

# HOW TO ATTRACT TALENT IN ENGINEERING & MANUFACTURING



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# Introduction

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In a market where talent in engineering & manufacturing is limited, it is challenged to find the right talent for your business? In our e-book you find all the tips you need to secure the best candidates.

Currently, the pool of talent in engineering & manufacturing is limited and attracting the best talent is a key driver for any organisation. Before you are able to host an interview, you have to appeal to the types of candidates' that you are looking for.

In this e-book we discuss the challenges that the engineering and manufacturing sector faces when attempting to hire top talent in a candidate-short market. We hope it will help your business to find the candidates you need.



# 10 Skills You Need in Engineering and Manufacturing This Year

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As engineering and manufacturing companies move toward technology-led operational processes, employers are seeking professionals with the right skills to drive successful transformation and boost the bottom line.

These skills include:

## 1. Lean manufacturing

Maximising efficiency and minimising waste are key focuses for businesses looking to increase their profit margins. Companies are seeking employees who can systematically drive value, reduce wastage costs and improve manufacturing processes. In particular, experience with lean methodologies – such as Six Sigma Black Belt, developed by American engineer Bill Smith – are highly sought after.

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## 2. Change and transformation management

As technology reshapes the sector, businesses are looking for change-driven and skilled strategic decision-makers who can help shift direction through innovation, uptake of new technologies and agile work processes.

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## 3. Product development

While brands vie to be first to market with innovative new products and increase market share on existing products, demand is high for talent with new product development expertise – particularly among food and beverage companies.

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## 4. Process design

In light of technological advancements and industry-wide process automation, there is a need for businesses to manage processes more efficiently than ever. As such, companies are looking for professionals with the skills to design processes that increase output and lower production costs.

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## 5. Adaptability

In a rapidly changing environment, the ability to adapt to new situations, projects and ways of working is critical. Demonstrating you can easily switch focus when required will help prove long-term value to prospective employers.

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## 6. Democratic leadership approach

Top-down management is out of fashion. Instead, both in the engineering & manufacturing sector and in other sectors, there is a need for a more democratic form of leadership that is better aligned with the new generation of employees. They feel more comfortable with more participative way of working. Companies also benefit from that, because employees can come up with ideas that management has not thought of. The best specialists are therefore not necessarily the managers anymore. Companies are increasingly abandoning that principle. Of course, professional knowledge is required, but good personal skills are just as important for managing a team.

## 7. Multi-project management

A focused multi-tasking approach is needed when we consider that large, high-value projects, are becoming commonplace, especially through foreign direct investment (FDI). Large-scale technology projects require solid project management skills and the ability to keep a number of plates spinning at once. A talent for controlling costs and managing efficiency continue to be perennially important in the current climate. Meeting high demand for profit margins relies on top talent with strategic and tactical planning expertise.

## 8. Attention to detail

Attention to detail is a key skill that is prized in every business and at all levels. In a fast-past world, professionals that are perfectionists in their work and who pride themselves in having an eye for the fine details, are rated very highly by managers. They can make a succinct difference to the business and with the ability to look for anomalies or trends in data, they can run informed reports on these to encourage positive business change, are crucial for business success.

## 9. Accountability

In engineering and manufacturing, it is essential that production schedules are adhered to so that deadlines and expectations from colleagues, stakeholders, and customers, are met. If no one is accountable for any part of a process, it can lead to a loss of revenue. Having a clear understanding of what accountability means and demonstrating it, whether through areas of quality ethics, regulatory standards, leads to a better controlled process.

## 10. Customer-led/centric design

With new products being developed all the time, managing expectations on customer-centric design is key for businesses to stay ahead in a competitive field. When customers are truly invested in your product, they are more likely to be retained. It puts the customer experience into sharp focus and can position businesses as leaders at the forefront of their field. The right individuals are key to ensuring that the customer-centric design approach is implemented correctly.

# What Are the Most Important Engineering Soft Skills?

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Which soft should you look for in a good engineering candidate? We've listed the 5 most important ones.

Today, soft skills are an essential foundation for any successful career. Thanks to the advent of technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and automation, there's a fast-growing need for soft skills in the workplace as the crucial 'human element' to tech-enabled data analysis and interpretation.

As technology, globalisation and changing demographics continue to shape the business landscape, the importance of soft skills is only set to grow. In fact, a report by Deloitte Access Economics predicts that two-thirds of all jobs by 2030 will rely on soft skills.

Here are five of the most important soft skills hiring managers should consider when they interview candidates:

## 1 Strong communication skills

Solid, effective communication skills are essential in the engineering field, as you may often need to explain technical information to a non-technical or "lay" audience. Technical knowledge is critical, but the ability to communicate it accurately and concisely to an uninitiated or non-expert audience is just as important so that all stakeholders are included in the conversation, understand the content or information and are on the same page.

## 2 Leadership qualities

Professionals in the engineering sector will typically need to display management potential. This may involve managing teams, individuals, projects or entire organisations. Some people have natural leadership abilities, but good management skills can be sharpened with the right training and development.

## 3 Lateral thinking

Whatever the role of the candidate will be, lateral thinking and problem-solving skills are always beneficial. It's important to have someone who can keep a cool head in a crisis and find innovative, creative solutions to complex business issues.



## 4 The ability to influence others

The ability to negotiate with people at all levels of the business, forge productive relationships, and persuasively present ideas and opinions is an important part of modern engineering roles. Confident influencers and decision-makers are always in demand.

## 5 Problem-solving skills

Potential employers look for a proactive approach to tackling problems where textbook knowledge may not offer up an immediate solution.

A problem-solver who takes a creative approach to interrogate business issues is desirable in any industry – but especially in engineering where innovation and effective solutions are critical to success.

# 5 Strategies to Attract Talent in Engineering & Manufacturing

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In a candidate-short market it's not always easy to attract the right talent for your business. These are 5 strategies you can use to find the right people.

The candidate-led market has created challenges across many sectors when it comes to attracting top talent. Before you are able to host an interview, you have to appeal to the types of candidates' that you are looking for, and it is becoming more and more crucial for businesses to improve their brand reputation.

These are 5 strategies to attract talent in engineering & manufacturing in a candidate-short market:

## 1 Focus more on the potential than on years of experience

Technical engineering roles, such as design and maintenance have become increasingly difficult to hire for. Over the last couple of decades, the lack of apprenticeships and training schemes have caused a decrease in the candidate pool. Because of this, businesses are over paying for skill sets or are focusing on cultural fit in order to develop candidates in the future.

Organisations are beginning to recognise the value in hiring a professional with the foundations of the role, who can develop the role, and themselves further within the business.

## 2 Attract and hire new graduates

It is good to consider candidates that have recently graduated from university. Newly graduated professionals looking for work on the market are the perfect candidates to attempt to attract and hire to your business. These individuals are passionate and learned about the industry, and are desperate to get a job in their field as soon as possible upon graduating.

The large, established engineering businesses aren't struggling to attract new graduates, but many great SME organisations are. New graduates emerge from education and believe that joining a large engineering firm's graduate scheme is the only option to have a successful career, without knowing or understanding how many businesses are available to them.

### 3 Improving your recruitment processes

University students, alongside most new talent in today's market, have copious amounts of information available to them. This is so vast that top talent is able to decipher what businesses they are interested in working for before knowing the full extent of the role or even visiting the offices. Our advice is to provide more information and highlight any career development opportunities that outline the working culture of the business.

### 4 Have a comprehensive D&I programme

Having a comprehensive diversity and inclusion programme will show candidates that the business is dedicated to creating a working environment that is open to different people, values, and skill sets. Organisations will benefit from having a diverse workforce that is more productive and decisive, as this creates a broader viewpoint, and allows businesses to think differently from their competitors.

### 5 Offering work experience and internships

There has been a definite increase in the graduate placements and internships within the engineering and manufacturing sector. Industry open days and career days have been effective in piquing the interest of potential top talent that is soon finishing their studies. However, there is still a long way to go. Businesses should be proactively joining in on these days and networking with the students. This will boost your brand awareness and make you recognisable to potential candidates.



# How to Spot the Perfect Match out of All Candidates?

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Data-analysis can filter for the best candidates out of hundreds of job applicants. But – how do you spot the perfect match for your company?

Hiring the wrong candidate can hurt a business's bottom line. This is why data analysis has become more popular with employers. This trend started in the professional sports industry: instead of relying on subjective advice from a talent scout, a football team, like Arsenal, has an exclusive contract with a data agency that advises them on players to buy based on their performance data.

## Software to filter out the best candidates

Companies like Netflix, Rituals and L'Oréal use similar methods to filter for the best people out of all applicants. A special software program collects data on candidates by analysing their wording and language, game results and/or psychological tests. Based on the results the hiring manager receives a short list with the most promising candidates. It's up to the manager to make the final decision.

## The role of the job interview

What is the role of job interviews in this process? The best practice is to combine the two selection processes. The data provides the hiring manager with objective information about a candidate, regardless of their age, gender or beliefs. It helps them to prepare for the final job interview.

So, how do you make sure you spot the right candidate? These tips can help:

### **1** See if the candidate asks the right questions

If you use a method to collect hard data about a candidate, you already know their capabilities. What you need to know is that they are interested in working for your company. The right candidates will ask questions that show they have done research on the company and their position. The way they phrase their questions and respond to your answers will tell you a lot about them.

### **2** Include colleagues in the application process

A candidate needs to be the right fit for the team they will work with. It's important to the opinion of his or her future colleagues. Some companies introduce the two or three best candidates to the team by, for example, taking them out for lunch. This is a great way to see how a candidate behaves in a more informal setting, and to find out how enthusiastic they are about the job.

### 3 Find out if a candidate can show measurable results

What are the achievements of a candidate, and what do they want to achieve in the new role? Good candidate can show tangible results of projects they were involved in. A company like Google doesn't even wait until the job interview, but keeps a record of the performance of talented employees who work for competitors.

### 4 Talk about why candidate left his former employers

The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. Although employees are much more mobile today than they were 10 years ago, you don't want to hire a candidate who jumps jobs too fast. If someone left all his former employers within two years, it's a good idea to find out why.

### 5 Look for someone who is different from you

One of the most common pitfalls in the hiring process is that you will automatically prefer people that look and behave like you. A thorough data analyses, combined with a good understanding of what kind of personality you are missing in your team will help you. to avoid this.



# How to make a job offer

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Once you've selected the most suitable candidate for a job, there's one crucial step left for employers to take as part of the hiring process: the job offer.

You will obviously be delighted by the prospect of picking the best from a shortlist of strong candidates, but everything now rests on how you deliver the terms of employment which you'd like your new employee to start on.

A job offer is an employer's final incentive when it comes to attracting talent to the organisation, and, as such, a great deal rests on getting it right first time.

## Making the offer

With more than 40 years' recruitment experience, our specialist consultants can assist you through the entire hiring process, from writing an initial job spec to sealing the deal with your preferred candidate.

It's essential that once a candidate has accepted a job by phone or email, they are immediately informed, by way of a formal letter, of all proposed terms of employment attached to role.

The job offer should provide your chosen candidate with all the information they'll need to satisfy themselves they're making the right decision in joining your business. A formal job offer should include:

- ④ The new employee's name
- ④ The job title in full
- ④ The salary being offered.
- ④ The date from when employment will commence
- ④ Terms and conditions (contract/temporary/permanent) on which the job is being offered
- ④ Benefits and other compensations
- ④ Conditions of any probationary period attached
- ④ Request for any relevant documentation required regarding a candidate's right to work in your country
- ④ Additional conditions including any legal, background checks that may be required to fill the role

## Sealing the deal

Ideally a finalised job offer will outline exactly what a candidate will receive and what is expected of them once they take up their new job. It is also important that a job offer matches the candidate's motivations and aspirations, so they'll feel they can fit in and progress in their new role.

Once a job offer is made, it's important to realise that the ball rests firmly in the candidate's court and they may wish to negotiate certain aspects of the offer or discuss the inclusion of further incentives or conditions.

With negotiation being a two way street, any employer who has clearly defined and outlined (for themselves and the candidate) where the role fits within the organisation and what they can offer a candidate by way of compensation and benefits, will have little problem finalising any minor amendments or inclusions to suit both parties and seal the deal.

Often, top talent will receive a counter offer from their current employer as a final bid to make them stay; read our article on handling a counter offer-situation here.

# Why partner with us

Having the right people is key to business success and here at Michael Page, we help businesses address the challenges of change. In those periods of uncertainty, we can provide you with the talent you need to stay one step ahead.

You may need to act swiftly, even radically. Which is why you need to access the right people, at the right time. We consistently attract and interact with the very best candidates and we are at the forefront of specialist recruitment. It means we are best placed to get the right candidate for your precise business needs.

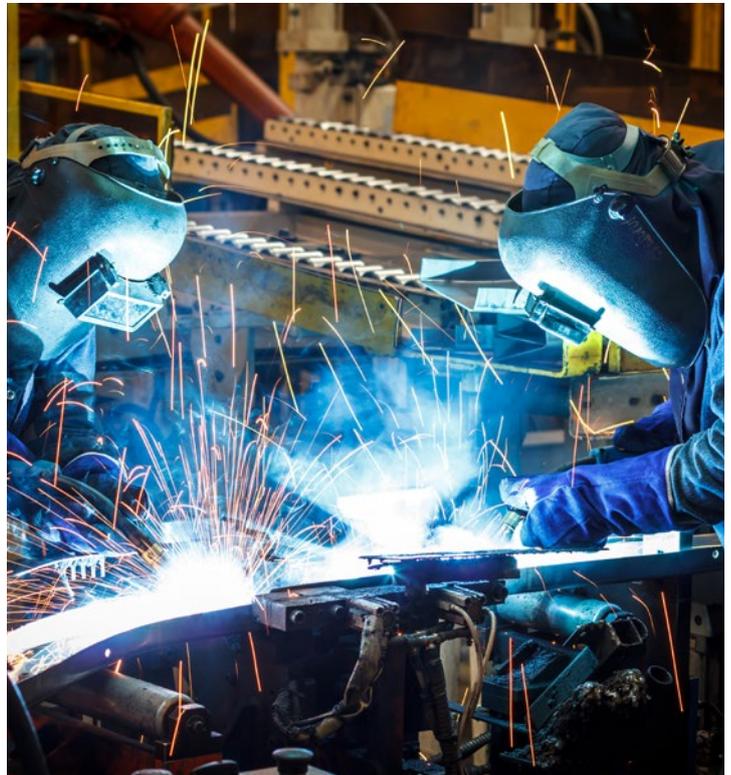
At Michael Page, we possess a number of unique characteristics that define us as one of the leading specialist recruitment consultancies in the world.

## Leading recruitment technology

- ④ We guarantee the visibility of our customers' vacancies, ensuring they are seen by top talent.
- ④ We ensure speed of response and the quality of candidates is second to none.
- ④ We advertise to and engage with candidates before our competition can.

## Unique market data and insight

- ④ We have access to detailed salary data, looking at advertised ranges by location and comparing to offered rates.
- ④ We can visualise the active candidate market and compare with advertising demand at aggregated and job title level, showing salaries and locations.
- ④ We deliver market analysis for both internal strategic reasons and to add value to our customer proposition.



## How to get in touch with us

Our consultants are available through email, landline, mobile and video to assist you in all of your recruitment needs. For an initial confidential discussion, get in touch with your local Michael Page office to speak to a specialist recruiter for your function, sector and region.

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# Michael Page

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Manufacturing