

PAWAN GAIKWAD, MBA

ENTREPRENEUR, ENGINEERING PROJECT MANAGER & OPERATIONS LEADER

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Project Management Leadership: 15+ years of expertise in driving complex, multimillion-dollar engineering projects covering product development, process design/improvement, Lean manufacturing, and quality assurance/compliance for leading global aerospace firms.

Engineering & Product Development Expertise: Proven track record of implementing and optimizing organizational strategy, product roadmaps, design engineering, production operations, quality management, and client engagement to deliver next-generation products.

Start-up Development & Consulting: Extensive experience in providing strategic direction and mentorship to diverse early-stage tech start-ups to foster innovation/R&D, accelerate product development, optimize production processes, and build strategic partnerships.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Strategic & Technical Leadership
 - Engineering Project Management
 - Project Engineering & Facility Start-Up
 - Industrial & Manufacturing Engineering
 - Lean Manufacturing Operations
 - Organizational Development
 - Change & Performance Management
 - Product Development & Innovation
 - Product Life Cycle Management
 - Production Operations Management
 - Customer Relationship Management
 - Vendor Management & Negotiations
 - Quality Management & Control
 - Process Management & Improvement
 - Budgeting & Cost Control
 - Risk Analysis & Issue Management
 - Teambuilding & Talent Development
 - Training, Mentoring & Coaching
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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Established and grew a product management consultancy (Rise Product Management) from the ground up to provide services in product design/engineering, project management, process improvement, and cost reduction to diverse tech start-ups.
 - Built long-term partnerships with start-up clients such as SwiftPaws (a pet health and wellness brand), Kalogon (a mobility tech and smart cushion manufacturer), and Groundswell Startups (a tech start-up incubator).
 - Streamlined SwiftPaws' early stage assembly process, led operational problem solving efforts, and supported the initial phase of the production run to drive cost efficiencies and accelerate product development.
 - Drove operational development and customer base buildup for Kalogon at the initial funding round, in addition to helping establish the firm's supply chain and core manufacturing processes via value stream mapping.
 - Directed the successful certification and installation of a business-class seating product on the Airbus A330 for a major airline client while serving at Zodiac Seat US (now Safran).
 - Led the design and development of 2 patented commercial aircraft seating products ([US7080881B2](#) and [US7121627B2](#)) as well as a seating product for a leading executive jet OEM while serving at B/E Aerospace (now Collins Aerospace).
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Rise Product Management, LLC, Melbourne, FL

Principal Consultant

2020 to Present

- Founded and developed a professional services consulting firm specializing in product engineering, project planning, operations management, cost reduction, production readiness analysis, and process design and implementation for diverse tech start-ups.
- Deployed industry best practices and methodologies (including DFMA) to develop product roadmaps, establish process controls and supply chains, and streamline communication flows in line with clients' project goals and budgetary constraints.

Groundswell Startups, LLC, Melbourne, FL

Mentor

2017 to Present

- Provided strategic direction, mentorship, and thought leadership for an early-stage tech start-up incubator, involving extensive networking, engagement, and development of long-term business relationships within the start-up community.
- Utilized product development expertise and keen business acumen to advise and support start-ups across all phases of the product lifecycle, from conceptualization to design, development, launch, and post-launch customer support.

Kalogon, Melbourne, FL

Director of Operations

2021 to 2022

- Drove the development and management of the company's manufacturing operations facility in close collaboration with supply chain and assembly stakeholders, resulting in rapid scaling of manufacturing capabilities to meet increased product demand.

- Collaborated closely with the CEO to formulate strategic plans and product/technology roadmaps in line with emerging market trends and consumer demand, in addition to providing weekly reporting to the CEO on manufacturing operations.
- Managed and streamlined day-to-day operations across the manufacturing facility by driving process improvement/automation, implementing a new quality management system, and executing team training/mentoring initiatives.

Embraer Executive Jet, Melbourne, FL

Project Engineer

2014 to 2020

- Spearheaded the end-to-end planning and execution of multiple complex aircraft interior development projects, with full oversight of project scope, schedules, budgets, timelines, and deliverables across all phases of the project lifecycle.
- Defined and established comprehensive project plans supported by a customer-centric value proposition, data-driven metrics/KPIs, clear communications and reporting processes, and robust risk/problem management frameworks.
- Partnered cross-functionally with internal and external stakeholders to formulate project strategy, prioritize deliverables, identify process improvement opportunities, and execute appropriate measures that reduced development costs while improving quality.
- Devised and implemented a process management initiative that drove a significant improvement in engineering output, in addition to planning and facilitating multiple Kaizen events to foster a culture of continuous improvement and operational excellence.
- Onboarded, trained, and mentored new team members to achieve all project milestones while consistently monitoring project progress to ensure on-time, on-budget completion of all project deliverables.

Zodiac Seat US (acquired by Safran), Gainesville, TX

Project Engineer

2013 to 2014

- Led the design and development of tourist-class and business-class seating products for leading commercial airline clients (Airbus and Boeing) by collaborating closely with integrated product teams across Zodiac and its sister company (Weber Aircraft).
- Oversaw the end-to-end certification process for an A330 business-class seating product (including crash testing, lifecycle testing, dynamic simulation, and flammability certification) in close collaboration with regulatory authorities and the certification team.

B/E Aerospace, Inc. (acquired by Collins Aerospace), Miami, FL

Project Engineer (Product Development)

2006 to 2013

- Directed aircraft seating product development/engineering projects for major business jet manufacturers such as Honda Jet, Embraer Executive Jet, Dassault Aviation, Gulfstream, and Boeing Business Jets.
- Executed all R&D projects within schedule and budget using best-in-class product design tools/methodologies and problem-solving methods while ensuring compliance with complex regulatory requirements (FAA, EASA, ANAC).

Mechanical Design Engineer (Product Development)

2004 to 2006

- Supported all aspects of product development for new seating products (from conceptualization to customer support) while designing various product components and mechanisms based on ergonomic, manufacturing capability, cost, and weight criteria.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Application Engineer • Onward Technologies Ltd., Miami, FL | Pune, India

Delivered on-site design and drafting support for B/E Aerospace that resulted in a long-term, on-site engineering assignment.

EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND CERTIFICATIONS

Master of Business Administration (MBA) • University of Florida - Warrington College of Business

Bachelor of Science (BS) in Mechanical Engineering • Savitribhai Phule Pune University

Toyota 8-Step Problem Solving Method • Toyota | University of Kentucky

Project Management Professional (PMP) - In Progress • Project Management Institute (PMI)

PATENTS

US7080881B2 (Flexible Seat Frame for Dynamic Divan) • US7121627B2 (Leg-Rest Extension for Seat)

BOARD & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

- **Mentor • Groundswell Ventures, LLC, Melbourne, FL (2017 to Present)**
- **Board Member • Codecraft Foundation, Melbourne, FL (2019 to 2020)**
- **Volunteer • Club Esteem, Inc., Melbourne, FL (2017 to Present)**
- **Board Member • Eau Gallie Art District, Melbourne, FL (2019 to 2020)**