

# Alan Foster

## Personal Profile



I have a career that has spanned over forty-five years in the international automotive manufacturing industry. I started as an apprentice and have worked through operational levels of organisations. I now have over 30 years of experience in management, executive and board positions. I recently left McLaren to establish my own consultancy business, AKMC Consulting, specialising in manufacturing operations and systems, facilities management, infrastructure projects as well as coaching and mentoring. I consider myself a straight-talking, high energy and enthusiastic individual, who balances the pressures of work well. I am currently studying for a second Post Graduate Master's Degree in Coaching.

My personal philosophy is to 'not take the easy route just because the alternative is difficult'. Through this, I believe a person can gain knowledge and experience. This approach keeps the brain sharp and provides motivation to take one more step toward personal development.

For the last sixteen years, I have been with The McLaren Group in a range of Executive Director positions. Effective July 2018, I assumed the role of Group Executive Director for Facilities Management & Infrastructure Strategy, covering McLaren's Automotive, Formula 1 and Electronics businesses. This follows a move in March 2017, from Executive Director of Operations, to Executive Director of Infrastructure Projects for Automotive. The move to Group in 2018 was strategic, to ensure McLaren had the correct facility profiles to deliver its ambitious business plans.

After completion of the McLaren Production Centre in 2011, I have designed, developed and constructed several other projects: McLaren's Motorsport facility, a 650 seat office complex, a service and training centre in Dallas, a vehicle development facility in Idiada, Spain, and a regional office and museum complex for McLaren's shareholders in Bahrain. In 2020, at the start of the coronavirus pandemic, McLaren assumed an essential national role in the manufacture of 4,400 ventilators for the NHS. This required significant and rapid changes to the infrastructure of McLaren's facilities, with which I was heavily involved.

My breadth and depth of workplace knowledge and experience is world-class. With McLaren, from 2005, I took an organization that had no genuine manufacturing or quality core and developed what has been referred to as an 'Iconic Manufacturing Organisation'. I combined world-class manufacturing philosophies with the exceptional technical engineering of an F1 team. In 2009, I took on the responsibility for the design, project management, construction and commissioning of the McLaren Production Centre. The Centre has been the focus of much customer, media and governmental commentary. The simplistic elegance of the manufacturing systems I deployed have been referred to as 'genius'. The philosophy I employed is constructed around flexible manufacturing, simple visual controls, people systems and engagement.

One of the most fulfilling aspects of my career has been the development of several high performing management teams. I utilise a combined approach of education, stretch challenges and personal support, with coaching and mentorship for key personnel. The teams have grown to be capable of delivering consistent excellence. Another key source of fulfilment for me has been the conceptualisation and delivery of significant infrastructure projects. Of these, the McLaren Production Centre and Bahrain Towers sit at the pinnacle. In all aspects of my various roles I have utilised my operational background mentality of transparent and easily understood performance metrics. These underpin the essential business delivery pillars of management cost accounting, HSEW, quality, project management and people development.

Throughout my career, starting as a press tool-making apprentice, I have worked in engineering, production, quality, logistics, management and executive positions. I have held roles at Ford Motor Company, at Toyota in the UK and Japan, and for General Motors in Switzerland, Germany, the USA and the UK. At General Motors, I undertook the roles of Global Lean Consulting Group Manager and Operations Management Troubleshooter.

I have supplemented my work career with academic qualifications, attaining a First class Honours Degree in Manufacturing from Liverpool John Moores University and an MBA from Cranfield University School of Management. In 2014 I was acknowledged by the UK publication *The Manufacturer*, in conjunction with KPMG and Lloyds Bank as one of their Top 100 most influential directors in the UK manufacturing industry. I also hold Advisory Board positions with Liverpool SuperPort and ICON Aircraft.

In 2018 *The Manufacturer* further recognised my continued achievements, electing me as an Exemplar Director to their Top 100 scheme. In July 2018, I was invited to become a Freeman of The City of London and became a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Coachmakers and Coach Harness Makers.

I have regularly acted as a Brand Ambassador for McLaren and have hosted many lectures and high-profile events, the most recent notable event being the Joint US & UK Parliamentary Business Group. I also provide lectures on Leadership and Manufacturing Career Planning for universities and schools. This matches very well with Surrey-based charity SATRO, for whom I have acted as a Patron and Sponsor. Their goal was the re-engagement of disaffected children, back into the education system, as well as growth of elementary business and problem-solving skills.

I recently made the decision to leave McLaren in December 2021 and establish my own consultancy business. Through leveraging my collective knowledge and experience, I believe I can have a greater impact.

# Alan Foster

## Résumé

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## 1. Summary

I have enjoyed a career spanning over forty-five years in the international automotive manufacturing industry - including over thirty years in management, executive and board positions - I've experienced and developed in positions from bottom to top within the industry, gaining unique insight and expertise across a broad range of fields within the industry and beyond.

With a world-class level of automotive manufacturing expertise, I have mastered skills in operational and organisational development, planning, facility development, facilities management, capital equipment projects, quality, and logistics. My breadth and depth of knowledge and expertise are echoed in the projects completed, qualifications attained and the accolades received throughout my career.

## 2. Education

<b>CCI ILM Level 7 Coaching &amp; Mentoring (Masters)</b> <i>Distance Learning, course commenced, ongoing</i>	<b>2021 - 2022</b>
<b>Master's in Business Administration (MBA)</b> <i>Cranfield School of Management, England</i>	<b>1988 - 1990</b>
<b>Bachelor's degree in manufacturing engineering (First Class Hons)</b> <i>Liverpool John Moores University, England</i> <i>Sir Walter Woodford prize, final year dissertation – Institute of Production Engineers</i>	<b>1983 - 1987</b>
<b>HNC, Mechanical &amp; Manufacturing Engineering</b> <i>Liverpool Polytechnic, England</i>	<b>1980 - 1983</b>
<b>ONC, Mechanical &amp; Manufacturing Engineering</b> <i>North East Liverpool Technical College, Liverpool England</i>	<b>1978 - 1980</b>

### 3. Employment Summary

#### **McLaren Group**

**2018 – 2021**

Executive Director of Facilities & Infrastructure  
*Woking, Surrey, England*

#### **McLaren Automotive**

**2005 – 2018**

Operations Executive Director and Manufacturing Director  
*Woking, Surrey, England*

#### **General Motors International Operations**

**1997 - 2005**

Lean Consulting Group Manager  
*Zurich, Switzerland*

Unit Manager, Paint Facility  
*Bochum, Germany*

Unit Manager Positions; Press, Body, Paint & Assembly  
*Ellesmere Port, England*

#### **Toyota (UK)**

**1991 - 1997**

Unit Manager Positions; Paint & Plastics  
*Burnaston, Derby, England*

#### **Ford Motor Company (UK)**

**1976 - 1991**

Manufacturing Engineer; Press, Plastics and Body Operations  
*Halewood, Liverpool, England*

Process Technician and Press Toolmaker; Press, Plastics and Body Operations  
*Halewood, Liverpool, England*

## 4. Relevant Experience

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McLaren Group

2018 - 2021

*McLaren Technology & Production Centres, Woking, Surrey, England*

**Executive Director of Facilities & Infrastructure, McLaren Services Limited**

**2018-2021**

This role was an extension of the previous McLaren Automotive strategic role and reported to the COO of McLaren Services Limited. The McLaren Group recognised that the approach I had taken with Automotive as being essential to the growth and future of the whole McLaren Group. I was tasked with global responsibility for all McLaren facilities, covering their day to day management, maintenance and operation as well as infrastructure changes and upgrades.

Duties included the conversion and modernisation of existing facilities, concept development, business case preparation, and delivery of brand-new facilities. The key directions were to grasp the operating model and operational budget condition, provision of transparency and budgetary control and to grow the four leadership positions in stature and capability. This, while maintaining the delivery performance of the McLaren Services Team.

With an annual operating budget of circa £30M and a capital equipment expenditure budget of circa £4.5M, the Facilities Management team under my leadership delivered on average a 12% better than budget outcome each year.

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McLaren Automotive

2009 - 2018

*McLaren Technology & Production Centres, Woking, Surrey, England*

**Executive Director of Infrastructure**

**2017 - 2018**

I was requested by the CEO of McLaren Automotive, to step out of the operational role and assist him in identifying the facility-based needs for manufacturing, vehicle development and sales & marketing activities around the globe. This was to support McLaren's 'Track 25' long range business plan. The goal was to ensure that we had a credible facilities plan that utilised existing facilities more effectively.

The role required me to carry out a gap analysis by type and region, with respect to the required facilities. The information I provided formed part of a long-range strategic investment plan within the business plan. The role also included strategic 'make vs buy' decision-making, leading to the approval to construct the McLaren Composites Technology Centre in Sheffield - where the chassis monocoque structure is now manufactured.

This role required the development of standardised business case justification documents, capital investment planning & assessment, and lending support to the CFO in business case discussions.

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**Executive Director of Operations****2015 - 2017**

Having concluded the P1 project, I was asked to resume control of MPC Operations. The goal was to take the facility from single to double shift operation. The time scale for this was three months and the task included developing a strategy to recruit, train and diversify the single shift skills across the two resultant shifts.

Coincidental to the timeline was the launch and volume ramp-up of three new variant models within the McLaren vehicle range, leading to an extremely challenging twenty-four months. To support this challenge, I was provided with three high-potential personnel, identified from within Automotive. I coached these individuals into key leadership roles in manufacturing engineering, production, and logistics director roles. A longer-term objective was to establish one of those leaders to act as my successor.

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**Executive Director of Operations, P1 Project****2013 - 2015**

In March of 2013, I was requested to assume Launch Director responsibility for McLaren's third vehicle in two years, the iconic and first-ever electric power assisted hyper-car the *P1*.

Beyond establishing production and quality operations within the facility, I took company-wide cross-functional responsibility for delivery of the project. This was to ensure that pre-production and start of production targets were achieved. This included regular reporting to the Automotive Board and the Board of Shareholders.

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**Executive Director of Operations****2011 - 2013**

Having commissioned the MPC facility, I spent 2012 stabilising output and quality, as well as pushing the facility to above its designed capability. Many initiatives on quality improvement - focused on customer satisfaction - and cost-down activities were completed. Towards the end of 2012, the focus shifted to increasing employee knowledge and developing greater flexibility within the operation. This gained momentum in October 2012, with the introduction of the MP4-12C Spider as an addition to the Coupe range running through the facility.

During this period, I was responsible for the manufacturing business units of; body construction, paint, general assembly, and final vehicle certification. Further still, I held responsibility for manufacturing and process engineering planning, new model pilot production and process development, supplier quality assurance, product and process quality audit (including vehicle dispatch quality), as well as after-sales performance with special regard to warranty and field issues.

## **Project Director, McLaren Production Centre**

**2009 - 2011**

The most challenging and rewarding aspect of this role was the design, commissioning and control of the new McLaren Production Centre facility. Building on all of the influences I had been exposed to over my career up to this point, I was able to design a facility to produce the entire range of McLaren vehicles for the next twenty years. At a total cost of £50M, including £16M for infrastructure facilities and equipment, I conceived and delivered a facility that has no equal in the world.

Resultantly, McLaren's manufacturing operations have been heralded as extraordinary and astonishing. The McLaren Production Centre has been the focus of much customer, media and governmental interest and commentary. The simplistic elegance of the manufacturing systems I elected to deploy within McLaren have been referred to as 'genius'. The philosophy is constructed around simple visual controls and metrics as well as people systems and engagement. A combination of education, stretch challenges and personal support and mentorship has developed a high performing team within the facility that is capable of consistently delivering excellent results.

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## **McLaren Racing**

**2009 – 2009**

*McLaren Technology Centre, Woking, Surrey, England*

## **Operations Director F1 Racing (Secondment)**

**2009-2009**

In 2009 I was seconded internally to McLaren's F1 Racing team as Operations Director with the task of recovering the team's poor performance at the start of the 2009 racing season. This involved gearing up F1 manufacturing operations rapidly to deliver race car upgrades. Simultaneously, I retained all my automotive responsibilities.

Applying my experience through streamlining production processes, problem solving and resourcing decisions, as well as breaking through roadblocks, the manufacturing team were able to deliver a complete vehicle upgrade package within six months - a process that normally takes twelve months at a minimum. This culminated in Lewis Hamilton winning the Monaco Grand Prix that year. The team presented me with the front wing end-cap from the winning vehicle, complete with a signature from the driver himself as a sign of appreciation.

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## McLaren Automotive

2005 - 2009

*McLaren Technology & Production Centres, Woking, Surrey, England*

### **McLaren Manufacturing Director, McLaren–Mercedes SLR**

**2005-2009**

As Manufacturing Director, this role covered production of the McLaren-Mercedes SLR, and in parallel, future product line preparation and planning. One of the objectives of the position was the streamlining and improvement of the effectiveness of the combined organisation in preparation for the launch of the next product series. It also grew to cover the introduction of a new function, Supplier Development.

Key areas of managerial responsibility during this period included, but were not limited to; manufacturing business units, composite carbon body construction, paint, general assembly and final vehicle inspection and certification.

On joining the company in 2005, I initially sought to stabilise production output and ensure consistent quality of vehicles. This was achieved in four months, with continued quality performance improvement over the following three years. Further to this, I was responsible for new model introduction, timing, output and quality - which I successfully achieved for the SLR Sports Coupe 722, the SLR Convertible, the SLR Sports Convertible 722s and the SLR *Stirling Moss*.

The roles had a broad brief and required me to support the wider organisation on key supplier issues of throughput and quality improvement within the supply chain. Additionally, I provided support for the Managing Director for new starter induction, a McLaren Group initiative. I made many insightful presentations, both internally and externally on behalf of the company to grow its brand awareness. Supplemental to this, during this time, I retained responsibility for the Automotive Health & Safety initiative and McLaren's Employee Forum.

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## General Motors International Operations

1997 - 2005

*Vauxhall Motors, Ellesmere Port, Merseyside, England*

### **General Assembly Operations Unit Manager**

**2003 - 2005**

Responsible for Production, Maintenance and Process Engineering of a 196K unit per annum vehicle facility. Primary tasks were the enhancement of manufacturing capacity at the facility as well as productivity and quality improvement through the use of Continuous Improvement strategies.

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### **Temporary Assistant Plant Director & Paint Unit Manager**

**2002 -2003**

Reporting to the Plant Director of GM's remaining UK facility, I directed production operations within the General Assembly, Paint and Body manufacturing units during a phase of significant management restructuring, while simultaneously working as manager of Paint operations.

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**Unit Manager, Body Construction****2001 - 2002**

Appointed as the Unit Manager of Body Construction, I was responsible for project control and commissioning of a completely new facility to produce mid-sized saloons at GM's remaining UK facility. The role migrated to the production ramp up of the facility to a capability of circa 216K units per annum.

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**Unit Manager, Stampings****2000 - 2001**

Responsible for improving output (strokes per minute) so as to ensure consistency of supply to a wide range of GM's European plants.

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*Adam Opel AG, Bochum, Germany*

**Manager, Paint Unit****1999 - 2000**

I held three functional roles during my time at GM's Bochum plant. Firstly, I acted as Lean advisor to the Bochum plant board and the Paint shop management. Concurrent to this, I took on the role of Paint Shop Production Manager, where I was responsible for establishing continuous improvement strategies to support an early retirement programme. Finally, during this period I also acted as a Shift Manager, directly responsible for the Paint shop output and quality for one of the three shifts operating there.

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*General Motors International Operations, Zurich, Switzerland*

**Manager Lean Consulting Group (GMIO)****1997 - 1999**

Manager of a small, highly experienced team of lean manufacturing experts who liaised with all GM European plants for continuous improvement and cost reduction. My team were also involved in new plant and new product projects, the focus being to assist planning and engineering groups within GM to reduce investment costs. I was also responsible for developing performance metrics to allow plant to plant performance comparison, as well as developing Lean Skills Awareness training for senior executives. The scope of the role also covered parts of North America and China, for powertrain and vehicle manufacturing.

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## Toyota (UK)

1991 - 1997

*Toyota Burnaston, Derby, England*

### **Unit Manager, Paint Shop**

**1995 - 1997**

Responsible for production, maintenance and process engineering within the Burnaston Paint facility. The focus was primarily on productivity and quality improvement. During this time, I spent six months with Toyota's Lean manufacturing consulting division, working with their supply base in Japan on continuous improvement practices.

In 1996, as part of a personal development action plan for myself, I was assigned to the renowned OMCD division within Toyota's Motomachi plant in Nagoya, Japan. This division is Toyota's 'Oracle of Lean Expertise', established by Taiichi Ohno, who is considered to be the father of the Toyota Production System (TPS). The assignment required me to operate in the local supply chain, focusing on cycle time reduction through small-motion Kaizen. Typically, this was on cycle times as short as 17 seconds, where a 10-20% improvement was achieved.

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### **Manager, Plastics**

**1993 - 1995**

Responsible for manufacturing, maintenance and process engineering of fascias, bumpers and moulds.

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### **Senior Group Leader**

**1992 - 1993**

Responsible for the manufacture and painting of bumpers and fasciae.

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### **Manufacturing Engineer**

**1991 - 1992**

Responsible for mould maintenance activities and bumper manufacture.

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Ford Motor Company (UK)

1976 - 1991

*Ford Halewood, Liverpool, Merseyside, England*

### **Manufacturing Engineer**

**1986 - 1991**

Responsible for door closures within the Body facility, covering then-current and future engineering changes.

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### **Injection Moulding Technician and Press Toolmaker**

**1976 - 1986**

After a four-year apprenticeship, as a skilled press toolmaker, I initially maintained press tools in the tool room along with automation systems. I also supported the servicing of the stampings line. I moved into bumper injection moulding tool maintenance and mould processing, including PU foaming. The role covered new tool construction, modification and correction.

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## **5. Other Skills, Achievements & Background Information**

I have received BBC Media Presentation and Interview Skills training.

Awarded 'Exemplar Manufacturing Director Award' by *The Manufacturer* trade magazine.

Awarded 'Top 100 UK Director' by *The Manufacturer* trade magazine.

Featured in the BBC documentary *How To Build A Supercar* (60' - 2011/2012).

I have achieved fluency in German and retain a working knowledge of the language.

I have conducted many lectures and presentations, notably including:

- SAP Senior Global Leadership Development: Guest Speaker
- Glaxo Smith-Kline - Global Manufacturing Board: Advisor on How To Build a World-Class Manufacturing Organisation.
- Royal Holloway University Entrepreneurial Society: Students and Alumni
- Akzo-Nobel - Global Strategy Board: World-Class Manufacturing Relationships
- Surrey University: McLaren's World-Class Manufacturing Facility
- Surrey Business Forum: Guest Speaker
- Unipart "Best of Britain" Dinner: UK Manufacturing Industry Seminar Speaker
- South East England Manufacturing Awards: Keynote Speaker

Outside of work, I am a keen golfer, a Level II Master of Reiki and a skilled Samba-Reggae drummer.