



interview

guide.

how to interview manufacturing
and logistics talent.

The rise of digital manufacturing has largely transformed hiring processes across APAC, a global hub of economic and trade activities.

- According to the Economic Development Board (EDB), Singapore's manufacturing industry forecasts a [21% rise in employment](#) in the 2nd quarter of 2022. However, the increasing number of job opportunities are still faced with [recruitment challenges](#) such as the lack of skilled talent and reducing work pass quotas.
- According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia, Malaysia's manufacturing industry ranked second out of five key economic sectors in [creating new jobs](#) as of May 2022. However, the rate of vacancies for this sector was also the highest, compared to the other key economic sectors, such as construction and services. The increasing number of job opportunities is still faced with a [critical talent shortage](#).
- According to the Hong Kong SAR Inland Revenue Department, the manufacturing industry is incorporating further digitalisation into its [infrastructure development plans](#) to meet high consumer demand as of May 2022. However, the rise in smart port development and increasing job opportunities are still faced with a [critical talent shortage](#).

As key employers in this region, your organisation is an agent of change in working with digital and automated technology. To prepare a capable workforce for frequent technological disruptions, you will need an effective recruitment strategy to identify, attract and hire the most qualified talent.

How you evaluate individual applicants' capabilities and potential for growth within your organisation is tantamount to your adaptability in a digital age.

This guide focuses on a critical point in the hiring process in the manufacturing and logistics field: the interview.

making the right hire.

Finding the right talent goes well beyond matching a candidate's background with a position's skills and experience requirements. It's equally important to consider how candidates will enhance and interact with the team and management.

A great fit encompasses three dimensions:

job fit

A candidate's ability to complete the work using the tools required for the job. Candidates should possess not only the right skill sets and experience to do the job but also a genuine interest to perform required tasks.

boss fit

Employee and manager compatibility. Candidates and direct managers should be compatible in terms of personality traits, values and expectations.

company fit

Alignment of the candidate with colleagues, company culture and industry-specific dynamics. Employees should be motivated by the working environment offered by your company and demonstrate the ability to work well with the other team members.



evaluating:

job fit.

What to look out for: candidates who have the right skills, technical knowledge and experience to succeed in the role, as well as the innate willingness to continue learning and developing.

machinery,
tools, systems and
equipment

questions you might ask.

- What manufacturing software have you worked with and are experienced in?
- What is the most complex manufacturing process you've worked on before?
- What would you do if a part of the safety equipment was missing or damaged on the line, and production had to start as soon as possible?

performance and
productivity

- What were your responsibilities, and how did you manage to overcome any problems that may have arisen?
- Have you ever implemented a process change that improved product quality? Tell us more.

performance and
productivity

why job fit matters.

A top priority for many businesses in the manufacturing and logistics sectors is hiring employees who are digitally-savvy, are familiar with operating supply-chain management systems, and are able to analyse and engineer QA/QC processes.

Therefore, it's important to ask candidates about their previous work experiences with regards to operating machinery and technology, any relevant training they have received, and their behaviours when they encounter specific problems at work.

In terms of their past accomplishments, focus on asking about individual applicants' performance and productivity in their previous jobs. For example, prompt the candidate to explain how productivity was measured in their previous company, and any methods they have used to maintain efficiency and hit deadlines. This will help you gauge how effectively they would respond and communicate in a given situation.

evaluating:

boss fit.

What to look for: candidates who are likely to respond well to current management, including their direct supervisors' own styles.

questions you might ask.

best supervisor

- Can you describe the kind of supervisor you would work well with the most?

motivation

- What kind of leadership style or management system would you feel unmotivated by?

least appreciated supervisor

- Describe any particular difficulties when you were part of a team with an incompetent boss. How did you handle the situation?

supervisor expectations

- Tell us a specific example of your ideal collaboration system between the boss and employee in a problem-solving context.
- Do you feel that this level of supervision was sufficient, excessive or not enough?

why boss fit matters.

An interview gives you a direct impression of a candidate's compatibility with their prospective manager. A new employee's response to their supervisor's management style will have a crucial impact on how well they integrate into the business, and sets an optimistic start to their work.

Boss-employee compatibility is important reasons such as:

- Set a positive example to other employees who see managers welcoming and supporting new staff
- Mitigate disruption that can affect the rest of the workforce if a new employee has a difficult start to their role
- Control turnover by reducing the risk of people leaving shortly after joining due to bad relationships with managers

How would you maximise the likelihood of a good boss-employee fit?

evaluating:

company fit.

What to look for: candidates who will appreciate and fit into your existing work environment, collaborate well with other members of the team and respect company values.

questions you might ask.

interest in the company

- What aspects of working for our company do you think you would enjoy the most?

problem-solving

- A product consistently has quality problems that are costly and occasionally reach the customer. How do you fix the situation?

conflict resolution

- How would you manage a situation where you're finding it difficult to work with a fellow team member?

collaboration

- What kind of individual qualities do you think you have that can make a positive impact on your team members?

why company fit matters.

Talent in the manufacturing and logistics industry may want to work with a company that is investing more into new technologies so that they can have more upskilling opportunities. Others may look for one that offers better work-life balance initiatives so that they can have more personal time to spend with their families or friends.

To invite a discussion on your company, you can start by asking the applicant what they already know about your business and what they think it would be like to work in this particular position. If they give an answer that reflects your own ideas and understanding of the company, it indicates that they're a genuine and fitting candidate.

spotlight on

safety.

questions you might ask.

- What practical steps did you take in your last job to work safely?
 - How would you respond if you witnessed an accident or injury in the workplace?
 - What machine operation training have you received in previous jobs?
 - What would you do if you witnessed unsafe practices in the workplace?
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employees' awareness of workplace safety.

The health and safety of the workforce should be every company's ultimate priority. This is particularly relevant in industries like manufacturing and logistics, where employees typically spend a lot of time using machinery, operating vehicles and doing physically intensive work. Without the proper checks, knowledge and supervision, your employees could face some serious health and safety risks.

Ensuring people can work safely has also become a bigger priority in all sectors as a result of COVID-19. The pandemic forced every employer to think more carefully about the measures and safeguards they put in place to help people get on with their jobs without putting their health at risk.

While much of the responsibility for keeping workers safe lies with the employer, it's reasonable for you to expect any new hire to have a level of awareness and understanding of key health and safety issues. Finding the right approach to skills assessment and interviewing will help you gauge applicants' understanding of this subject, as well as their willingness to learn and take safety seriously.

hiring

great leaders.

What to look for: a demonstrated competency in the areas in which they will manage, along with the ability to define and promote the culture of the organisation.

Additional attention must be given when hiring a leader for your team. Supervisors and managers are critical in motivating, guiding and training employees. Employee morale and engagement are often directly related to the leadership styles of the managers under whom they work.

questions you might ask.

style and communication

- In your own words, describe your management style.
- Give me an example of a time you were able to successfully motivate an employee.
- How would you handle a worker who is not meeting expectations?
- What would you say are your biggest strengths?

employee development

- In your last position, how much of your time was people focused vs. machinery focused?
- How much involvement have you had in recruiting and training employees?

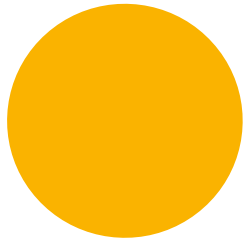
other

- Explain any direct customer interaction you have had in previous positions.
- How did you utilise technology in your day-to-day activities?

interpreting the answers.

Production supervisors, inventory managers, warehouse managers, operations managers, general managers and other supervisory positions in the industrial sector often have vastly different KPIs and business objectives unique to their respective roles. For example, some metrics may be tied to saving money, whereas others are focused solely on motivating and managing staff. Others might be cross-trained, depending on the size of the organisation.

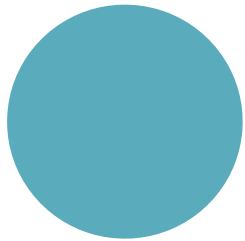
All management or supervisory candidates should possess strong interpersonal and communication skills in addition to their knowledge and competencies in the areas in which they manage. Other favourable attributes to look for are strong attention to detail and accuracy, flexibility to work in different environments, ability to maintain concentration over a long period of time, and the ability to influence and motivate. Be prepared to ask additional follow-up questions based on the specific job duties and responsibilities.



Since health and safety is an important issue, be sure to ask candidates about their knowledge of and experience with safety procedures.



If you're interviewing a candidate for someone else, keep in mind that manager's leadership style to ensure compatibility.



Think twice before hiring any candidate who has given inaccurate information or made exaggerated claims on a resume. Conscientiousness is the greatest single predictor of on-the-job performance—and conscientious people are usually honest people.



A skilled employee who doesn't fit with your values and organisational culture will not thrive in your company.

If you would like to hire manufacturing and logistics talent, please [contact us](#). We are happy to support you.