

Istvan Mihura (Pityu), Production Manager Europe, responsible for Expanite production in Germany and Denmark.



From relocating to Denmark as a child to building a career without formal education but with endless curiosity and persistence, Pityu's path is anything but ordinary.

INTERVIEW

First of all: What is your educational background, and how did you end up at Expanite?

I was born in Hungary, and my parents moved to Denmark when I was a kid. Moving to another country has strengthened my resilience and curiosity. As is probably true for many people, I have worked my way up. What may be different compared to others is that I have no formal education. All my life, I have been curious and wanted to learn new things. This has given me a tremendous insight not only in technologies, processes and people, but I have been fortunate to supplement my "on the job" training with many relevant courses. Looking back, I can safely say that I have always responded to new challenges with the view "I don't know anything about it, so I am sure I can work it out". I applied for and got the job as Production Operator at Expanite in 2018. I had been following Expanite for several years because I had worked with the CEO at Expanite, Thomas Sandholdt, when I was head of production at another company. During my first week here at Expanite, the head of production unexpectedly left for another opportunity, and I was asked to take over. We had one week to cover the handover process. This was a bit of a deep-water exercise for me, but I just looked at it and thought, "How difficult can it be?"

Even though I was completely new in the job, Expanite sent me to Germany to help the team there. This experience started a long relationship with our German colleagues. This is a part of my job I enjoy tremendously. And you may ask, why am I still at Expanite? It is the people, the team and the challenges. And the fact that no two days are the same. We have achieved a lot, we have developed a lot, and we continue to optimize, which I truly enjoy.

How would someone who knows you well describe you?

I am more temperamental at home than at Expanite. I hope my family says that I am easy to live with. I am the loyal type. And I am a family man. Even at 4 o'clock in the morning. I hope my colleagues think of me as a person seeking good compromises and involving others.

What's a day in the life like for you at Expanite?

I arrive at Expanite early in the morning and meet with the production team. I quickly get an overview of what is going on thanks to Fenris, our digital production management platform. Following this, I met with Timo, our German Head of Production. All my days are different, but one thing is sure: I am always curious, and I am always "hands-on" if we have an issue.

What are some of the key technologies and tools you work with at Expanite?

My two main tools are Fenris and our ERP platform, E-conomic. As a member of the management team, I am constantly looking at how to optimise production costs, including reducing handling costs.



**Can you describe a recent project you've worked on and your contributions to it?**

An interesting project is the very recent installation of a nitrogen storage tank at our treatment center and headquarters in Denmark. With this tank, the need for weekly truckloads of nitrogen bundles has been eliminated. The results: A significant reduction in CO₂ emissions from transportation and much less hassle. But the project started with the realization that it was possible. We sat down with Linde and the contractors and got the ideas going, and once the project was scoped, we applied for building permission from the authorities. Suddenly, the project started for real, and we had three days to go live and avoid production stops. And we reached the goal. This kind of project, with lots of people involved and many challenges, is something I enjoy. I am proud that I have been responsible for a project that is beneficial for the environment and optimizes our processes.

Have you noticed any interesting trends or projects within a specific industry?

The biggest achievement is that the production teams in Denmark and Germany are now one entity. We have a common view (thanks to Fenris), and it increases our utilization. Without a structure and a common understanding, you can't manage, and you can't optimize. Thanks to the structure, we can help our customers, we can deliver faster, and we ensure a consistent quality.

What are the latest trends or technologies either helping or disrupting our industry?

The future is digital. I know I have mentioned Fenris several times, but it is truly unique that we can manage everything through this platform. For the future, I am pretty sure new and improved analytics tools will emerge. Another opportunity is Heat Treatment with an even shorter turnaround time.

How does the production team at Expanite help our customers?

There is, of course, the actual surface hardening that ultimately makes our customers' parts more durable and competitive. We in the production team make sure that all parts we receive are handled and processed correctly, and we often advise on protective packaging, ensuring that the parts are transported without scratches or other damage.

How does your work at Expanite impact the company's overall goals and objectives?

I sincerely hope that what I do contributes to achieving our common goals. My main tasks are to deliver on time, on spec, on quality, using the right processes and the right resources. We are a growth company, and I appreciate that we are working towards a common goal.

What trends do you see in the industry, and how is Expanite preparing for the future?

Sustainability is a mega trend affecting us all. At home and at our jobs, we optimize the use of all resources (electricity, water, etc) and we, of course, sort all our waste (paper, packing, cardboard, etc). Our ISO 14001 is a natural part of this development and a part of our daily work life.

What advice would you give to someone aspiring to work in a technical role at a company like Expanite?

First of all, I would wish them good luck and all the best. I would advise them to be honest, correct and polite. Share your experiences and be helpful. Be ready for changes and support the team. Then it can't go wrong.

Can you share a memorable experience or accomplishment during your time at Expanite that stands out to you?

Working together and achieving something together is a great feeling. I truly feel that the German and Danish operational team is exactly that: one team. This makes me proud. Another thing that makes me proud is the number of times we reach our goals and deliver on time. That's a great feeling.

