



Ben Siderits

B.S. in Biomedical Engineering (2014)
M.S. in Mechanical Engineering,
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SpaceX, Boca Chica, TX

Describe your overall duties/responsibilities as a Machining Operations Supervisor:

My role as a Machining Operations Supervisor at SpaceX is to lead a large cross-functional team in the manufacturing of flight parts and tooling for the Starship vehicle program. As production rate increases and more vehicles are built, it is important that the machining operations correlate to the increasing demands from the downstream teams. So far, the team is succeeding, with exciting plans for future growth.

Explain the skills/abilities that are required for being successful in your role:

The unique challenge in this program is that we are not only building the first mass-manufactured rocket production line in history, we are also building this fast-paced production system in parallel to rapid design iterations. As such, communication skills are essential to be effective in my role to get the engineering, production, and machining teams all synchronized on the changing requirements/priorities that are frequently on the critical paths. I promote a culture of strong communication and teamwork within my team, emphasizing this more so than core individual competencies. I learned this skill in my previous job supervising drive unit production at Tesla during the Model 3 ramp. A team with stronger communication and camaraderie always emerges with a higher collective skillset and better performance.

What advice would you give to students who are considering majoring in Biomedical Engineering?

I went into biomedical engineering because I wanted to positively contribute to the welfare of humanity. I then started my career in medical device manufacturing. Now, I work on building rockets with the aim of making humanity multi-planetary. Previously, I worked in the automotive industry with products that are helping the world accelerate its transition to a future with more sustainable energy. The advice here is that there are multiple ways of fulfilling your long-term goals. You may not have a clue what your route will look like, and at times you may feel lost. But keep moving forward - the best way of reaching your goals is to never stop improving your professional knowledge, credentials, and experience. Although networking is a great way to immerse yourself in the field, you cannot solely depend on it. Continuous self-improvement is the most valuable asset I have chosen in my career. For students that truly want to make an impact, I encourage you to adopt a similar mindset.

