to take a chance on another Grand Circus student. Grand Circus prepares us with the skills employers need so that we're ready to hit the ground running at our first jobs out of bootcamp.



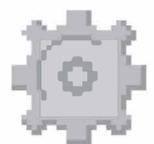
LEARNING EXPERIENCE

GC: What was learning in a bootcamp like?

C: Learning during bootcamp comes at you fast! I came in with a few months' worth of coding knowledge and I still felt overwhelmed the first few weeks. Luckily, my classmates were great and we would meet up and have study groups after class or on the weekends. Things started to really click for me somewhere around the three-week mark. You just really have to go in knowing that you don't know everything, no matter how smart you think you are, and be completely okay with that feeling. It gets better!

GC: How was the learning process managed? Was there time to ask your questions? Did you get enough one-on-one time? Did you feel like you were being invested in as a student? Were your teachers helpful and effective?

C: The instructors were really great about pacing when it came to teaching us new skills. And there were a lot of new skills to be learned, quickly. Usually the first half of the day was devoted to learning, taking notes and asking questions. After lunch we would usually work on Labs, which gave us the opportunity to put what we learned earlier in the day to use. I found that to be the best way to retain all the new information that was coming at me. The instructors were always available to answer questions whether it be during class, office hours or on Slack. There were several office hours available to students and we also had access to a vast network of alumni who were always willing to help out. I could not have asked for a better bootcamp experience, everyone at Grand Circus was so hands-on and wanted to see you flourish.



BOOTCAMP TAKEAWAYS

GC: Why did you end up feeling that the bootcamp was worth it?

C: I ended up walking away with way more than just new coding knowledge. I gained great career advice, lifelong friends, and an awesome network of people willing to help me out in any way they can. When you commit to a Grand Circus bootcamp, you can be certain that they will not leave you hanging after you make such a big investment in your future.

GC: What was something you learned about yourself through the bootcamp commitment?

C: As cliché as it sounds, I truly found out that you're never too old to learn something new. I would say that I thrived by being completely out of my comfort zone. Although I was voted the social butterfly of my cohort, I consider myself to be pretty introverted and I was able to really hone my networking skills and let go of a lot of the imposter syndrome feelings I had during bootcamp.