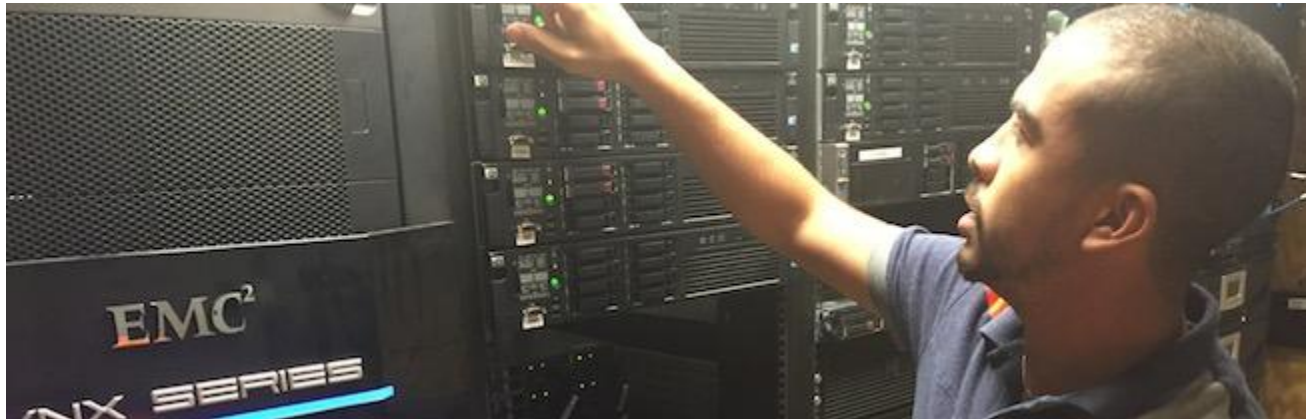


Ayoub's Story: Upgrading His Career



When Ayoub Ouabira '12 started thinking about college, he knew he wanted to take advantage of the dynamic computer technology field. He had always been fascinated by computers and enjoyed the troubleshooting and problem-solving that came along with making them work. After looking into programs in the Boston area, he realized he didn't need a four-year degree to get started. "I was looking for an industry that I could get into quickly, and not take four or eight years before I landed a job." Tipped off by his brother's earlier success at Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT), Ouabira enrolled at the college in 2010. They would become the first members of their family to graduate from college.

A college degree didn't always seem like a certainty. Ouabira graduated from East Boston High School and initially attended a larger state school. Soon, he found the large environment difficult to succeed in. For Ouabira, BFIT's small classes made for a more engaging learning environment. "BFIT was more hands-on and the faculty taught me skills I use on a day-to-day basis at my job," Ouabira said. "It was also close to home and the schedule allowed to work part-time to help pay for school."

Ayoub enjoyed the close connections he developed with other BFIT students. "There was a lot of collaboration. People were in the same place as me. They wanted to go to college, work hard, and get out with a degree." Ouabira was captain of the soccer team his second year on campus, a role he said helped build his leadership ability and taught him how to be a role model.

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After graduation, he wanted to get more in-depth experience in the field and was accepted into Year Up's selective internship program. "I was one of the only participants with a college degree and computer

knowledge,” Ouabira said. “My experience at BFIT allowed me to be a leader within our cohort and prepared me to succeed in my internship at Boston Children’s Hospital.”

He leveraged this new work experience to get a job at Harvard Business School doing technical support and then accepted a full-time job as a Support Analyst at Rue La La, an online invitation-only retail site, in 2013. In this role, Ouabira assists the company’s employees with IT issues. Ayoub not only applies the technical skills he learned at BFIT, he often gets to work with people from all across the company. “I like not being in a cubicle all day. I move around responding to technical issues,” he said. “I get lots of thank you notes from people I help. When I know I helped them get their job done, it’s rewarding; even more than the paycheck.”

Like all BFIT graduates, Ouabira still has his eye on his future and opening up new opportunities for himself. Thanks to his associate degree credits, he’s now taking night classes through Northeastern’s fast-track program to get a bachelor’s degree in 18 months.

Ouabira’s advice to students looking to go to college is to really consider the options available. “Going to a big university, not knowing what you want to do, is not for everyone,” Ouabira says. “Find the right program for you. There’s going to be ups and downs, but you’ve got to stick with it.” Ouabira’s own hard work and persistence have clearly paid off and an associate degree opened up career options he never thought possible before walking through the doors at BFIT.