

Case description

You are John Taylor, head of a cross-functional team at Glass Fac, a mid-sized glass manufacturing company. The company is expanding its product line to serve both the automotive and construction industries, and you need to hire a Program Manager to coordinate multiple strategic projects across departments and ensure their successful delivery.

The Program Manager will:

- Oversee and coordinate multi-team projects
- Track and manage timelines and budgets
- Engage and manage external vendors and partners
- Ensure adherence to quality standards and compliance requirements
- Regularly report progress to senior leadership

Decision Task

You will review three shortlisted candidates for the Program Manager role. Based on their profiles, select the candidate you believe is the best fit. Provide a brief (1–3 sentence) justification for your choice.

The challenge is that the hiring budget is limited, and each candidate brings different strengths, areas for development, and compensation expectations. The decision must consider:

- Stakeholder goals (operations, sales, finance, senior leadership)
- Gains each candidate can contribute
- Pains (potential challenges or limitations)
- Resources required (salary, training, internal support)

Candidates

Background: 12 years in industrial operations, leading continuous improvement and equipment maintenance programs at two mid-sized manufacturing firms.

Education: B.Eng. (Industrial Engineering); Lean Six Sigma Black Belt.

Strengths: Deep technical expertise in process control, maintenance scheduling, and quality systems; proven track record reducing downtime and defects; experienced in vendor negotiations.

Development Areas: Primarily focused on operations; less exposure to cross-functional or innovative initiatives; prefers established procedures over experimental approaches.

Salary Expectation: €3,000/month (negotiable with performance-based bonus)

Maria Costa



Background: 7 years managing production planning and supply chain integration at a large consumer goods factory; coordinated projects between operations, procurement, and logistics.

Education: B.A. (Business Administration); PMP certification.

Strengths: Strong stakeholder management, excellent communication skills, capable of bridging teams across production, procurement, and logistics; adaptable to shifting industrial priorities.

Development Areas: Less depth in technical engineering and maintenance frameworks; moderate experience with regulatory compliance; will require targeted training in glass-specific processes.

Salary Expectation: €2,400/month + modest bonus tied to project milestones.

Daniel Kurt



Background: 4 years as a project coordinator in a machinery plant and a packaging startup; led automation and data tracking pilot projects.

Education: M.Sc. (Project Management); strong data analysis skills (Python, SQL).

Strengths: Highly adaptable, skilled in using data to optimize production lines, creative problem solver; comfortable introducing new technology and automation.

Development Areas: Limited exposure to large-scale vendor contracts and complex factory operations; less experience managing large teams; will need close mentoring initially.

Salary Expectation: €1,750/month, with growth linked to performance reviews

Aisha Khan

