**Interview Transcript**

**Participant 2**

Interviewer: Yeah OK, so my first question is just, can you tell me a little bit about yourself, maybe some demographic information, a brief summary of like your education and employment, and whatnot?

Participant 2: Yes, so um I was born in China.

I moved to the US when I was five. My parents came here for grad school um so I guess I learned English pretty early, so um yeah.

I guess education-wise - went to high school in Florida, went to college at Cornell University in New York and majored in mechanical engineering.

And then I got my first job out of college in Massachusetts. It was an engineering job for a company that does like automotive sensors and yeah. That was my first job, I was there for like about three years and then I moved to California, which is where I am currently and I've been at a few different jobs since then. Actually, quite a few. I don't think it's normal. But I basically switch jobs every two to three years it seems.

Interviewer: It seems like in your in your line of work, it might actually be pretty normal.

Participant 2: Yeah, yeah I think also like with our generation, right? Where we're like a lot of us just don't stay at the same job for a while, because it's hard to get like raises and promotions, and all that stuff um. So yeah I’ve been in the medical device industry, since I moved to California. So I've been there for about 9 or 10 years now, which is kind of crazy um but yeah. A few of the larger MED device companies, I was at St Jude medical, which is now Abbott. And I was also at Medtronic and more recently I've been working at more of like startup environments. I actually just started a new job three weeks ago.

Interviewer: Congratulations!

Participant 2: Thanks, yeah so my startup wasn't doing you know too great so. I was worried that it was gonna die, so I found something else, it's another startup. But it's further along in the product development process so I'm not as worried about it folding.

Interviewer: Got it. Is it also like a healthcare related or?

Participant 2: Yeah so I was previously in diabetes products, but now it's neurovascular stroke treatment devices so it's a little different but yeah.

Interviewer: Got it, and what would you say is your capacity or your role or position that you're usually doing in these sorts of jobs?

Participant 2: Yeah so for the most part I've been in either like process or manufacturing engineering, which just means that I support the manufacturing of the products. So, a lot of the time it involves doing just you know day to day support of any production issues.

And then also introduction of new products, I also do process development which just means you know, like you know, increasing our yields, capacity things like that.

Interviewer: Oh wow—cool. That sounds really important. So you're at a new company now and for some of these questions you might not know, so you can also refer back to like your previous job or whatnot. But I guess, for your current job, do you know, like how big the organization is and like how many people you typically work with?

Participant 2: Yeah so the company I'm at right now is actually pretty small. It's about 30 people. 10 of which are production personnel so like operators, and then there's like 20-ish, I guess like office people. I don't interact with too many of them, I would say, maybe like six to eight people max?

Interviewer: And, and what capacity, are you like interacting with the six to eight people?

Participant 2: Yeah so um there's my manager who like who mentors me and gives me assignments, and then I also have like a quality engineering counterpart, who kind of I guess checks my work, essentially, is what is what quality does. And then, not at this job, but at my previous job, the other people I would be interacting with are just like people on my team who have a similar role or do what I do. At my current position it's just me.

Interviewer: So the other people that you would interact with just be like occasional not on a regular basis?

Participant 2: Yeah, I think I do also interact with some of the operators just working with them on the process, but not a ton.

Interviewer: Do you ever have to interact with like clients or customers as well?

Participant 2: I do not, which I'm pretty happy about.

Interviewer: Yeah? Did you in previous jobs or anything like that?

Participant 2: Yeah just like I mean none of my engineering jobs, but like when I worked at like Publix for a summer. I worked at a takeout place for a summer, and you know I had to interact with customers there and it was just really unpleasant.

Interviewer: Yeah I can imagine that. Well cool, so can you tell me a little bit more about like sort of the composition of the people you work with, like the demographics of the people you work with and what the sort of business culture is like, or like the office environment?

Participant 2: Yeah sure. Actually I think I'll just go back to my previous experience because I don’t have a feel for my current one yet.

Interview: Sure, yeah. That’s fair.

Participant 2: So um my previous job, the environment was like mostly engineers, some like logistics like finance and clinical people but mostly engineers. I want to say, maybe like a third of them were like around my age or like you know from college to early 30s type of ages. It was actually pretty well balanced, as far as like male and female goes, which was pretty nice. So yeah I share an office with two other females. As far as other demographics, I want to say it was like mostly Caucasian, a few... like a handful of Asians. Um yeah not super diverse.

Interviewer: Like racially or in general?

Participant 2: Racially yeah. I guess, like the as far as like the culture goes, it was just like a very collaborative environment. So you know we all sat in like our little cubes that were next to each other and it was pretty common to like, you know walk over if you had a question, or like um... Yeah I guess you know just a lot of...I mean I worked pretty closely with some with a good number of people actually so it was nice, it was pretty...I would say it was pretty fun. I mostly hung out with the people my age. But yeah, I mean people were pretty cool.

Interviewer: Would you say that you were like friends with your coworkers and did you ever hang out with people outside of work?

Participant 2: yeah so I have like um... let's see... probably like three or four coworkers that I became pretty close with. I actually joined a running group that one of them was part of.

They like got a bunch of people at work to join so it's like every Wednesday, so we do that outside of work. Other than that, you know, we would get dinners occasionally. We actually did travel together. One of our contract manufacturers is in Arizona, so we would go out there pretty often. So I think being able to hang out there was pretty nice too. Going out to dinner and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Did you ever get a sense that there were certain things that you shouldn't discuss with certain colleagues, or did you feel like you can mostly just be yourself?

Participant 2: um I actually felt pretty good about being myself, actually I mean, maybe I shouldn't have but, I was pretty open about my feelings about the company and, like other people. Like if I was you know complaining about people or something, I would be pretty open about it, and you know, usually they’re you know... they find it pretty easy to relate or like they'll complain with me and stuff like that. I know you're not really supposed to do that with coworkers, at least like that's what people tell me. They're like “oh you can't really trust your coworkers and stuff, like they'll go behind your back” and stuff, and I'm like I don't really think that was true, I think they are like legitimately my friends. So, I didn't feel any issues with that I think like towards the end of when I was there, we were all...like a lot of people were pretty frustrated with the company, so we were pretty open about like our salaries and you know other people's salaries, so I think we were actually pretty close.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, and so it seems like a pretty open environment in general.

Participant 2: mm hmm yeah but you know with a select few people. There's definitely others that you know I feel like I'm friends with, but I wouldn't share that kind of information.

Interviewer: Sure yeah. In terms of emotionality and emotion in the workplace in general, do you ever feel like... Well, first of all, do you consider yourself an emotional person or are you the type of person who's maybe more private about your feelings?

Participant 2: Yes, so I think I have emotions but I do tend to hide it pretty well I think? So, like a lot of my coworkers, especially the ones I don't know very well, they just see me as really calm right? So like even if I'm really stressed, they don't really see that. They just think I have it all together. But you know the ones that I'm closer with I’ll be more open about like: “hey i'm really stressed or i'm really upset that this happened”. But for the most part, I would say that… I would say that I hide it pretty well.

Interviewer: Is there...Do you hide it intentionally or do you feel like that’s just something that naturally happens?

Participant 2: um I want to say it just naturally happens because I'm just not like a very expressive person in general, so like even if I'm like really excited about something... people can't really tell. I just tend to be like very reserved in general I think, and I'm not sure like where that really came from. I think probably just like part of how I was raised, like I didn't have siblings right and I didn't really have anyone to express things to, so I just mostly like kept things to myself.

Interviewer: Yeah, do you ever feel like that is an asset and, conversely, do you ever feel like it's a problem?

Participant 2: Um, I've seen people at work getting really emotional and sometimes like higher up people, like managers right, they'll get really upset and start yelling at people and I don't think that's really good. So I definitely feel like it at least has somewhat of an advantage, where like you know I can maintain like professionalism, because I don't you know ever... I don't have outbursts usually right. You know and meetings and things like that, like I'll do it on the side like with my own people, but you know in front of others. I think it's I think it's a good thing for the most part, I do kind of I mean... I'm not sure about like whether or not it hinders me. I’m not really sure. I can't really think of um... I'm sure there is there is a downside to it, but I can't really think of what that is right now.

Interviewer: Maybe there's not. I mean it's a very particular environment too, so I think it probably depends... When you had managers or you know, people who would have these outbursts, did they have any consequences for that or were there any like social repercussions that you felt like occurred because they were, you know, too emotional?

Participant 2: Yeah I would say, probably just more of like social repercussions. So, like you know afterwards, people would kind of you know gossip and be like like: “whoa can you believe what he said?” and, like um... I just know they get criticized sometimes for being unprofessional, like you can't just do that.

Interviewer: Sure.

Participant 2: So yeah I think that's probably the... I don't know, maybe some people don't mind it? I definitely don't think it's cool to do that.

Interviewer: Were you ever on the receiving end of that?

Participant 2: I want to say not directly but like indirectly, definitely. And it, you know it makes me feel bad and feel embarrassed. I don't know that I really ever said anything about it, like called anyone else being like: “hey you probably shouldn't do that in front of all these people”.

Interviewer: Why not? Just didn’t want to?

Participant 2: Well, I'm just really non-confrontational in general, so.

Interviewer: Do you ever feel like you've been singled out at work or like there is a sense that you're different and, if so, in what way? And if not, I will I guess you don't have to answer that question.

Participant 2: Singled out not really. I mean, do you maybe have like an example? I guess, I can't really think of any example.

Interviewer: Not really, no. What about have you ever had a time where you felt particularly emotional at work, maybe you were really nervous or really excited or really irritable. Can you tell me a little bit more about what happened then?

Participant 2: Yeah sure, so I feel like for the most part, my emotions at work are just like... I mostly feel stressed. So, like working in manufacturing, it tends to be really fast-paced because you gotta you know meet your numbers and all that stuff and if issues come up... you know, they need to be solved really quickly. So, I think I've definitely had moments where I just felt completely overwhelmed, like there was too much on my plate. And when that happens, I tend to kind of just shut down a little bit. Like I just don't even know what to do, I don't even know where to get started. Which maybe, you know, isn't a totally bad thing, because then I can kind of like you know, take a bit of a breather and kind of reset a little bit. I think what does help in those situations is you know just taking a break and talking to other people about it.

Interviewer: Yeah, um was there ever like a very particular time, where you felt like maybe more stress than normal?

Participant 2: mm hmm. Yeah I think the last time I remember being super stressed was when I was at St Jude Medical. I was working as a manufacturing engineer and I don't know, I just had so much to do, and I felt overwhelmed. I just went into my friend’s office and I sat under her desk and I was like: “I'm just gonna hide here for a little bit like.... tell people not to bother me”.

Interviewer: Yes, was your friend cool with that?

Participant 2: Yeah,she totally understood. She was like: “Yeah I get it, I have those moments too”. So yeah.

Interviewer: What made it better? You just eventually calmed down or?

Participant 2: Yeah, I think so. I think just kind of like removing myself for a little bit and trying to... yeah I don't know like... trying to calm myself down, I guess. But really just not paying attention to it for a little bit.

Interviewer: Yeah, no that makes sense. Do you feel like other people are also equally stressed, or do you feel like this is particular to you or your position?

Participant 2: Yeah I think it varies. I think other people I've worked with have also been stressed, but I've also worked with people who are just like super chill. They're just like: “hey, like this thing went totally wrong but there's not much I can do about it, so it is what it is”. And I hear that a lot, “it is what it is”. That helps me calm down a lot, I also at some point I started taking like anti anxiety medication, and that helped a lot too. I think that with the combination of like having more years of experience, where I have a better sense of what really matters and what doesn't. It's like all those like smaller things that I was stressed about earlier in my career, now I know like “oh it doesn't really matter that much”. So, I think you know, like, in the past few years I've calmed down a lot.

Interviewer: Do you notice sometimes that like maybe some of your colleagues who are younger than you are more stressed out about smaller things?

Participant 2: Yeah for sure, and I told them like: “hey you know, like do what you can but honestly, it doesn't matter that much.”

Interviewer: In terms of like stress or outbursts or maybe just the really calm people, do you notice any like patterns in terms of you know, it's mostly men who are like this, or it's mostly the older people who are like this, or you know, anything like that.

Participant 2: I guess I'm a little biased, because my industry tends to be more male dominated, but as far as like the people getting emotional at work, it tends to be people in positions of higher power, and they also tend to be male. Yeah, but I also just don't work with a whole lot of females so it's a little hard.

Interviewer: Fair yeah and then... Is there anything else about your workplace that we haven't discussed that you would maybe want to talk about?

Participant 2: Yes, I don't… I don't think so. Nothing I can think of.

Interviewer: No that's totally fair. In terms of your different jobs is there one that you would say was your favorite? And at your current position, or maybe your last position, would you rate your job satisfaction on a scale from one to 10 with 10 being the best and one of the worst... How would you rate it?

Participant 2: Yeah um, so I would actually say my my previous job, which was at the small startup for that did the diabetes stuff. That was probably my favorite.

Interviewer: Was that also like a 30 person firm?

Participant 2: It was like 50 people so a little bit bigger um but not a whole lot bigger. But I would say, like job satisfaction there... Like in 8 of 10. Um... Did you want me to elaborate?

Interviewer: Sure, yeah.

Participant 2: Yeah I think the thing that stops it from being higher is that the product we were working on wasn't really making much progress and I felt like we were going around in circles. And I didn't really agree with... like management, they were really like... they were overly optimistic about it. Like, especially when they're trying to convince me not to leave and stuff, and I was just like “hey I've been here for like two and a half years, and we really haven't made much progress so”. Anyway, but otherwise, I really liked the people that I worked with there.

I liked the work that I was doing. I thought you know, because it was in the early stages of development, it was just a lot more... you know a lot less red tape and there was a lot that I could do without like bureaucracy. And you know it's just easier for me to get things done. And things moved, you know pretty quickly. So, I think those things are what makes it an eight, which I think is you know pretty good.

Interviewer: Yeah, that makes it really good. What about your current job, do you feel... Again, I mean I know it's been only a few weeks, but do you feel good about it?

Participant 2: Yeah so, Ilike my boss. I like the work that I'm doing so far. I think the only thing that I'm a little hesitant about is that it doesn't seem as collaborative as my last workplace. So I've been you know, mostly doing solo work so far and haven't really made any friends yet, which makes me a little sad, but you know it's only been three weeks so it's still a little early. There's probably you know, like fewer people who are my age. So, it just feels a little lonely.

Interviewer: So yeah, so in that circumstance, do you feel like maybe... Did that make you feel more reserved or like you need to act a certain way while you're at work or not really, same as always?

Participant 2: Um… I don't think so. I would say it's still the same, like the way I act at work is still the same.

Interviewer: Cool. Well, that is basically all the questions that I have. I jumped around a little bit, so I hope that I hit them all, but I think I mostly did. So yeah, I'm going to end the recording real quick.