



# HUNGRY

FOR A CAREER THAT WILL NEVER  
GO OUT OF STYLE?



**The possibilities in the food industry for your career go well beyond the production line.**

A career in food processing and equipment manufacturing is always in demand, is a part of a growing market, and has competitive wages at all levels. Read about career professionals in the food and beverage processing industry and their stories, to learn more about how they got their careers started, and what their day-to-day looks like in this in-demand and growing industry of food processing.



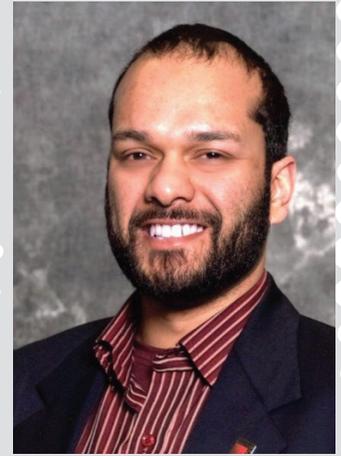
# Len Roche

## Engineer

**seiberling**  
A Haskell Company



*"I got into the food industry through the career fair at the University of Wisconsin, where I went to school. I never thought I'd end up in the food industry. That's because, as an engineering student, you don't hear much about food. At least in Wisconsin, the courses are steered towards chemicals, oil, and gas with very little exposure to food. Food is a sort of hidden industry — we all need food and drink, but we don't spend much time thinking about production and how a product gets from the farm to the table."*



### Education:

M.S. Chemical Engineering – University of Florida  
B.S. Chemical Engineering – University of Wisconsin – Madison  
B.S. Chemistry – University of Wisconsin – Madison

### Snapshot of your day:

My role has the right balance between office and fieldwork. At the start of a project, I work together with our client and my team to hash out the conceptual and detailed designs of a new process. This could range from a small expansion to a new greenfield facility. This involves a lot of meetings, both externally with the client and internally with our CAD designers and our automation engineers. As the design nears completion, I specify process equipment such as tanks, pumps, heat exchangers, skids, valves, and piping for procurement. I also work with our automation engineers to implement valve sequencing and interlocks for CIP circuits.

Once the project reaches the execution phase, I work with pipe fitters and riggers on-site to ensure the process is built per the design. This often involves quickly resolving unforeseen issues not picked up during the design phase. This phase is very fast-paced and high stress but provides a fantastic opportunity to learn and grow. After construction nears completion, I work with our automation engineers to perform IO checks on equipment and start commissioning processes and clean in place systems. This culminates in production trials where we work with plant operations and engineering to ensure that a salable batch of product is created, and the process works as designed. The project then concludes with on-site support monitoring regular production.

This project time frame can last between a few weeks to a little over a year, depending on the scale of a project.

### How did you end up in food and beverage?

I got into the food industry through the career fair at the University of Wisconsin, where I went to school. I never thought I'd end up in the food industry. That's because, as an engineering student, you don't hear much about food. At least in Wisconsin, the courses are steered towards chemicals, oil, and gas with very little exposure to food. Food is a sort of hidden industry — we all need food and drink, but we don't spend much time thinking about production and how a product gets from the farm to the table.

### The biggest takeaway for people curious to join the industry:

I've had a very enjoyable time in the food industry, the variety keeps you on your toes and constantly learning. It's also great to see the products you've worked on at your grocery store. You get a sense of pride and accomplishment whenever you see the fruits of your labor on display like that. From a job security standpoint, the industry is as recession-proof as you can get. We all need to eat no matter what's going on in the economy. Having this security is like an anchor keeping us steady when the waves around us get choppy.

# Andy Topor

## Training Specialist

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Ideas for the future.

*"People with various degrees in numerous fields can find their skill set needed in this industry. From mechanical or IT to management or marketing, there are many job opportunities with companies with amazing benefits and treat their employees like family. Being at the front line of producing food products for the public is a rewarding feeling. Learning how the process works and being a part of the innovative team to create foods that people know by name makes me feel accomplished."*



### Education:

Associate in Applied Sciences and B.S. in Automotive Technologies.

### What is your position/role?

Train customers and Handtmann Service technicians on all Handtmann equipment and technical services. Provide technical assistance to employees and customers by troubleshooting issues.

### Snapshot of your day:

Most days, I spend with newly hired technicians in a classroom setting or in the field. During the classroom setting, I train technicians on specific Handtmann equipment and demonstrate the machine's operational functions. In the field, I supervise a technician's ability to utilize the training they received and tools to perform services and repairs to Handtmann equipment. I provide technical assistance over the phone or in-person on all equipment when my expertise is needed. I provide training to our customer's maintenance and operational teams, both in a classroom setting at our Lake Forest facility or the customer's training facilities. When I am not training personnel, I spend my time creating documentation and training courses for new and special equipment that Handtmann has available. I create directional videos for maintenance and operation personnel. When time is available, I continually try to learn more about the technology Handtmann offers or mimic troubleshooting errors to share my findings with my colleagues.

### How did you end up in food and beverage?

A family friend that works for Handtmann suggested that I apply for a service technician position in the Chicagoland area that was open at the time. After working as a service technician for four years and learning the equipment and industry, I applied for the Training Specialist position that was announced and have been in this position for almost one year. Before applying for the position, I was involved in developing training material and other training projects with the Training Manager at Handtmann Inc. This paved my way into the Training Specialist position.

### The biggest takeaway for people curious to join the industry:

The industry is vast and offers many job opportunities for all sorts of careers. The industry is changing every day, and new technologies emerge from various manufacturers. People with various degrees in numerous fields can find their skill set needed in this industry. From mechanical or IT to management or marketing, there are many job opportunities with companies with amazing benefits and treat their employees like family. Being at the front line of producing food products for the public is a rewarding feeling. Learning how the process works and being a part of the innovative team to create foods that people know by name makes me feel accomplished.

# Veronica Sanchez

## Food Safety Specialist

*"I moved to the US in 1999, and my first job here was as a QA technician in meat plants. After seeing the risks that can be present in food manufacturing plants, I felt the need to help keep the food safe and make it my career. The industry is always facing new challenges that keeps the job super interesting."*



### Education:

B.S. in Biology, minor in Microbiology, M.S. in Food Safety and Technology

### What is your position/role?

At Commercial Food Sanitation (CFS), we specialize in strategic consulting in the areas of Sanitation, Hygienic Design, and Food Safety. Our goal is to establish a partnership with our clients to help them keep their products safe and, at the same time, focus on continuous improvement.

### Snapshot of your day:

Collaborate internally on strategies to help customers, collaborate on process or guidelines reviews, conduct customer meetings, prepare or facilitate customer training, prepare for sanitation assessments

### How did you end up in food and beverage?

I moved to the US in 1999, and my first job here was as a QA technician in meat plants. After seeing the risks that can be present in food manufacturing plants, I felt the need to help keep the food safe and make it my career. The industry is always facing new challenges that keeps the job super interesting.

### The biggest takeaway for people curious to join the industry:

Food safety is the responsibility of every single employee at the plant. The support of upper management is needed to have a tangible food safety culture and to have solid programs and execution to keep the product safe.

# Alicia Shoulders

## Regional Sales Mgr.

**HARPAK**  **ULMA**

*“There is never a dull moment in the food industry, and I always found it interesting, especially being in the food packaging side of things. Grocery store visits are not only to buy food but also a way to prospect potential new customers, as well as see a product you helped a company create. I like the fact that the food industry is recession-proof. Even during rough times, food is an essential item, and what we are providing services for affects how consumers eat and shop at the grocery store.”*



### Education:

B.S. Marketing – Western Illinois University

### Snapshot of your day:

My role as a Regional Sales Manager is different daily and changes frequently. The day to day during Covid-19 is different than before Covid-19. Before Covid, it consisted of traveling to different areas within my assigned territory to meet customers and potential new customers to determine their struggles or production issues. Are they facing a labor shortage, is their package leaking, do they need more capacity? etc. All of these challenges drive the product or service that we would offer or provide to them. Our job is to help the company grow and achieve their goals through packaging. Once we have determined what their needs are, then we work with our Product Management Team to put together a complete solution. This solution is then presented to the customer, and further discussions begin to dive in deeper to ensure what we gave satisfies their requirements. If they feel we have provided the best solution, price, overall package, then they would purchase from us. After the sale, we have to ensure that all documentation is received internally, and the project goes off without a hitch. Now with Covid, a lot more is done online with virtual meetings, demonstrations, etc.

Other job activities include attending trade shows, prospecting (looking for new customers), responsibility for your budget that needs to be met by the end of the year. Networking, networking, networking. If you are a social butterfly like myself, then this is the job for you. This job does require a self-starter attitude. You have to be responsible for yourself and ensure you are working to meet goals as there is not a lot of time spent in the office. It is typically a work from home job.

### How did you end up in food and beverage?

I got into the food industry right out of college when there was a hiring freeze due to the economy. I was able to work part-time at a packaging machinery company where my father worked. Eventually, I was hired full time and began my career. It was a great start as I was able to work a wide variety of positions, purchasing, production coordinator until I finally ended up in inside sales, which jump-started my path.

### The biggest takeaway for people curious to join the industry:

There is never a dull moment in the food industry, and I always found it interesting, especially being in the food packaging side of things. Grocery store visits are not only to buy food but also a way to prospect potential new customers, as well as see a product you helped a company create. I like the fact that the food industry is recession-proof. Even during rough times, food is an essential item, and what we are providing services for affects how consumers eat and shop at the grocery store.

# Deanna Barnard

## Administrative Assistant



*"It has been enlightening to learn about the variety of opportunities within this industry. I have met people from so many different backgrounds applying their knowledge in many different ways. I have had interactions with companies that range in size from small mom and pop businesses to large international corporations. Having access to this diverse customer and vendor base has been very valuable to my career growth."*



### Education:

B.F.A. - Visual Arts - The College of New Jersey  
A.A. - Burlington County Community College  
Accounting & Taxation Certification (in progress) - Bucks County Community College

### What is your position/role/snapshot of the day?

My role supports many departments within the company. My primary role is assisting the controller in overseeing accounts payable, accounts receivable, and collections. In an accounting role, I am constantly presented with new challenges and problems to solve. This helps each day feel different and interesting. Within those main functions, I oversee our vendors' payments and correspond with our customers and follow up on past due payments or billing errors. Each day I review incoming and outgoing payments to our bank accounts. With that information, I make entries into our ERP system and ensure that the payments are applied appropriately. I also handle deposit billing for customer machine purchases. In addition to assisting with the company's financial side, I also work with the manufacturing team as a production planner. I take each potential machine shop job that the ERP system recommends based on stock and sales order demands and convert those recommendations into jobs carried out by the in-house machine shop. As a part of this role, I need to ensure that the correct quantities will be made and schedule the jobs within the given timeframe for manufacturing. This part of my job allows me to interact with each department of the company. Because of this, I have had the opportunity to diversify my skills. I enjoy learning new things and applying what I learn to improve how I do my job.

### How did you end up in this industry?

I had always gravitated toward accounting positions during and after graduating college. I am drawn to the challenge that accounting offers. PacProInc was looking for an administrative assistant to support several departments at the company. I jumped at the opportunity as I felt the smaller size of the company and the unique industry would offer variety to each day as well as the opportunity to learn new skills. I enjoy a challenge and the opportunity to problem-solve. I had never imagined myself in the food manufacturing industry, but it has been a perfect fit for me.

### What is your biggest takeaway from joining the industry?

It has been enlightening to learn about the variety of opportunities within this industry. I have met people from so many different backgrounds applying their knowledge in many different ways. I have had interactions with companies that range in size from small mom and pop businesses to large international corporations. Having access to this diverse customer and vendor base has been very valuable to my career growth.

# Kevin Guernsey

## Global R&D Director



*"Working directly in the food industry truly brings a sense of appreciation for knowing what it takes to feed the world and taking great pride in being part of that process. The enormous scale of the industry to provide safe, quality products at an affordable price is something you don't realize until you experience it first-hand. When you make the connection that we are all consumers of food and that everything we in the food industry are doing has a direct impact on humanity, that's a powerful sense of purpose for a career."*



### Education:

B.S. Mechanical Engineering Technology - University of Southern Mississippi

### What is your position/role?

Working directly with processors and equipment manufacturers to understand trends, challenges, or opportunities for new solutions to help them accomplish those goals.

### Snapshot of your day:

My role at Intralox consists of a wide range of functions that most importantly starts with interacting directly with the food processors and equipment manufacturers to understand the industry trends, challenges, and opportunities that will shape the future of their businesses. This work takes place in the field, where I learn and observe first-hand. There is no better experience than "putting yourself in the customer's shoes." The main drivers for food processors to continuously improve typically revolve around the worker experience (safety, ergonomics, automation, etc.), food safety (hygienic, foreign object control, quality, etc.), and process improvements (efficiencies, new product implementation, packaging, etc.).

Intralox is a company that is rooted deeply in innovation, which usually starts with a well-defined problem statement. Part of my role is to turn these first-hand customer experiences into good problem statements along with customer requirements, which, in turn, become a menu of opportunities for our R&D teams to develop innovations. I then work closely with our global commercial team to develop a vision for our R&D efforts along with road mapping a path to achieve that vision. This process is not always based on pure financial analysis, but understanding the true impact our solutions will bring to our customers' businesses.

Lastly, I play a role in the development process. This is an extremely rewarding experience being able to see the evolution from customer challenge/opportunity all the way through the development and implementation of these solutions. I am named as the inventor on several patents for solutions we developed for the food processing industry. While this is personally satisfying (and a childhood dream), it isn't quite as rewarding as traveling the world and seeing products I was directly involved in creating being used to provide safe, affordable, high-quality food to not only my family but families around the world!

### How did you end up in food and beverage?

In 1998, I started an engineering internship with Intralox on a new product development team. At the time, the team developed several conveying solutions for the MPS industry (Meat, Poultry, and Seafood). I was hired full-time in 1999 on that development team as a New Product Engineer. As our team had the most experience in the MPS industry, several years later, our group became 100% dedicated to developing new solutions for the MPS industry. Since then, I have played several roles on the team as Lead Engineer, Industry Engineer, and now my current position of Global R&D Director for the MPS industry. Cooking, particularly BBQing, is a hobby of mine, so I enjoy being part of the process of providing safe, quality meat products to the world!

# Jonathan Buettner

## Market Mgr.



*"Having never really thought about how hard people work to get food to my plate, it has been eye-opening and inspiring."*



### Education:

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B.S. International Business – Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE)  
B.S. Engineering – Fachhochschule Lübeck (FHL)

### Snapshot of your day:

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My day consists of an evaluation of market opportunities on a broad scale, gaining a better understanding of how our technology fulfills needs in one of our R & D labs and working one on one with clients to fulfill existing project needs.

I start my day with calling prospective and current clients to introduce or update personnel on Deville Solutions and consulting through to an installed solution.

### How did you end up in food and beverage?

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I was at the gym when a good friend started venting about a hard to fill position requiring business acumen and technical expertise. I told him to take my resume.

Having never really thought about how hard people work to get food to my plate, it has been eye-opening and inspiring.

### The biggest takeaway for people curious to join the industry:

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I have made more lifelong friends than I could have imagined. This is a highly competitive industry that still maintains the ideals of us as one big family attempting to feed the world.

Everyone works together where it counts for the good of the public, and that is something you rarely see.

# Nicole Cammarata

## Global Training Manager

*"Making safe food is not a competitive advantage. And if you work in a food manufacturing facility in any capacity, it's your job to deliver safe food."*



### Education:

B.S. in Biology from the University of New Orleans

### What is your position/role?

My role is to ensure customers are engaged in critical learning that empowers how they approach food safety.

### Snapshot of your day:

Work with CFS Food Safety Specialists to ensure that all training events (training sessions, workshops, webinars, digital) are consistent experiences for our participants. Currently, a focus for me is the roll-out of our digital training platform.

### How did you end up in food and beverage?

I worked in the oil field for 16 years, starting as a field engineer, and ending in a training and development role. I joined CFS as a Training Specialist.

### The biggest takeaway for people curious to join the industry:

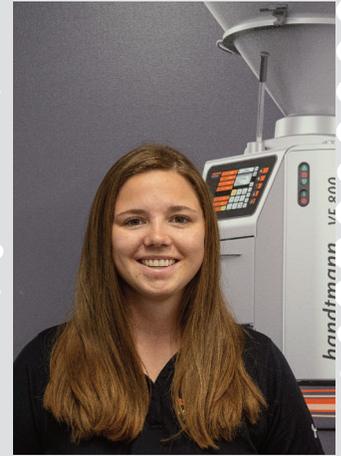
Making safe food is not a competitive advantage. And if you work in a food manufacturing facility in any capacity, it's your job to deliver safe food.

# Morgan Larson

## Application Specialist

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Ideas for the future.

*"My biggest takeaway from joining the industry so far is how many people are involved in this industry. Not only is it the actual producers of the food products, but every single one of their suppliers and all the people who keep those businesses functioning to the highest capacity. Being a part of the industry that feeds this country is very rewarding, and I get to see it firsthand every single day."*



### Education:

I received a Bachelor's Degree in Dairy Science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison

### What is your position/role?

I work across a variety of industries that include meat, plant-based protein, dairy, pet food, and other non-food applications. My position is to aid and guide the testing/commissioning of Handtmann technology for Handtmann sales personnel and our customers, either in our Technology Center or at the customer location. I also provide troubleshooting assistance to customers regarding the Handtmann equipment they already have in their facilities, which can be done through electronic support or traveling to their location. I generate technical reports on tests to create a library of information regarding specific applications that are used internally and also by our customers. This helps our team to solve other similar issues that may occur in the future and provide more detailed information on each application. I have the opportunity to see some very unique applications with our machines in this role.

### Snapshot of your day:

If I am in the office, you can usually find me conducting customer testing in our Technology Center or writing my reports from previous tests and customer visits. When I am not in the office, I travel around the U.S., assisting on machine installations, customer tests, or providing aftermarket support.

### How did you end up in food and beverage?

I started working at the UW Madison Meat Science and Muscle Biology Laboratory as a freshman and quickly took an interest in the harvest and processing of meat products. I continued working there throughout my four years at UW-Madison. In the Meat Science Lab, we had a Handtmann ConPro system, whose smaller vacuum filler we regularly used to produce various processed meat products. The ConPro unit was primarily used for testing with outside companies who wanted to see its capabilities and work on R&D projects. It always fascinated me with the kinds of projects people would come to the UW-Madison Meat Science Lab to carry out. Going into my senior year, I was appointed to Interim Meat Lab Manager. I carried this position up until I graduated in May 2019. I was fortunate enough to receive a position with Handtmann Inc. before graduation and started working very soon after graduation.

### The biggest takeaway for people curious to join the industry:

My biggest takeaway from joining the industry so far is how many people are involved in this industry. Not only is it the actual producers of the food products, but every single one of their suppliers and all the people who keep those businesses functioning to the highest capacity. Being a part of the industry that feeds this country is very rewarding, and I get to see it firsthand every single day.

# John Capps

## Automation Engineer



*"The unique variety of work, mixed with a glimpse into how the food supply chain works and how we support it, makes each day new and exciting. There is always a new challenge to undertake, allowing you to be creative and quick on your feet. The food industry will continue to grow and become more automated, allowing for more opportunities to get involved and make a difference."*



### Education:

B.S. in Applied Technology Studies - Automation Engineering focus with a minor in Innovation Engineering - Pennsylvania College of Technology  
A.A.S. in Mechatronics Engineering Technology - Pennsylvania College of Technology

### What is your position/role/snapshot of the day?

My role has many different facets that help to make each day interesting and new. There is a healthy mix of office work, shop time, and service assistance. Most of my time is spent on the shop floor, taking our fully assembled machines and bringing them through the commissioning procedure. This consists of powering the machines up, following the schematic to verify wiring, downloading initial programs, starting the machine, verifying conveyor directions, and thoroughly testing and debugging the programs to achieve proper operation. When I am not commissioning machines, I assist the electrical team with wiring and the R&D team with testing of new ideas and equipment. We also recently acquired a collaborative robot for our machine shop. I have been working with the machine shop to integrate the robot, train the operators, and create fixtures. This has allowed us to run the CNC machine without an operator, allowing the operators to focus on other tasks around the shop. When not on the shop floor, I am in the office creating and modifying schematics, researching new ways to improve our machines, archiving machine programs and schematics, programming drives for sales orders, and assisting service over the phone. Occasionally I do in-person service and sales visits, which is a nice change of scenery. It is one thing to see our machines operate in the shop but seeing them run for 21 hours a day in harsh food production environments helps bring things full circle. It gives us a different view on what we can improve and what customers are looking for.

### How did you end up in this industry?

Pennsylvania College of Technology hosts a career fair that brings out 300+ different employers. Many of these companies are part of the food, manufacturing, consumer goods, and pharma industries. While searching for and speaking to companies, I talked to PacProInc, who happened to be local to home. They are an OEM who builds interleavers and stackers for the food packing industry. Their story and equipment piqued my interest, as I did not know the food industry. After interviewing and being offered an electrical internship, I decided to join the team. I enjoyed the line of work and was fortunate enough to be offered an Automation Engineering role once I graduated.

### What is your biggest takeaway from joining the industry?

The unique variety of work, mixed with a glimpse into how the food supply chain works and how we support it, makes each day new and exciting. There is always a new challenge to undertake, allowing you to be creative and quick on your feet. The food industry will continue to grow and become more automated, allowing for more opportunities to get involved and make a difference.

# Elizabeth Burriss

## Account Manager



*"The food industry is incredible. There are so many different parts and pieces that must work together to ensure that the industry is successful. Furthermore, the success of this industry is critical to human survival. This industry is what gives the world the fuel it needs to keep moving forward. I take great pride in being a small piece of the puzzle that keeps the food industry going."*



### Education:

B.S. in Animal Science with a minor in Communication Studies from the University of Tennessee.

### What is your position/role?

This is a sales role. My job is to call our customers and see if we can help them with anything conveyance related. My focus is to connect with customers and build working relationships that are beneficial to each party involved. Although it is a sales role, I like to think of it more as consulting since it is my goal not just to sell them something, but to help them solve problems

### Snapshot of your day:

My days are centered around customers. I get in touch with them to see if there is anything I can help them with; sometimes these are unscheduled phone calls, and other times there will be a scheduled web conference with additional company resources. I determine customer needs and bring in the right people and resources to help solve their problems. I will also plan trips to visit customers at their facilities to establish stronger relationships and to uncover needs. This balance of office and fieldwork ensures there is never a dull day.

If I am not spending time with a customer, I am spending time on my knowledge and self-improvement. I will spend time learning about industry trends, common issues, and how we can solve those problems. I also collaborate internally with various teams within the organization. Because the food industry is so broad, we have teams focused on different portions within the industry. There is much to learn by working alongside colleagues who focus on other areas, and it creates a strong sense of community as we are all working together towards a common goal.

### How did you end up in food and beverage?

With my university, I attended a food industry trade show, where major food processing companies worldwide gather to showcase their technology. A portion of the trade show was dedicated to students. Therefore, some of the companies brought along their HR and recruiting teams to interview students who would soon be graduating. Intralox was one of the companies I interviewed with the company at the show, and I ended up going all the way through the extensive interview process and eventually being hired.

### The biggest takeaway for people curious to join the industry:

The food industry is incredible. There are so many different parts and pieces that must work together to ensure that the industry is successful. Furthermore, the success of this industry is critical to human survival. This industry is what gives the world the fuel it needs to keep moving forward. I take great pride in being a small piece of the puzzle that keeps the food industry going.