

CAREERS IN CORRUGATED: STRUCTURAL DESIGNER

Executive summary:

Structural Designers create unique packages for customers that protect and display products in new and visually exciting ways. They support the sales staff by designing and producing box and display samples that can be used in client presentations. They also develop specifications to ensure production success of the approved design.

“...now that I’ve been in the business for quite some time, I see that every customer simply wants to make sure their product gets from point A to point B safely.”

Brian Oldham, Structural Designer, Batavia, IL box plant

Structural Designer responsibilities with customers:

- Awareness of customer product offerings; shipping and other requirements
- Communication with customer personnel to coordinate packing and other specifications

Structural Designer responsibilities within the box plant:

- Work with sales staff to develop new package or display designs to secure new business
- Produce package or display samples using CAD software
- Develop and maintain job specification records
- Make production specs from prototypes
- Meet tight deadlines
- Finalize specifications and coordination with production staff

Structural Designer skill sets:

- Strong problem-solving skills; ability to carry out instructions
- Ability to develop product layouts and specifications
- Good communication skills with sales, graphics and production personnel
- Strong math skills; reading tape measures, ability to calculate percentages, volumes, ratios in applying high school-level math concepts
- Knowledge of product specifications and their relation to projects
- Technical ability: understanding equipment design and capabilities
- Knowledge of cost issues and how they affect operations

“I had a packaging minor at school... this is a job that fits my personality really well.”

Melissa Murphy, Structural Designer, Livermore, CA box plant

Structural Designer education/ experience:

- College education or concentration in computers, CAD, drafting or applicable work experience
- Excellent communication skills with internal sales, graphics and production staff and customers

Preferred candidates have:

- A minimum of three years of work experience in the corrugated industry as a Structural Designer
- Experience with CAD software/ sample table operations
- Experience or education in graphics, art, drawing and color concepts

Computer skills preferred:

- Thorough knowledge of CAD software
- Word processing/ presentation software knowledge

Skills needed for advancement include:

- Outstanding creativity in structural design
- Ability to quickly grasp customer needs
- Excellent interpersonal/ leadership skills
- Knowledge of corrugated manufacturing processes
- Ability to adapt designs to production capabilities
- Outstanding communication skills
- Ability to work effectively under pressure

“It’s not all just brown boxes. If that’s all that corrugated was, I probably wouldn’t be working here, but it’s die-cuts, displays...the sky’s the limit.”

Scott Jensen, Structural Designer, Addington, IL box plant