



Job Description

Production Planner

Location: Northern Ireland

Department: Operations / Supply Chain

Reports To: Production Manager / Supply Chain Manager

Contract Type: Full-time, Permanent

Role Purpose

The Production Planner is responsible for developing and maintaining efficient production schedules to meet customer demand within a fast-paced chilled and frozen food manufacturing environment. The role also plays a key part in the effective use, maintenance, and ongoing development of the ERP system to support accurate planning, stock control, and operational decision-making. In addition, the role oversees the annual seasonal stock build and the coordinated despatch of this stock during the peak trading period each December.

Key Responsibilities

Production Planning

- Create, issue, and maintain daily and weekly production schedules using ERP-generated sales forecasts, confirmed orders, and capacity constraints.
- Coordinate with Production, Engineering, Technical/QA, Procurement, and Sales teams to manage plan changes and resolve issues promptly.
- Monitor production output through ERP reporting and adjust plans as required to ensure customer orders are fulfilled on time.
- Plan labour allocation and machine utilisation to maximise efficiency and reduce downtime.
- Schedule chilled and frozen production runs, considering shelf life, shift patterns, product segregation and storage capacity.

Seasonal Stock Build & December Despatch Management

- Plan and oversee the annual seasonal stock-build programme within the ERP system, ensuring sufficient production volumes are achieved ahead of peak December demand.
- Coordinate with procurement, production, warehouse, and logistics teams to ensure materials, capacity, and storage requirements are accurately reflected in the system during the stock-build period.

- Manage the controlled and timely despatch of seasonal stock throughout December using ERP despatch and order management functionality.
- Maintain accurate system-based scheduling, stock visibility, and order tracking to ensure seasonal orders are fulfilled in full and on time.
- Review ERP data following the seasonal period to evaluate performance and recommend system or process improvements for future years.

ERP Systems & Process Development

- Act as a key user of the ERP system for production planning, scheduling, and stock management activities.
- Ensure master data accuracy, including bills of materials, routings, lead times, yields, capacities, and production parameters.
- Identify opportunities to improve planning accuracy, efficiency, and visibility through better use of ERP functionality.
- Support the development, testing, and implementation of ERP enhancements, upgrades, or new modules relevant to planning and supply chain operations.
- Work closely with IT, system providers, and internal stakeholders to resolve ERP-related issues and improve system performance.
- Develop and maintain standard operating procedures (SOPs) for ERP planning processes.
- Provide ERP system support and training to colleagues as required to ensure consistent and effective system use.

Communication & Coordination

- Attend daily and weekly production meetings and provide updates on production schedules, ERP data accuracy, and seasonal stock status.
- Communicate plan changes to production and support teams in real time, ensuring system updates are completed promptly.
- Liaise with Technical/QA regarding specifications, changeovers, and compliance requirements within the ERP framework.

Data Management & Reporting

- Maintain accurate, timely, and reliable planning data within ERP systems.
- Produce routine and seasonal stock-build progress reports using ERP and supporting data tools.
- Review production performance, downtime, variances, and forecast accuracy using system-generated reports.
- Develop and maintain KPI dashboards relating to schedule adherence, throughput, stock levels, and seasonal despatch performance.

Compliance & Standards

- Ensure all planning and system-related activities comply with BRCGS, HACCP, and customer audit requirements.

- Maintain accurate ERP records supporting full traceability and audit readiness.
- Participate in continuous improvement initiatives across planning, systems, and operations.

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

Experience & Knowledge

- Experience in production planning or scheduling within food manufacturing (chilled/frozen desirable).
- Strong understanding of capacity planning, workflow, and factory processes.
- Proven experience using ERP systems for production planning, scheduling, and stock control.
- Experience maintaining and improving ERP master data and planning parameters.
- Strong Excel skills and confidence working with large data sets.
- Awareness of BRCGS, HACCP, and food safety requirements.
- Experience managing seasonal production peaks, stock build programmes, or time-sensitive despatch operations (particularly during December).

Skills & Competencies

- Highly organised with excellent attention to detail, particularly in system data accuracy.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to translate data into actionable plans.
- Ability to work under pressure, particularly during seasonal production and despatch periods.
- Effective communicator across multiple departments and technical levels.
- Confident system user with a continuous improvement mindset.

Qualifications

- 3rd Level qualification in Business, Supply Chain, Operations, Engineering, or a related discipline (or equivalent experience)
- Eligibility to work in the UK.

Essential Criteria

- Experience supporting ERP implementations, upgrades, or system optimisation projects.
- Data analysis, forecasting, or demand planning experience.

Desirable Criteria

- Experience in chilled and frozen production environments.
- Relevant supply chain or planning qualifications (e.g. CIPS, APICS).
- Exposure to lean manufacturing or continuous improvement methodologies.

Key Behaviours

- Proactive, with the ability to anticipate production, system, or seasonal challenges.
- Adaptable to fluctuating demand and evolving system requirements.
- Strong sense of ownership and accountability for planning data and outcomes.
- Collaborative and team-focused, with a willingness to support colleagues in system use and process improvement.