

INDUSTRA

TALENT PARTNERS

A Bespoke Partners Affiliate

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

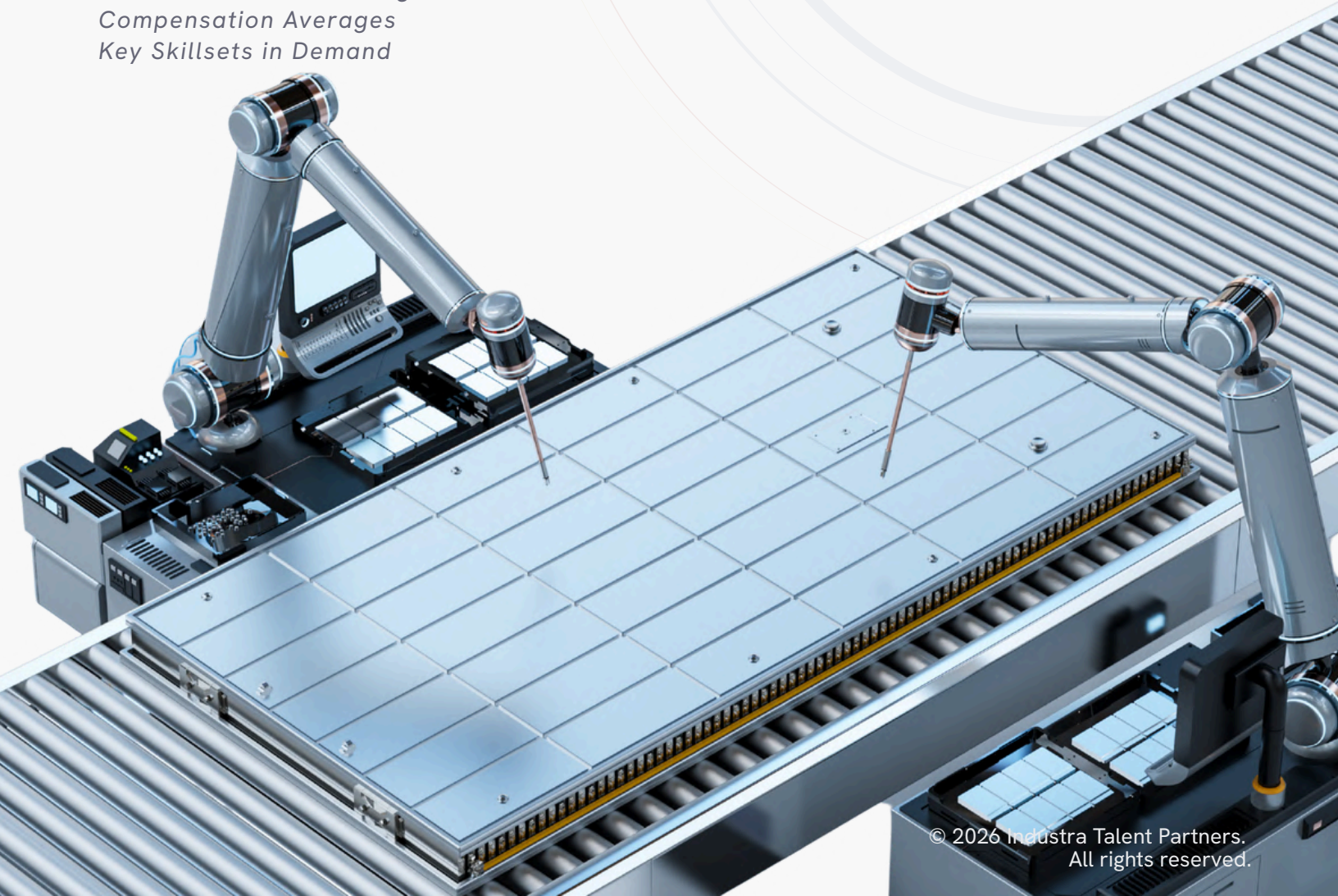
Automotive Manufacturing

2Q 2026 Sector Talent Trends

Portfolio Executive Hiring Trends

Compensation Averages

Key Skillsets in Demand



INDUSTRA

TALENT PARTNERS

A Bespoke Partners Affiliate

Industra Talent Partners provides unmatched access to executive talent across the Industrial sector, including manufacturing, distribution and industrial services across multiple end markets including automotive manufacturing, capital equipment, product distribution and many more.

Industra Talent Partners recruits the most effective leaders for portfolio companies in private equity-backed industrial companies.

Executives placed by Industra Talent Partners have generated more than \$10 billion in enterprise value for their companies.

The team brings more than 25 years of experience and has recruited more than 300 senior leaders including President & CEO, CFO, CRO/CCO, CHRO/CPO, CTO, CIO, COO and other EVP/SVP/VP functional leaders.

Industra Recruiting Practice Leads:

Jared Moriarty
Partner, Search Practice Lead

Heather Kivett
Partner, Search Practice Lead

Learn more at
<https://www.industrapartners.com>

Overview

Automotive manufacturing continues to generate significant demand for transformational leadership talent in PE-backed companies.

The sector's talent market is being shaped by three converging dynamics: growing demand for executives who can lead multi-site operational transformation and margin recovery, a limited supply of leaders with experience across advanced manufacturing and global supply chain optimization, and rising pressure to balance near-term EBITDA performance with long-term platform and technology transition strategies.

This executive summary draws from Industra Talent Partners' 2Q 2026 Automotive Manufacturing Sector Talent Trends report, covering the key investment themes, hiring priorities by value-creation thesis, and executive compensation benchmarks PE-backed automotive manufacturers and their sponsors need heading into the second half of 2026.

Access the complete report at [industrapartners.com](https://www.industrapartners.com).



Key Talent Trends

The easy phase of volume-driven growth is less reliable. Value creation in PE-backed automotive manufacturing is increasingly driven by execution.

Three forces are shaping leadership demand in 2026:

1. Operational transformation experience remains scarce.

Sponsors are prioritizing plant optimization, procurement discipline, footprint rationalization, and manufacturing efficiency. Demand remains high for executives with repeatable experience leading multi-site operational improvement programs.

2. Electrification and systems complexity are reshaping leadership needs.

The shift toward electrification, connected systems, and software-enabled vehicles is increasing demand for leaders who can integrate engineering, manufacturing, digital systems, and supply chain operations across increasingly complex organizations. EV investment remains a core strategic priority, but 2026 playbooks are focused on capital discipline and return thresholds.

3. Leadership teams are being built earlier in the hold period.

In a more selective investment environment, sponsors are investing in leadership earlier, particularly in operations, supply chain, engineering, and commercial roles tied directly to value creation execution and integration planning.

Download the full report for a complete breakdown of the three forces shaping Automotive Manufacturing leadership in 2026.



Deal Environment

Transaction activity in automotive has remained selective, with continued sponsor interest in platforms that enable electrification, supply chain resilience, and engineered components, even as broader volume remains sensitive to macro conditions.

Deal flow is concentrated in three areas:

- ⚙️ Carve-outs of non-core OEM and Tier 1 assets as manufacturers continue portfolio rationalization
- ⚙️ Consolidation across fragmented Tier 2 and Tier 3 suppliers tied to operational efficiency and supply chain resilience
- ⚙️ Platforms positioned for electrification or hybrid demand, including battery components, thermal management, and power electronics

Download the full report to explore more transaction activity trends in automotive manufacturing.

In a selective market, sponsors are concentrating leadership investment in integration-heavy carve-outs and platform build-ups, operational turnaround and margin recovery situations, and strategic repositioning of portfolios across ICE, hybrid, and EV exposure.

Hiring Priorities by Value-Creation Thesis

The full report maps hiring priorities to three thesis types. Key roles in scope for 2026:

- **Margin Recovery and Manufacturing Optimization:** COO and Head of Operations with multi-plant experience, VP Manufacturing and Continuous Improvement leaders, and Supply Chain and Procurement leaders with global sourcing, cost optimization, and dual sourcing depth
- **Platform Transition and Commercial Strategy:** CRO with pricing discipline and OEM relationship depth, Product and Platform leaders with EV, hybrid, and ICE portfolio strategy experience, and BU P&L leaders with OEM and aftermarket exposure
- **Electronics, Software, and Systems Integration:** CTO and Engineering leaders with ADAS and systems integration experience, CIO and Digital leaders with connected vehicle and data platform depth, and IT/OT leaders with ERP and plant systems integration capability



Download the full report for a deeper breakdown of hiring priorities by value-creation thesis and what that means for building the right leadership team at each stage of the hold.

Executive Compensation

Executives with repeatable experience in electrification, multi-site operations, and supply chain transformation remain in limited supply, creating upward pressure on compensation packages for roles tied directly to value creation.

[BLS Employment Cost Index](#) data shows private industry wages and salaries rose approximately 3.3% over the 12 months ending December 2025, providing a baseline for 2026 planning assumptions. In PE-backed automotive manufacturing, the most competitive packages balance market-aligned base salary, annual incentives tied to EBITDA and operational outcomes, and equity designed to retain leaders through multi-year transformation. The table below shows total cash ranges from the low to high end of the market.



Role	Low End	High End
CEO	\$700K	\$1.4M
CFO	\$425K	\$900K
COO / Head of Operations	\$500K	\$1M
CRO / Commercial Leader	\$500K	\$1M
CTO / Engineering Leader	\$425K	\$900K
CIO / Digital / IT	\$350K	\$700K
CHRO	\$325K	\$600K

The full report includes a complete cash compensation table with base salary, target bonus percentages, and total cash by role, equity participation ranges by role, and a full breakdown of averages by company scale.

Download your complimentary report.

Figures shown as Total Cash (base + bonus) ranges from low to high end of market. All figures are median-style benchmarks and synthesized estimates intended for PE-backed automotive manufacturing companies. Source: Industra Talent Partners and Bespoke Partners proprietary placement data.

INDUSTRA

TALENT PARTNERS

A Bespoke Partners Affiliate

Access the Full Report

The full 2026 Automotive Manufacturing Sector Talent Trends report includes equity participation ranges, detailed variable compensation structures, a full breakdown of averages by company scale, and complete hiring priority guidance mapped to investment thesis stage.

Access the complete report at industrapartners.com.



Questions? Contact the Automotive Manufacturing search practice team directly.

Jared Moriarty
Partner, Search Practice Lead

Heather Kivett
Partner, Search Practice Lead