NIKHIL RAJENDRAKUMAR, PMP®

EIT | ASQ CQE | ASQ CSSGB | Certified IATF 16949:2016 Internal Auditor

Kitchener, ON, Canada • +1 (514) 224-0751 • nikhil.rajendrakumar@gmail.com

nikhil-rajendrakumar.net • linkedin.com/in/nikhil-rajendrakumar

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PMP-certified Project Manager with 8+ years of multi-industry manufacturing leadership across automotive, aerospace, and electronics manufacturing environments. Proven record of delivering phase-gate program launches, defending CAPEX business cases above USD 6M, and orchestrating cross-functional execution from concept design through Start of Production. Expert in stakeholder & executive communication, RAID-based risk governance, vendor and supplier management, engineering change control, and quality-system compliance (IATF 16949, VDA 6.3). Combines APQP/PPAP/PFMEA technical depth with Lean Six Sigma rigor and Python/SQL data fluency to convert engineering complexity into measurable business outcomes.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Program & Project Management • Phase-Gate / Stage-Gate Launch Execution • Stakeholder & Executive Communication • Risk & RAID Governance • Engineering Change Management (ECN/ECR) • CAPEX, ROI & Business Case Development • Vendor, Supplier & Contract Management • Cross-Functional Team Leadership • Budget & Schedule Management • MS Project Master Scheduling (MPS) • APQP / PPAP / PFMEA / Control Plans • Quality Systems (IATF 16949, VDA 6.3) • Lean Six Sigma / Hoshin Kanri / Kaizen / VSM / SMED / 5S • Root Cause Analysis (8D, 5-Why, Ishikawa) • SPC / Cpk-Ppk / Capability Studies • KPI Dashboards & OBEYA Reporting • FAT / SAT, Commissioning & Tool Buy-Off • Continuous Improvement & Operational Excellence

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Project Manager | **PWO Group** *Apr 2024 – Present*

Kitchener, Canada | Automotive Tier-1 — VW, Stellantis, Ford safety-critical structural & seat components. Lead multi-site launch execution (> USD 50M lifetime revenue), coordinating phase-gate readiness, stakeholder alignment, and escalation management across engineering, quality, production, purchasing, suppliers, and leadership teams.

- Drive APQP and PPAP execution from Product Design Freeze / B-Release to SOP, coordinating deliverables, timing, readiness reviews, and cross-functional closure of open items.
- Govern Control Plan, PFMEA, PFD, and Work Instruction implementation while ensuring manufacturing feasibility through FLD assessment, forming-simulation alignment, and GD&T / tolerance reviews within IATF 16949:2016 and VDA 6.3 audit frameworks.
- Built and defended ROI, payback, cash-flow, and CAPEX business cases above USD 6M for tooling, laser-welding, and bushing-insertion machine investments — including reuse-vs-new-investment trade studies for existing assets across sister plants — enabling PSHSR approvals, supplier-led development, FAT/SAT planning and execution, runoff/commissioning coordination, and tool buy-off readiness.
- Owned customer audit and launch-readiness deliverables (incl. Stellantis MPA Level 2) through Control Plan alignment, capability evidence (Cpk/Ppk), Run-at-Rate validation, destructive weld testing, and dimensional compliance.
- Implemented Excel-based OBEYA dashboards with milestone maps, R/Y/G health signals, baseline-deviation tracking, and visual open-point escalation to manage workstreams, site readiness, release gates, and PPAP submission visibility for executive stakeholders.
- Coordinate prototype builds and early production trials (dimensional loop studies, fixture tuning, weld-joint verification, packaging validation), and support quotation development and technical-commercial feasibility reviews — costing inputs, process assumptions, investment logic, and customer specification review.
- Led multi-site program coordination across PWO Canada, Czechia, and Germany for a strategic seat-structure program, aligning tooling, fixture sourcing, prototype builds, and PPAP / Run@Rate readiness against VFF / PVS / Zero Series milestones with structured supplier-quote and multi-currency cost-walk analysis.
- Drive risk and change governance through structured RAID logs, ECN/ECR coordination, contingency planning, and escalation triggers across stamping, welding, and line-efficiency risks; plan and maintain Master Project Schedules (MPS) in MS Project, coordinating engineers to tune HV-Tube robot cells and fixtures, integrate prog-die subcomponents, control springback via FLD/FE, enforce datum scheme/GD&T, and align tooling/layout buy-offs to customer build milestones.

Manufacturing Engineer | **Magna International** *Apr 2023 – Apr 2024*

St. Thomas, Canada | Automotive Tier-1 — Structural stampings for GM, Ford, Stellantis. Drove continuous improvement for front-end stamping and materials flow, stabilizing quality KPIs and OEE across a 13-press production fleet through daily management and structured loss elimination.

- Applied FLD checks and forming-simulation outputs to assess formability risk (splits, wrinkles, thinning) and prioritize die/process countermeasures before production release.
- Led in-tool crack/split detection rollout using finite-element forming simulations (“red” risk zones) — specifying sensor type and locations, PLC trigger thresholds, fail-safe machine interlocks, and Poka-Yoke error-proofing — cutting unplanned downtime and stopping defect propagation.
- Authored rework and verification work instructions linked to Control Plan, PFMEA actions, and Layered Process Audits (LPA) so containment is repeatable, traceable, and sustained via sign-offs, training, and revision control.
- Led structured problem-solving for production nonconformances and customer complaints using 5-Why, Ishikawa, rapid containment, and 8D corrective/preventive actions — validating fixes with data and control updates to prevent recurrence.

- Represented stamping in APQP reviews, aligning QCD targets, trial deliverables, risk controls, and readiness evidence to plant stage-gates and launch milestones; executed bank-builds and engineering changes (ECN) while protecting takt time, throughput, WIP buffers, and downstream assembly fit using Control Plans and SPC monitoring.
- Designed returnable and expendable packaging for structural stampings — validating pack density, deformation countermeasures, ergonomics, and logistics cost to improve part protection and supply reliability.
- Owned PFEP (Plan-For-Every-Part) — engineering end-to-end material flow: point-of-use vs. supermarket sizing, flow routes / milk-runs, line-side storage, Kanban (min-max) replenishment, and tugger/forklift capacity models; coordinated conveyor and material-conveyance interfaces with automation suppliers and acted as customer/supplier liaison (GM, Ford, Stellantis) to eliminate packaging-induced defects and line disruptions.

Manufacturing Engineer | **Dana Incorporated** *Aug 2022 – Mar 2023*

Cambridge, Canada | EV battery cooling systems — global product transfer & PPAP execution. Core APQP team member coordinating PPAP, PFMEA sessions, and updates to Control Plans, PFDs, and Work Instructions.

- Acted as New Product Engineer for EV battery cooling systems — owning equipment pre-start health & safety review, calibration, and process validation; built AviX work breakdowns for new stations defining task sequence, standard work, and cycle-time targets.
- Improved robotic-cell capacity through automation strategy development, robot-path optimization, changeover improvements, and PLC interface coordination.
- Led implementation of Autonomous and Preventive Maintenance on critical equipment, embedding TPM standards to improve MTBF.
- Developed furnace-braze recipes, laser-welder parameters, and leak-tester verification methods to secure stable thermal and sealing performance.
- Supported product-volume transfer to EU plants — coordinating with corporate engineering to achieve Run-at-Rate, creating build-ahead inventory plans, and providing technical support for prototype and PPAP builds.

Manufacturing Specialist — Operational Excellence (OPEX) | **Safran Group** *Jan 2022 – Jul 2022*

Montréal, Canada | Aerospace — cabin-interior monuments for Boeing 777-300ER (Emirates program). Coordinator for manufacturing-method selection and lead for production-tool identification and improvement across aerospace cabin-interior production.

- Owned product serial-life management — fulfilling improvement requests, developing infrastructure, implementing engineering change requests, and managing layout changes.
- Improved manufacturing-system maturity vs. One Safran criteria, closing gaps on standard work, performance reviews, and visual management.
- Core member of New Product Launch Management — handling operational budget allocation, prototype build, and change management for product hardware and related machine software; served as plant coach for standard work and line-pacing implementation.
- Liaison between Safran Engineering and suppliers — troubleshooting process/equipment issues to eliminate process-induced defects within the facility and the supplier base.
- Managed prototype build execution for the Emirates Boeing 777-300ER Front Row Monument, overseeing budget control and global component sourcing.

Project Manager / Plant Coach | **Continental AG** *Jan 2015 – Oct 2018*

Bengaluru, India | Electronics manufacturing — automotive & industrial electronics. Managed a multi-project Operational Excellence (OpEx) portfolio under the Continental Business System (CBS) — Continental's enterprise OpEx / Lean Manufacturing framework — driving cross-functional initiatives in digitalization, equipment localization, consumable-cost reduction, and cycle-time improvement aligned to Hoshin Kanri strategy deployment.

- Led 8D problem-solving projects across the facility and supplier base, owning CAPA close-out, action tracking, and recurrence-prevention governance; planned and facilitated Jishuken / Kaizen Blitz events as time-boxed improvement projects with defined scope, deliverables, and capacity/capability targets.
- Project Lead for the 5S Best-In-Class initiative across the Electronics Plant — defining scope, milestones, and audit standards, coordinating area owners and shift leads, and delivering measurable productivity improvement against the project charter.
- Owned end-to-end delivery of the organization's flagship Lean training program across all hierarchy levels — managing curriculum scope, training schedules, and live-project application of cross-functional flow diagrams, VSM, Heijunka, SMED, and Poka-Yoke.
- Managed plant-wide rollout of Deviation Management (Daily Management) boards as a structured change project — defining KPI baselines (FPY, OEE, non-conformance cost, internal rejects), executing phased implementation across shifts and value streams, and embedding escalation routines for countermeasure tracking.

EDUCATION

Master of Engineering — Industrial Engineering • Concordia University, Montréal, Canada *Jan 2019 – Apr 2021*

Bachelor of Engineering — Mechanical Engineering • University of Kerala, India *Sep 2007 – Apr 2012*

TECHNICAL SKILLS & TOOLS

Project & Program Management: MS Project (Master Project Scheduling), MS Office (advanced Excel & PowerPoint), Phase-Gate / Stage-Gate, RAID & Risk Registers, OBEYA & KPI Dashboards, RACI, Executive Status Reporting

Quality & Compliance: APQP, PPAP, PFMEA, Control Plans, PFD, 8D, 5-Why, Ishikawa, SPC, Cpk / Ppk, IATF 16949:2016, VDA 6.3, Layered Process Audits, GD&T

Lean Six Sigma, Engineering & Data: Hoshin Kanri, Kaizen / Jishuken, VSM, SMED, 5S, Poka-Yoke, TPM, PFEP, Kanban · MS Project, AutoCAD, CATIA V5, Minitab, Arena Simulation, FLD / forming-simulation, PLC · Python (NumPy, Pandas, scikit-learn), MySQL