

Neil Ackerman

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Over 14 years of experience with a proven track record for achieving sustained, positive results. Held positions ranging from individual contributor to people leader in both manufacturing and corporate environments. Extensive experience with several methodologies, including: Stage-Gate, Stakeholder Management, Root Cause Analysis, Loss/Cost Savings processes, Total Productive Manufacturing (TPM), and Lean Six Sigma.

EXPERIENCE

Golden State Foods –Liquid Products North America Division

R&D Sr. Manager

December 2020 – Present

Leading a team of 8 that is responsible for executing all of the division's process development activities. Responsible for managing the Pilot Plant, aiding the Procurement team with alternate material/supplier integration, helping overcome supply chain issues, and providing technical support to the Sales and Manufacturing Site teams.

- Accountable for development and performance of two Sr. Food Scientists, four Food Scientists, and two Technicians across two offices (Georgia and California). Successfully brought top talent to the team, furthering the development of existing team members and improving overall team performance.
 - Continue to hold a 100% retention rate since the end of 2020
 - Improved customer acceptance of 1st productions by 4% (from 95% to 99%)
 - Increased the on-time in-full (OTIF) delivery of 1st productions by 2% (from 96% to 98%)
 - Successfully back-filled two positions, due to retirement, by leading collaboration to develop and execute a seamless transition for the organization. This strategy included an organized, inclusive process for driving knowledge transfer.
- Continue to demonstrate my ability to balance technical leadership and project management, leading to significant, positive results for the company.
 - Successfully drove the transition of 13 formulations from a legacy site to a new facility. Complexities included the installation of new equipment (with highly dynamic timelines), differences in capabilities between the legacy and new line, and a broad variety of product types. Six additional formulas will be transitioned by the end of H2.
 - Coordinated the successful scale-up of two key products for a customer critical to the business. Both products included expedited timelines coupled with the task of providing a consistent product manufactured across 3 facilities.

Golden State Foods –Liquid Products North America Division

R&D Principal Process Engineer

December 2019 – Present

Divisional position in the R&D innovation center. Support development and implementation of an array of new products and processes from bench-top to full scale production across all sites in the division. Aid the manufacturing and divisional teams with technical challenges.

- Led the development and implementation of a revamped business planning process. Utilized a Stage-Gate design, coupled with cross-functional partnerships. Since inception, product launches have increased by 59% while also improving quality for customers.

- Drove root cause analysis and provided solutions that achieved sustained results for an array of product types, including: Mayonnaises, Emulsified Salad Dressings/Dips, Shake Syrups, Ketchups, BBQs, Jam/Jellies, and Wing Sauces.
 - Solved relish distribution issues with two high volume products for our top customer.
 - Identified solutions that enabled a key customer's product to move to a continuous batching line at our California plant.
 - Led a cross-functional risk analysis on a sensitive formula that was changing packaging format. This ask required packing the product (a key brand identifier) on a line that always struggled to produce it. Discovered unidentified root-causes and provided solutions, resulting in seamless transition of the formula to the new packaging type.
 - Utilized Focused Improvement techniques to help our Texas based team with poor set on a salsa product. Worked with the team to narrow down to the root cause and drove solutions that overcame the quality issue.

MARS –Mars-Wrigley Confectionary Division

R&D Senior Process Engineer

August 2016 – December 2019

Field based regional position, that led the implementation of new products and processes from bench top to full scale production. Supported on-site problem-solving activities. Developed and executed cost savings and quality improvement activities.

- Led on-site activities including trialing strategy, trial execution, and long-term implementation for R&D cost savings projects, resulting in over \$3.5 million annual savings.
- Drove all trialing and start-up activities for numerous chewing gum innovation and portfolio renovation projects. Responsible for assessing processing risks, building strategies, and leading execution to a successful startup. An example included the launch of Extra Refreshers.
- Improved site coating capacity by reducing batch cycle times by 20%. Achieved success while utilizing existing assets and maintaining product quality throughout the process.
- Developed and implemented a robust trialing process that increased efficiency and effectiveness of trialing activities within the organization. Coordinated with fellow regional team members to have the process implemented across all sites within the region.

Unilever – Food Solutions Division

R&D Senior Process Development Engineer

April 2012 – July 2016

Corporate engineering position responsible for development and implementation of new processes that brought projects from bench top to full scale production. Additionally, provided leadership on cost savings and quality improvement activities.

- Transitioned 42 salad dressings to a new location utilizing new processing technologies. Developed and optimized the go-forward strategy to minimize both cost and risk. The portfolio represented a volume of over 830,000 cases and more than \$10 million annually.
- Technical Project Leader for a project that aided alignment to Unilever's Sustainable Living Plan strategies. The project covered over 80 Dressing skus representing \$36 million in annual sales.
- Led development and implementation of a new product in the Savory category. Avoided a \$400,000 capital investment through process development design.
- Moved 8 top selling Savory skus to a new site. Drove process development and implementation, without impact to customer orders nor product quality. Overcame numerous delays and complexities to the new line, including significant difference between legacy and targeted lines.
- Division Pilot Plant Manager focused on delivery of a fully operational Pilot Plant and ensure the facility was strategically positioned for future initiatives.

PepsiCo – Quaker Oats Division

Focused Improvement Leader

August 2010 – April 2012

Led all site FI programs, including: 7-Steps Analysis, RCO events, and Simple Root Cause analysis. Breadth of responsibility was across 5 departments with 10 pack lines, 3 high speed pouchers, and 5 high pressure extruders.

- Led the Divisional Pouching and Cutting Technical Team, a cross-functional team composed of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from all Quaker sites.
- Drove a Lean Six Sigma Green Belt project to reduce over pack on pouching lines by over 20%.
- Executed Early Management tools to deliver projects totaling over \$75,000 annual savings.

PepsiCo – Quaker Oats Division

Process Improvement Engineer

August 2007 – August 2010

Responsible for improving operational safety, quality, uptime, and profitability in the Pouching Department.

- Managed a \$250,000 capital project that achieved vertical start-up while eliminating annual yield and quality losses totaling \$100,000.
- Led a \$50,000 capital project that implemented new technology to improve pouch seal quality and eliminate related packaging downtime.
- Reduced downtime and improved sanitation practices through a \$200,000 upgrade to our seasoning conveying system. Incorporated a design that eliminated inconsistencies with allergen cleans.
- Led a cross functional FI team to 20% reduction of the top consumer complaint (“Open Pouches”).
- In addition, back filled for the open Pouching Department manager position (Jan. – Dec. 2008)
 - Prepared work schedules, managed the budget, and developed 30 employees across all 3 shifts.
 - Led the implementation of SAP across all 3 shifts.
 - Led the department to a perfect score on our annual audit conducted by AIB.

PepsiCo – Quaker Oats Division

Supply Chain Rotational Program

February 2006 – September 2007

Spent the first year rotating between departments, including: TPM, Quality, Packaging, Processing, Warehouse, and HR. Upon graduation, led all safety, quality, production, and people development activities for over 40 employees as the 3rd Shift Supervisor.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Chemical Engineering (2005)

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

GPA: 3.5/4.0

Graduated *Dean's List*

Associate of Science, Chemical Engineering (2003)

Vincennes University, Vincennes, Indiana

GPA: 3.9/4.0

Graduated *SUMMA CUM LAUDE*

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Language

Spanish - 3 years of coursework, with intermediate skill level

Processes

TPM, Lean Six Sigma, Trainer for High Performing Hourly Teams, Product Life Cycle Management, GMP, HACCP, and Pilot Plant operations.