

Case Study: Quality Control Manager - Mark

What do you do?

I'm a quality control manager, which means that I oversee all quality issues including management and inspection. The company I work for makes injection-moulded plastics that are used for everything from car dashboards to key tags, to frisbees, coffee mugs and clocks.



What is your background?

After working at several jobs on a factory floor, I found myself unemployed. I heard that there was training available in quality control and felt that I should give it a try since I've always been the type of person who can find a needle in a haystack.

I studied quality control and assurance at college and worked as a quality control inspector for three years before becoming a manager.

What characteristics do you need to be successful in your job?

Quality controllers should be good at stress management, since we have to make a lot of tough decisions. We must also have very keen eyesight and good memory for details and regulations.

What other jobs could you do using the skills from this job?

Quality controllers can move into factory management because we understand the manufacturing process and everything involved with it. We could also move into positions as production controllers for the same reasons.

What changes will there be in the future?

I believe the demand for quality controllers will increase because quality is becoming a higher priority for everyone. Due to the global competition now faced by many companies, they are less concerned about quantity and more concerned about quality.

In the future, technology will take over the more repetitive and straightforward tasks done by quality inspectors. It will also ensure quicker results in problem solving.

For example, calculations will be performed more rapidly, and the repair of manufacturing machines will involve simple reprogramming instead of manual adjustments.

What are the biggest challenges in your job?

The most challenging part of being in quality control is redefining what quality means to people who have been doing something for a long time.

We must convince people that the quality of the product, as well as its appearance, packaging and delivery time, is all important. I try to get people to see quality as a philosophy, not just a part of the process.

Are there many opportunities to enter this career?

Yes, there are opportunities in quality control. I suggest that you sharpen your maths skills and get some experience working at a factory to familiarise yourself with the process. You should really get a good qualification in quality control or quality assurance.

What do you like about your job?

Believe it or not, I really like working under pressure. I enjoy being busy and having a lot of things to do at once. I

thrive on the responsibility.

Also, it's nice knowing that I can make a difference in a company - that my ideas and actions will have a real impact on the way things are done.

What do you dislike about your job?

One problem with this job is that I'm not always the most popular bloke in the company.

If we make a big mistake in production, I'm the one who has to tell the workers and the management. I have to make tough decisions, including when to shut down production because something's gone wrong.

It's frustrating for everyone but I'm the one that has to put my foot down if standards drop.

What advice would you give to someone interested in your career?

Get as much experience and quality-related training as you can. Keep the knowledge and apply it well; you may find you move up the ladder fast if you do a good job.

A day in the life

9:00 am - 11:00 am

Walking around the plant, working to solve any problems reported in previous shifts, talking to production manager, maintenance workers and inspectors.

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Attending a meeting of the quality board (with plant manager, production manager and chief executive), reviewing quality-related problems in production, discussing current practices and whether they are effective.

12:00 pm - 12:30 pm

Eating lunch.

12:30 pm - 1:00 pm

Checking finished products (eg, key tags), ensuring that labels are correct.

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Updating documentation on the computer.

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Preparing paperwork for meetings, summarising the results of audits I have done of various stages of production.

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Ensuring that there are no problems for the oncoming shift to deal with.