SheSTEM

Returning to STEM: How Skills Training Reignited Akhtara's Confidence

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Name

Akhtara Khatun

Institution

City University of Bangladesh

Field of Study

Computer Science and Engineering

Current Status

Private Sector Job

www.shestem.org

Akhtara's journey is a story of resilience and rediscovery, as she transformed a non-STEM work experience into a renewed pursuit of her original passion. Through SheSTEM's Data Analytics course offered on the 10 Minutes School Platform , she regained technical confidence in Python, Power BI, and Excel, while learning to balance her full-time job and studies, giving her both the skills and mindset to confidently re-enter the world of STEM.

Akhtara's STEM Journey

After graduating in Computer Science and Engineering, Akhtara hoped to begin her career in a technical field. But like many young women entering the job market, her first opportunity came through a non-STEM administrative role. What was meant to be a temporary job turned into three years, and slowly the distance from her academic training grew wider.

Still, the desire to work in a technical role never went away. She often wondered whether she could find her way back to the field she once loved. The challenge was not only the job market but also a growing lack of confidence after being away from STEM for so long. When she discovered SheSTEM, it felt like a much-needed opening to rebuild the skills she feared she had lost.

"I always wanted to go back to engineering work, but I didn't know where to restart"

SheStem Experience

Akhtara enrolled in SheSTEM's online Data Analytics Course, hoping it would help her reconnect with her technical background. The structured lessons, weekly assignments, and consistent practice gave her a clearer understanding of tools she had long forgotten. Over the weeks, she strengthened her abilities in Excel analytics, Python, and Power BI while managing her full-time job.

From the very first session, Akhtara felt a renewed spark. Coding, which once seemed daunting, now clicked in a way she hadn't experienced before. For her, the course was more than a learning experience. It helped her rediscover a sense of possibility, reminding her that she still belonged in the world of STEM. The exercises, guided instructions, and gradual progression allowed her to rebuild skills at her own pace. She felt encouraged instead of overwhelmed, something she had struggled with in her university years.

She felt the course would be even more impactful if top learners had opportunities to work on small end-projects or practical tasks. She believes this would help learners demonstrate their work more confidently during job applications.

"The basics were taught so clearly that I could follow along with ease, even though earlier I always found it a little tough and harder to grasp"

Confidence and Career Progression

Before joining SheSTEM, she rated her confidence to pursue a STEM career at 3 out of 5. She often doubted whether her long break from technical work had made her fall too far behind. After completing the course, she felt her confidence rise to 4.5.

The shift came not only from learning new software but also from seeing herself perform tasks she once thought she had forgotten. She now believes she can begin applying for data-related roles again.

However, she recognizes the barriers she still needs to overcome. Many technical roles require strong English skills, flexibility in working hours, and a high level of competition among graduates. As a woman in the tech sector, she also knows that navigating expectations and biases can add extra pressure.

Her plan is to continue improving her English, building more small analytical projects, and applying gradually to suitable roles while retaining the stability of her current job. She feels that SheSTEM gave her the first push she needed to believe that a transition is still possible.

Way Forward

Akhtara wants to build a career in data analytics or software-related roles. She hopes for a stable job with regular working hours that allows her to grow professionally without compromising her responsibilities at home. She has already started applying for entry-level positions in data and tech. Even though she was not selected in her first attempt, the process encouraged her to keep trying

She understands that transitioning into a STEM job may take time, but she feels better equipped now. The skills she gained have given her a clear direction, and she plans to keep practising Python, Power BI, and Excel analytics to strengthen her portfolio.

Looking ahead, she sees SheSTEM as a turning point. It served as a bridge back to the field she once stepped away from. With support from her family and a renewed sense of confidence, she is ready to move forward in her STEM journey. Her message to other young women is simple and heartfelt:

"You can always return to your dreams. Even if you take a different path for a while, the right learning opportunity can guide you back. Just take the first step."

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