

Line Supervisor

"It's a team effort and it has to be. If one person fails, the entire team fails; if one member of the team succeeds, it's because the team helped that person succeed."

WHAT I LIKE BEST ABOUT THE CAREER

"I love being on the cutting edge of technological change...of fantastic changes in the way food is processed and handled."

THE WORKING WORLD

"No matter what field you choose, it has to be something you will enjoy and continue to be challenged by. The most important thing is to find a job where you can continue to learn."

EMPLOYER

Heritage Foods Ltd.

EDUCATION

Grade 12

YEARS IN WORKFORCE

17 years

SALARY RANGE

\$25,000 - \$35,000

CAREER PATH

Line Cook,
Restaurant Manager,
Line Supervisor



•Randy•Oldenburger•

WHAT IS A LINE SUPERVISOR?

Good food doesn't "just happen". A great cake, a fine meal or the perfect perogy, in the case of Heritage Foods, results from good work and informed decisions all along the way. In a food processing plant, each person who works on the production "line" contributes to that process, whether it is the person loading and mixing the raw ingredients, the machine operators or those who package the finished product. The person who orchestrates this process is called a line supervisor. At Heritage Foods, Randy Oldenburger faces this challenge with enthusiasm each day.

WHAT DOES A LINE SUPERVISOR DO?

"I basically coordinate the work of eight people on a production line," explains Randy.

"I find out what we are going to be making that day, make sure all of the ingredients and materials are in place, the right equipment is set up and that everyone has what they need to do the job." On a given day, Randy's team will produce 300,000 "Cheemo" perogies.

Jack of All Trades While each day has a predictable schedule of setting up the line, running production and cleaning up for the next shift, the line supervisor must be flexible enough to quickly respond to concerns regarding equipment, materials, and staff. Randy frequently finds himself responding to staff concerns or mechanical breakdowns on the line. "You have to know every piece of equipment from the ground up," he explains, "as well as proper procedures, safety regulations and how to work with people."

Team Leader Line production depends on teamwork. "It's a team effort and it has to be,"



states Randy. "If one person fails, the entire team fails; if one member of the team succeeds, it's because the team helped that person succeed." Randy works hard to develop and maintain a positive team spirit on the line as he trains new personnel, organizes the positions on the line, and responds to staff concerns.

Customer Focus "The customer is the business focus at Heritage," stresses Randy. To ensure customer satisfaction and efficient production, Randy meets monthly with senior management to discuss product changes, review customer concerns and plan production improvements. Subsequent meetings with the production team ensure all employees are involved in the process.

HOW TO BECOME A LINE SUPERVISOR

Randy came to this position after ten years in management in a national food chain. That experience was invaluable in developing the "people skills" needed to train and motivate staff and the organizational skills needed to keep production running smoothly. While many line supervisors are promoted to supervisor from the production line, Randy recommends a basic

management course like those offered at many technical institutes and colleges.

Line supervisors need strong mechanical skills to respond to equipment problems. "They also need to be fast learners," emphasizes Randy, "to not only learn the new technology but to pass that on to staff on the line". To keep his own skills current, Randy has enrolled in a four-month food production course offered through the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology.

THE FUTURE

Randy views food processing as a dynamic and growing sector. New products and improved production techniques provide varied and stimulating work opportunities for line supervisors like Randy, who views the future with confidence and optimism. In addition to a growing industry, he enjoys working for a growing company, happily reporting that "this is the best company I've ever worked for." For those employees eager to learn and to take on new challenges, a line supervisor's position can lead eventually to positions such as production manager or plant manager.

RELATED CAREERS

Production Manager

A production manager manages all production lines in a plant, planning the production process at a more strategic level. Production managers, for example, would plan the production targets and schedules, source and order supplies and oversee the work of the line supervisors.

Restaurant Manager

Restaurant managers oversee one or several production lines on a smaller scale, providing product for immediate consumption by the customer.

Machine Operator

Machine operators are responsible for one point in the production process, operating one or several machines that prepare and produce the product.



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For more info, check with Janet Henderson,
 Alberta Food Processors Association
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 or visit the website at www.afpa.com