

Head of Mechanical Engineering

Location: AIR Wakefield

Overview:

We are a leading provider of bespoke automation solutions tailored for blue-chip clients across the FMCG sector, including pharmaceutical, food & beverage, and general engineering industries. Renowned for our innovation, quality, and technical excellence, we deliver complex automated systems that solve challenging manufacturing and production problems.

We are seeking an experienced and driven Head of Mechanical Engineering to lead our team of 20 highly skilled Mechanical Design Engineers. Reporting to the Technical Director, you will be responsible for the strategic and operational leadership of the mechanical design function, ensuring the delivery of high-quality, innovative, and cost-effective automation solutions. You will play a pivotal role in project delivery, technical governance, team development, and cross-functional collaboration with electrical, software, and manufacturing teams.

Key Responsibilities:

Leadership & Strategy

- Lead, mentor, and manage the Mechanical Design Engineering team (20+ engineers) to deliver high-performing results.
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and engineering excellence.
- Ensure the team is equipped with the necessary skills, tools, and processes to deliver world-class solutions.

Project Delivery

- Oversee mechanical design activities across multiple concurrent bespoke automation projects from concept through to commissioning.
- Provide technical leadership and guidance on complex mechanical design challenges.
- Support the Project Manager and Technical Lead to ensure designs meet customer specifications, safety standards, and are delivered on time and within budget.
- Collaborate with the applications and sales team to ensure engineering feasibility during proposal and quotation phases.

Technical Governance

- Own and maintain mechanical engineering standards, processes, and best practices.
- Ensure compliance with relevant industry standards, regulations, and quality procedures.
- Champion the use of FMEA (Failure Modes and Effects Analysis) and machine risk assessments to proactively identify, assess, and mitigate design and operational risks.
- Support compliance with CE marking, PUWER, and machinery directives through robust risk management practices.
- Drive standardization and modular design methodologies where appropriate to improve efficiency and reduce risk.

Collaboration & Communication

- Work closely with cross-functional teams including electrical, controls, software, and manufacturing to ensure seamless integration of systems.
- Serve as a key point of contact for customers and stakeholders on mechanical design and safety matters.

People Development

- Conduct performance reviews, set development plans, and manage resource planning and recruitment for the team.
- Promote knowledge sharing and professional development within the team.

Required Qualifications & Experience:

- Bachelor's or Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering or related discipline.
- Proven experience in a senior mechanical design or leadership role within an automation or special purpose machinery environment.
- Strong understanding of mechanical engineering principles including pneumatics, robotics, kinematics, and structural design.
- Demonstrable experience of FMEA and machine risk assessments (e.g. in compliance with ISO 12100 and related safety standards).
- Experience of delivering bespoke solutions for FMCG clients, preferably in pharma, food, or general manufacturing.
- Strong familiarity with CE marking, PUWER, and relevant machinery directives.
- Exceptional leadership, organizational, and communication skills.
- Strong understanding of engineering project lifecycles, risk management, and design governance.

Desirable Skills:

- Experience working with blue-chip customers and understanding of their quality and compliance expectations.
- Knowledge of DfM (Design for Manufacture) and close collaboration with in-house manufacturing teams.
- Exposure to Lean Engineering, Six Sigma, or other structured process improvement methodologies.
- City & Guilds in Machinery Safety
- Proficient in Autodesk Inventor 3D CAD system and Autodesk Vault Professional

What we offer:

- A dynamic and innovative working environment.
- Opportunities to work on cutting-edge automation projects.
- Competitive salary and benefits package.
- Career development and leadership growth opportunities.

About AIR:

Established in 2023, Automated Industrial Robotics Inc (AIR) is headquartered in Los Angeles, USA. AIR has a global presence with operations in the UK, Ireland, and the US, including our Wakefield facility which was formerly Sewtec Automation dating back to 1982.

AIR is a trusted automation partner empowering our customers to innovate, produce and scale through technology-enabled manufacturing. Our 500 strong world-class team operates across 350,000 sq ft of advanced manufacturing space in four facilities spanning America and Europe. With centralized engineering, technology and support, we deliver transformative automation solutions that increase quality, production and efficiency.

Applications: Please send CV and cover letter to careersairwakefield@industrialrobotics.com