

King Wilkinson

Senior Manager, Manufacturing Strategy and Engineering Programs

☎ 630-555-2718 ✉ king.wilkinson@example.com 💼 linkedin.com/example/kingwilkinson 📍 Naperville, IL 60540

SUMMARY

Senior **manufacturing strategy** and engineering program leader with 10 years guiding production, engineering, supply chain, **product strategy**, capital planning, and external partner initiatives. Industrial Engineering training, an MBA, PMP certification, and Lean Six Sigma preparation support practical leadership across throughput, cost, quality, capacity, scalability, and value realization. Directs modernization from business case through implementation, including automation, digital tools, **AI enabled improvement**, OEM assessment, capacity expansion, make versus buy analysis, and acquisition support. Builds **cross functional roadmaps**, governance routines, risk controls, KPI systems, ROI models, and executive reporting. Develops program managers and engineers while aligning plant leaders, technical teams, commercial stakeholders, and suppliers around practical decisions. Brings a steady record of turning strategy into measurable manufacturing progress.

EXPERIENCE

Senior Manager, Manufacturing Programs

Lakefront Consumer Systems 📅 January 2023 - Present 📍 Naperville, IL

Leads manufacturing modernization, automation, capital portfolios, KPI governance, OEM assessment, and people development across production operations. Connects engineering decisions with business cases, risk controls, executive reporting, and post implementation value realization.

- Built automation roadmap linking **capacity** constraints with **capital justification** and production priorities.
- Established KPI governance reviews that gave plant leaders clearer ownership of **throughput**, cost, and **quality**.
- Assessed **OEM** partners through capability reviews, risk analysis, and structured sourcing recommendations.
- Developed program managers and engineers through milestone reviews, coaching, and practical decision support.
- Directed modernization work from business case approval through implementation and **value realization**.
- Used AI enabled process improvement concepts to identify repeatable opportunities across manufacturing workflows.

Manufacturing Strategy Program Manager

Prairie Home Products 📅 June 2020 - December 2022 📍 Aurora, IL

Managed Lean roadmaps, digital tools, ROI models, Kaizen activity, and factory transformation programs. Translated product and manufacturing strategy into sequenced work, stakeholder decisions, standard work, and measurable operational improvements.

- Created **Lean** roadmap connecting factory priorities with **product strategy**, capacity needs, and investment timing.
- Built ROI models that supported capital decisions and clearer executive review of expected value.
- Led Kaizen events that converted frontline observations into **standard work** and practical **waste reduction**.
- Introduced digital tools that improved program visibility across plant, engineering, and **supply chain** teams.
- Coordinated factory transformation milestones through **governance** reviews, risk tracking, and corrective action.
- Presented progress and tradeoffs to leaders, helping teams make timely implementation decisions.

Engineering Program Manager

Midwest Product Works 📅 August 2018 - May 2020 📍 Elgin, IL

Directed production readiness, make versus buy analysis, Six Sigma problem solving, supplier coordination, and engineering delivery. Connected technical choices with cost, quality, capacity, launch timing, and partner performance.

- Led production readiness reviews that surfaced launch **risks** before transfer into **manufacturing** operations.
- Compared **make versus buy** options using **cost**, capability, capacity, and supplier risk factors.
- Applied basic **Six Sigma** problem solving to recurring quality issues and corrective action planning.
- Qualified suppliers through technical reviews, documentation checks, and cross functional stakeholder decisions.
- Aligned engineering and operations milestones with product **execution** needs and factory constraints.
- Maintained program governance through action logs, risk reviews, and executive status reporting.

Industrial Engineer

Great Lakes Manufacturing Solutions 📅 September 2016 - July 2018 📍 Rockford, IL

Improved manufacturing performance through standard work, capacity modeling, **waste reduction**, **root cause analysis**, and capital equipment planning. Supported plant teams with practical analysis that strengthened flow, repeatability, and investment decisions.

- Created **standard work** that improved process repeatability across production cells and operator handoffs.
- Modeled **capacity** needs to support staffing discussions, equipment **planning**, and production schedule decisions.
- Reduced process waste through value stream observation, workflow analysis, and targeted **Kaizen** actions.
- Used root cause analysis to guide corrective actions for recurring production and quality concerns.
- Supported capital equipment evaluations with technical requirements, capacity assumptions, and business inputs.
- Partnered with supervisors and engineers to move improvement findings into daily operating routines.

PROJECTS

AI Enabled Factory Improvement Roadmap 📅 2024

Mapped practical AI enabled improvement opportunities across production workflows, KPI reviews, quality signals, and capacity decisions. Connected ideas with governance, risk controls, and value realization measures.

OEM Capacity and Partner Assessment 📅 2022

Created a structured assessment approach for OEM and partner capability, covering capacity, quality, scalability, risk, and commercial fit. Supported sourcing and capital planning decisions.

LEADERSHIP & AWARDS

- PMP certification recognized for disciplined program governance, risk control, and delivery leadership.
- Lean Six Sigma Green Belt recognized for practical waste reduction and root cause problem solving.
- People leadership included developing program managers and engineers through milestone coaching and decision reviews.

EDUCATION

MBA

DePaul University 🎓 GPA: 3.5 📅 2021 📍 Chicago, IL

Coursework: Strategy, finance, operations management, organizational leadership

Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Engineering

University of Illinois Chicago 🎓 GPA: 3.5 📅 2016 📍 Chicago, IL

Coursework: Operations research, quality engineering, facilities planning, manufacturing systems

CERTIFICATIONS

- Project Management Professional 📅 2020
- Lean Six Sigma Green Belt 📅 2019

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **Manufacturing Methods:** Lean, Kaizen, standard work
- **Quality Improvement:** Six Sigma, root cause analysis, waste reduction
- **Program Management:** PMP, roadmaps, governance
- **Capital Planning:** ROI modeling, capital justification, value realization
- **Factory Operations:** Throughput, capacity planning, scalability
- **Automation Systems:** Automation, digital tools, AI enabled improvement
- **Product Strategy:** Product planning, execution, portfolio roadmaps
- **Partner Management:** OEM assessment, supplier evaluation, sourcing
- **Operations Analysis:** Value stream thinking, process optimization, KPI design
- **Leadership Practices:** People management, executive reporting, risk management

SKILLS

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|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| • Manufacturing strategy | • AI | • OEM assessment | • Root cause analysis |
| • Lean | • ROI | • Supply chain | • Standard work |
| • Kaizen | • Capital planning | • Program management | • Capacity modeling |
| • Automation | • KPIs | • Product strategy | |

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Professional Project Management Community, engaged in program governance and delivery practices.
- Lean Manufacturing Community, connected with practitioners focused on Kaizen, standard work, and waste reduction.

LANGUAGES

- English (Native)
- Spanish (Intermediate)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Work Status : Authorized to work in United States. No sponsorship required.

REFERENCES

AVAILABLE ON REQUEST