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Production Manager
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Job Description

The *Production Manager* at Sony Technology Center is in charge of a shift of approximately 562 people, who are working together to manufacture computer monitors. Managing the work of six supervisors on six production lines, the production manager is responsible for reaching production goals and solving problems that hinder production. She works with other managers to set production goals based on customer demand, and she communicates with engineers to ensure the highest possible standards of quality and efficiency in production.

CONCEPT: Ratio

In my job today I have to look at how I'm going to produce a certain amount of units on any given production line and if I have any problems with producing those units on that production line. Sometimes it might be equipment related... let's say for instance... if I have a defect ratio of 40 percent, then obviously I can't meet my scheduled goal on my schedule of 100 percent. I'm only going to output 60 percent of what I need to output, and that's a big problem because then my customer is not going to understand why he can't [have] that other 40 percent which is being [lost] by my production process which again relates to engineering.

So every day I look at these factors and I look at what we did the day before, what our defect ratio was the day before, how much more I need to keep on... the production line-- because if I have units coming off the production line, that's money every time a unit is rejected off the production line.

[Kim explains how she uses algebra. She creates equations in order to set production goals.] I use algebra in – Let's say for instance we have scheduled meetings and we meet with the materials group and our planners and they sell product to the customer. Well they say, this is what we sold to the customer, and then they come to us, production, and say, what can you build? Well, they've already told the customer we can build this amount and so I have little flexibility in that.

But all I can say is, well, based on what you sold the customer which might be 92,000 units that you sold for that particular month-- I go back and I look at my averages per production line and our past performance and I take those averages and I come up with a percentage that I think we can achieve for that particular month based on our past performance and then ... there might be pluses and minuses that engineering might have corrected, and then I take all that into [an equation] and then I give planning what I think I can actually produce for that particular month. And sometimes we're pretty much very close, and then sometimes we're not. It just depends on what's going on for that particular month.

WORK SKILLS: Teamwork and diversity

Sony is very team oriented. So if you work well with the big group and a diverse culture which Sony has, you can achieve almost any goal. It's like working in the world, being thrown out there in the world. You work with many different cultures. And certainly the way of the world now is to go in team environments and if you work well in a team, you can achieve almost any barrier.

WORK SKILLS: Business within a business

Sony is a global business and in the global business we have many different aspects... We build televisions. We build computer monitors. We build Play Stations.

So the display monitor business, that is a business within itself. Each production line is also. I tell the supervisors to look at [their production line] as if it was their own business and they should be running their bottom line. They should be managing their people. They should be managing their product. They should be managing their incoming material to build the product. So it is a business within a business.

WORK SKILLS: Schedules

Scheduling is a very, very big part of what I do. I deal with numbers all the time. I have different numbers for each production line and I have to make sure those production lines can achieve their numbers. The customer does not care how I do it, but they want their units, and that's my job to make sure they get their units.

We have customers that buy our product. They expect their product at a certain time, so we have schedules that we have to meet. We have schedules that are given to us a month prior to us even producing the product, so we know within a month's time what the capacity we have to build for each monitor, when we have to have it out the door, our shipping requirements. And so these are things we look at daily. We have a monthly schedule and we have a daily schedule and a production line has to output, let's say for instance, 800 units in an eight-hour period.

WORK SKILLS: Customer demand

In any business you have a customer. Obviously your goal is to satisfy that customer. You want to look at all the factors that you can bring into your everyday goal to achieve what the customer needs you to achieve because obviously if you don't meet your customer demand, your customers will go to the next person that can provide them with better customer service. So we look at the aspects of our business, all the ratios that matter that hinder us into not being able to meet customer demand, and we aggressively try to attack those areas to make sure that we can resolve any dilemmas.

It's my job to go to [the production line] supervisor and say, what are your concerns? Tell me about your deficiencies. Tell me about your defects that we're having for today. And then it's my job and the supervisor's job to go back to engineering, let's say for instance, and tell them, these are my concerns for this production line, and if they're going to meet their goal for that particular day and if they're not, what are they going to do to help us to meet our goals?

No matter what the past performance of that monitor might be doing on that particular production line, it is my job, no matter what, to make those numbers. The customer does not care how I do it, but they want their units, and that's my job to make sure they get their units.

WORK SKILLS: Leadership

My job is to motivate people to achieve a certain goal daily. I mean, certainly, so I have to come in here and I have to have a positive attitude because my people are going to respond by the way I respond to them. If I come in and say good morning to everybody that passes by me with a smile on my face, at least I think, I guess I'm off to a good start.

And then I go down the production line and I try to remember everyone's names as much as possible because for the most part I've worked with almost everyone on those production lines. I've been moving around from production line to production line until I came off the production line, so I know the majority of them.

But people respond by what they see from the individual that's leading them. And if you're a positive individual and you work well with people... you certainly have to build that every day. It's an everyday thing and it's a motivational skill that you need to be able to have in order to get them to achieve what you need them to achieve. And certainly my thing to achieve every day is to outperform the previous day. And when they do that, I make sure they hear it from me because, you know, their supervisors say, great job, great job. But they need to hear that also from me. And I make sure that they know that because they've done something that's amazing. We output units every single day. It's an amazing process.

WORK SKILLS: Communication

There are some things that are difficult, and that's I guess when I have to really sit down and talk to an individual that's just sometimes refusing to get with the program and I have to remind that individual why they're here. And sometimes I tell them, you're here because you came to Sony. You came and got this job. We didn't come out there and find you, you came to us. So, when you come to us, we have certain, you know, things that we expect from you. We're not asking you to do anything other than what your specific job says. That's all we're asking.

WORK SKILLS: Using math

Math in any job is very critical. Oh, when I was in high school I thought, well, let me just get through these classes because they're not going to have any relationship to what I'm going to do out in the real world. And obviously, I found that to be a big discrepancy of what I thought before and the way it relates to my job now.

I can't emphasize enough how much you might not think it's important at that particular time while you're in school, but anything you do, even fast food, you have to work on a cash register. You have to learn how to count. You have to be very, very quick on a cash register with customers. Even though the cash register tells you how much change to give, you still should practice those math skills because you have to be quicker almost than a machine or at least as quick as a machine.

You have to know-- everything is based on what your previous day's business is. Even in fast food you know what your customer count is, you know what your hourly rate is, you know based on your hourly rate you have to divide that by how much you think you're going to get, like your dollars by hour, and then you have to know how much you're going to cook up ahead of time or cook up while you're having that customer rush. It's just like what we do here. We calculate to every 30 minutes...how many monitors we can output every 30 minutes.

JOB/CAREER: Job Overview

I lead a shift of approximately 562 people, and I make them -- or I try to get them to work as a team to build a computer monitor.

In our business, our business is very team oriented. That means everybody works together and -- within cooperation with engineering, with materials, with scheduling in order to get the product out the door.

Our product is Sony 15 inch, 17 inch, 19 inch, and 20 inch, and 21 inch computer monitors.

I have six supervisors; six production lines, six supervisors. And I go from line to line and I discuss individual issues that have occurred on their line and I let them know what the concerns are, what our priorities are, and we go from there.

JOB/CAREER: Background

After Morris High School I went to Mesa College for approximately three years, went to San Diego State for another two years, and while at Mesa College I started working in fast food. I was a regular employee at Jack in the Box. That was my first job ever when I was in college. I liked that job because it was very much like myself, very fast paced, very busy, dealing with a lot of people, working with many different levels of people from management to the operators like myself. In that job I made it to assistant manager and then I switched fast food companies.

I went to Carl's Junior for about two years and I made it to co-manager at Carl's Junior. And then I was recruited from Carl's Junior to Wendy's by a previous manager that used to work for Jack in the Box. He had started working for Wendy's restaurant and I went there as an assistant manager, worked myself up to the manager, general manager of the store. And I was there for approximately six years.

From that business I went into an entirely different business, which is the business I'm in now, Sony, and actually I came into this business as a regular operator working on the production line because I had no idea what Sony did.

JOB/CAREER: Sony Career

So I was very excited about starting on the production line. Even when they hired me, they asked me, did I want to start there? And I told them, yes, I will get where I want to be eventually.

I needed to know what the product was about and what Sony did, and I figured working on the production line, that will tell me exactly what Sony does and will better educate me on Sony's product line.

As long as you have some initiative and show Sony that you have a goal, Sony allows you to reach your goals, so I knew I would get there.

On the production line, I was inspecting CRTs, picture tubes, and you know, inspecting those for defects, working with many different people. I got along very well with a lot of people, and again, as I said before, Sony is very team oriented.

Because I work well with people and because of my previous background in fast food, hiring people, training people, sometimes unfortunately even firing people, and bringing people up through the company, that related to human resource skills. So I went out for a job as a Human Resource rep and I got that job as a Human Resource rep. And in that job I found myself working with many, many more people than I was on the production line.

Then from Human Resources I started a second shift in the display monitor business which is where I work, building computer monitors right now.

JOB/CAREER: Typical Day

I usually start at 6:30 because I like to be there when the production operators are there. I walk through production and see what the previous night went like. I check out numbers, check out our defect ratio, output numbers, how many we've output the previous night in production. I also look at what our scheduling for the day is going to be. I look at a schedule and I base that schedule on what I think we're going to be able to produce that particular day, and then I greet all my supervisors, tell them what the concerns are.

JOB/CAREER: Getting Hired at Sony

If it's an individual right out of high school, because we do hire operators right out of high school, I look for their attendance in school. That's very, very important. I look for the activities they did while they were in high school. If they did group activities, that means that that individual works well within teams generally, and so I look for that.

I look for their enthusiasm in the review when I'm talking to them, especially things that they like talking about. I look for that enthusiasm because that's a key example of somebody that's going to adapt well within our process.

Again, attendance is a big, big thing that we look for because in the team environment everybody depends on that individual showing up for work because, you know, if you're there and you're there constantly... our production line stays at a certain rhythm. It's almost like a hum and, you know, everything runs smooth because there's a certain -- there's the same person there all the time, same team, and everybody's working really, really well with each other. It's like an engine running well. And so I look for that in an individual to make sure they're going to be here all the time, and they have that kind of ethics. You go to school and you go there every single day.

JOB/CAREER: Success

Success. I think success is a frame of mind sometimes. You have to think what you want to do, you have to never give up on those goals. You have to be persistent. You have to have enthusiasm, and you have to stay focused. If you stay focused and you do all those other things, you can achieve anything you want and certainly at Sony I always encourage my operators, don't let anything stop you. We have many opportunities that are always posted for you. You have to believe in yourself and like I said, if you believe in yourself you can do whatever you want.

Certainly I think I can say I'm like that. I never thought anything or anyone would stop me, only me if I wanted me to stop me. And everything I said I wanted to do, I have actually done at Sony and I'm not done yet.

So I've been here seven years, and I'm never satisfied with what I'm doing. As long as I'm working with a bunch of people that have the same kind of enthusiasm as me, you know, the sky's the limit. So one day I'll probably be vice president. That's my goal, and you know, I can do that. I know I can do it.