

Production Manager (Manufacturing)		Western Australia
ASCO Code: 1222-11		May 2008
Labour market rating:	No shortage	
Comment		

Occupational demand

There were 98,300 people directly employed in manufacturing in WA in 2007, being 9.2 per cent of the total employed. Western Australia accounts for half of Australia's shipbuilding production and has produced vessels valued in excess of \$3 billion over the last decade at the Australian Marine Complex in Henderson. Nearby Kwinana is the state's major industrial and manufacturing area where products such as chemicals, steel fabrication and piping are produced. Recently there have been major investments in the Technology Park at Bentley where ICT manufacture is a primary focus.

Occupational supply

Production Managers require a balance of management and manufacturing skills. In most cases, the supply of skills for this occupation comes from people who have worked in a manufacturing or engineering environment for a number of years. Employers do not typically consider University level management qualifications by themselves to be sufficient for applicants to be suitable for the role. Measurement of the supply of experienced and qualified people is difficult. This is compounded by the vast range of manufactured goods produced in a variety of industrial landscapes. In 2006-07 international immigration provided Western Australia with 73 new production managers.

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

A DEEWR survey of employers who had recently advertised for manufacturing production managers showed that all of the vacancies were filled within six weeks. There were 23 applicants per vacancy of whom 4.2 per vacancy were considered by employers to be suitable. The main reasons applicants were considered unsuitable were insufficient manufacturing or engineering production experience or lack of management skills, with employers indicating overseas applicants were typically unsuitable. Employers reported they sought a combination or balance of knowledge of manufacturing and 'people' management skills. They indicated they usually require prospective managers to have experience with the specific or similar types of goods as those in the advertised role. Employers often used the term "operations manager" which they said encouraged higher numbers of applicants as it demonstrated the importance of a trade background. Employers advertising via the internet reported high numbers of overseas applicants but none suggested they were prepared to consider 457 visa sponsorship. Recruitments firms indicated this role requires a broad range of skills across a broad range of industries. Transfer between industries is not always appropriate, for instance from or to the chemical or pharmaceutical industry, due to the qualifications and technical skills required. Recruitment firms said that 'culture' fit is an important aspect in selecting applicants and that there is now a greater requirement for qualifications than was previously the case.

Labour market outlook

Current supply appears sufficient to meet demand. The numbers of suitable applicants suggest there will continue to be no shortage in the near-term.