



DAVID OKONKWO

Process Engineer

Process engineering leader with 17 years across food and beverage manufacturing, currently managing a team of 11 engineers and technicians across three plants. Builds capital plans that stand up to CFO scrutiny, and keeps line efficiency and safety compliance moving in the same direction. Ammonia refrigeration and aseptic processing are the deep wells.

CONTACT INFORMATION



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EDUCATION

M.B.A., Xavier University, 2018

B.S. Chemical Engineering, The Ohio State University, 2008

Licensed professional engineer, chemical discipline, Ohio (active)

KEY SKILLS

- Capital planning and stage-gate governance
- Process safety management and risk management planning for ammonia
- Process hazard analysis, hazard reviews, and layer of protection analysis leadership
- Aseptic processing and clean-in-place and steam-in-place
- Line efficiency and total productive maintenance programs
- Vendor factory and site acceptance testing and commissioning
- Technical due diligence on M&A
- Team building and engineer development
- SAP and Wonderware historian
- Six Sigma Black Belt

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

PROCESS ENGINEERING MANAGER | RIVERBEND DAIRY COOPERATIVE, CINCINNATI, OH

2020 – PRESENT

- Lead an 11-person process engineering group supporting three plants that ship about 340 million pounds of finished product a year.
- Delivered the \$18.4M aseptic filler expansion at the Ohio site on schedule, with first commercial run within nine days of mechanical completion.
- Cut plant-wide ammonia charge by 22% across two sites through refrigeration redesign, easing both regulatory reporting burden and insurance premiums.
- Rebuilt the capital planning process so line owners score projects on the same net present value and line efficiency uplift template, which shifted spend toward higher-return work.
- Chair the corporate change management and process hazard analysis governance forum for all six plants.

PRINCIPAL PROCESS ENGINEER | MERIDIAN FOODS GROUP, LOUISVILLE, KY

2016 – 2020

- Set the process design standard for ready-to-drink beverage lines across the enterprise, adopted at five plants.
- Led the process hazard analysis revalidation cycle for two ammonia refrigeration systems and closed all high-priority recommendations within the required window.
- Owned the technical due diligence on a \$65M acquisition, including clean-in-place capability, allergen segregation, and utilities headroom.
- Coached six process engineers, three of whom moved into senior or lead roles.
- Drove a sanitation-water reduction program that trimmed water use per case by around 14%.

SENIOR PROCESS ENGINEER | MERIDIAN FOODS GROUP, LOUISVILLE, KY

2013 – 2016

- Led the clean-in-place redesign for two high-temperature short-time pasteurizers, cutting changeover time by roughly 25 minutes per product switch.
- Ran the FAT and SAT for a new spray dryer, including a two-week performance test against the vendor guarantee.

- Wrote the site's clean-in-place validation protocol used for six subsequent equipment installs.
- Supported the safety team through a compliance audit with zero findings on the process side.

PROCESS ENGINEER I AUBURN BEVERAGE WORKS, COLUMBUS, OH
2008 – 2013

- Supported three filling lines running about 900 cans per minute each, focused on efficiency losses and short-stop reduction.
- Led a designed experiment on carbonation control that tightened the CO₂ spec capability index from 0.9 to 1.4.
- Commissioned a new pasteurizer tunnel, including operator training and the first 30 days of hyper-care coverage.
- Chaired the plant's daily loss walk and drove the weekly action list.