Manufacturing Operations Manager

Wausau, WI · Full-time · **$100k–110k**

Manufacturing Operations Manager
Location: Wausau, WI
Salary: $100,000 - $110,000 + Generous Annual Bonus + Full Benefits
Benefits: Medical, Dental, Vision, HSA, Life, 401k w/ match, PTO, Holidays
Job Type: Full-Time
Typical hours: Mon-Fri; 7am-4:30 pm – some flexibility
Start Date: ASAP
Sponsorship is not available

Manufacturing Operations Manager Description

Our client, an established custom manufacturer, is seeking a hands-on **Manufacturing Operations Manager** to lead the next phase of operational improvement. This is an opportunity for a thoughtful change agent who understands that meaningful improvement starts with **listening, learning, and building trust**. You'll work closely with the manufacturing team to understand current processes, ask the right questions, and identify opportunities to improve workflow, efficiency, consistency, and profitability. From there, you'll help develop smarter, more repeatable ways of working while preserving the craftsmanship and institutional knowledge that have contributed to the company's success.
The ideal candidate is **curious, collaborative, and action-oriented**—someone who can challenge the status quo, build trust, and bring people along through change. This is an excellent opportunity to make a lasting impact on an established operation and help position it for continued growth.

Manufacturing Operations Manager Responsibilities

- Oversee manufacturing workflow, productivity, quality, costs, and profitability
- Analyze **job costing, COGS, labor hours, material usage, and job margins**
- Review estimated vs. actual job performance and identify cost variances
- Improve fabrication methods to reduce labor, waste, rework, and production bottlenecks
- Implement practical **Lean Manufacturing and continuous improvement** initiatives
- Develop standardized, repeatable manufacturing processes and work instructions
- Capture and document knowledge from experienced fabrication employees
- Partner with Engineering/Drafting to simplify designs and improve manufacturability
- Forecast workload, labor requirements, materials, and production capacity
- Evaluate equipment, tooling, automation, and technology investments
- Monitor KPIs including profitability, labor efficiency, scrap, rework, and throughput
- Partner with Finance on COGS, gross margin, budgeting, and forecasting
- Build accountability around productivity, quality, costs, and schedules

Manufacturing Operations Manager Qualifications

- 5+ years of progressive manufacturing operations experience required
- Strong process/continuous improvement background required
- Experience in custom fabrication or engineered-to-order manufacturing required
- Strong job costing, COGS, and manufacturing profitability experience required
- Production scheduling, capacity planning, and labor utilization experience required
- ERP/MRP and data-driven manufacturing experience required

Who You Are

You're a **curious, hands-on manufacturing leader and thoughtful change agent** who believes meaningful improvement starts with listening and learning. You take time to understand the current operation, build trust with the team, and ask the right questions before making changes.

You combine a **continuous improvement mindset with strong business acumen**, using data and firsthand insight to improve efficiency, consistency, and profitability. You're a lifelong learner who enjoys developing others, challenges the status quo with curiosity, and knows how to bring people along through change. You lead from beside, not in front, and thrive where creativity, curiosity, and continuous improvement are part of the culture.

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