

# GENERAL MANAGER

Estes Rockets  
*Colorado Springs/Pueblo Region*

A Position Profile



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# ABOUT ESTES ROCKETS

Estes Rockets was founded in 1958 by Vern and Gleda Estes and found a home soon thereafter in Penrose, Colorado, the model rocket capital of the world. Through more than six decades of hard work and innovation, Estes has grown to be the leading manufacturer of model rocket engines, kits and accessories. After a series of owners, Estes was acquired in April 2018 by family-run Langford Industries. The Langford family has a passion and commitment to the aerospace and rocketry field. Estes is once again a privately held and family-run business, committed to the mission of enabling safe, successful flights for customers everywhere, from their backyards and school yards to worlds beyond. The family and the Estes team are proud to be part of the Estes legacy, as rocketry has always been part of their family's history as engineers, rocketeers and designers.

**Estes Rockets Vision:** to ignite the imagination of every generation by being the most trusted source for model rocketry.

**Values:** safety is paramount; integrity of data is essential; maintain a sense of urgency and bias towards action; good ideas come from everyone; lead by example; instill personal accountability; and all people deserve dignity and respect.

The organization has developed a five-year strategic plan with the following key objectives:

- Make the company a self-contained and self-supporting business again
- Create a strong STEM education focus
- Strengthen competency in the engineering and production of small solid propellant rocket motors
- Build ties in professional aerospace
- Redesign the Estes campus and launch an incremental renewal and expansion program

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Today, [Estes Rockets](#) has 65 employees with approximately \$20M in revenues. The organization sells their products through multiple channels including mass markets, ecommerce, distribution (hobby shops, etc.) and educational markets. As they continue to modernize the business, expand and refine their product lines, elevate their educational mission which currently reaches over 500,000 students annually, and grow partnerships in the industry (including SpaceX, Blue Origin among others), Estes Rockets is poised for future success.



## OPPORTUNITY

The General Manager will be responsible for executing the strategic plan outlined above and leading the day-to-day management of the organization ensuring it is agile, responsive and a technical enabled company. With rocket motor manufacturing capabilities on-site, the General Manager and the team need to focus on remaining committed to maintaining their strong safety record for both employees and their customers. With most of the models and accessories made by suppliers in China, the GM must deal with an international supply chain and guide the company through future decisions about potential reshoring. Managing a growing team, the General Manager will foster a positive, collaborative and innovative culture with a commitment to attracting, developing and retaining talent.

## REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

The General Manager reports to the President, Mallory Langford, and will manage a team including the Director of Education, Director of Quality and Safety, Facilities and Equipment Manager, Human Resources Manager, Operations Manager, Director of Systems, Director of Sales, Director of Marketing, Director of Manufacturing and the Controller.

The General Manager will also meet several times a year with their Advisory Board, which consists of family members, the original founder, and a key leader within the industry.

## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Model the company values and focus on executing on the five-year strategic plan to continuously make progress on the company's goals.
- Deliver year-over-year revenue growth and improvements to earnings. With Estes's strong margins, the General Manager will effectively link sales, purchasing, inventory management, and delivery together to drive free cash flow and steadily repay the initial investment to the Langford family.



- Drive improvements in productivity and the customer experience through process excellence, industry-leading quality, effective products and service.
- Work closely with the team to continue to elevate the Estes brand by increasing their online presence and website to sell more products and share space and rocket knowledge with the public.
- Preserve and expand Estes Rockets role as a STEM education platform. Working closely with the education team to further that goal and thoroughly integrate the team into the company as a part of its core mission.
- Drive talent management efforts and ensure high expectations for individual and team performance, attracting talent and employee development.
- Lead change in shaping the culture with a committed team of long-tenured and newly hired employees with a common team focus on excellence, innovation and driving the company in its modernization efforts.
- Establish a high-performance culture based on respect, teamwork, continuous improvement and accountability.
- Work closely with the organization to operate in a more global market versus a US market and closely evaluate supply chain partners to minimize future disruptions to the business.
- Continuously focus efforts on developing product lines to meet changing consumer interests and needs.
- Develop new partnerships and strengthen existing ones with key stakeholders and companies in the industry to enhance the Estes brand.
- Cultivate and strengthen an effective, well-aligned and mutually beneficial relationship with the Langford family. Serve as a proactive communicator to minimize surprises and develop trust.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- Possesses a minimum of seven to ten years of experience leading operations in a small to medium-sized consumer goods/ manufacturing/distribution organization with a diverse workforce of hourly, professional and technical employees.
- Exposure to working with a privately held/family-owned businesses is helpful.
- Excellent strategic thinking and operational capabilities to manage a stand-alone business.
- Five or more years of profit and loss responsibility in a \$20M+ organization.
- Strong leadership skills and experience in building effective leadership teams.
- Excellent 'nose for talent' with a strong history of attracting and retaining talented individuals.
- Results-driven and comfortable taking calculated risks in a collaborative team environment.
- Possesses strong change management experience; encourages employee communication and team work to produce creative ideas and develop new solutions.
- Serves as a coalition builder.
- Asks good questions and serves as a positive, solutions-oriented leader.
- Demonstrated ability to work in partnership with colleagues, subordinates, superiors and customers.
- Possesses a strong safety orientation.
- Undergraduate degree in engineering, operations, business or related field is required; MBA preferred.
- Commitment to living in Colorado and working on-site to serve as an effective leader.



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Salveson Stetson Group (SSG) is a multi-specialty, retained executive search firm located in Radnor, Pennsylvania that delivers strategic, high-quality, responsive consulting and support for clients across the country and globally. Working across diverse industries SSG has a long history of conducting executive level human resources, clinical, scientific, finance, sales and marketing, and general management searches. With a team of 20 colleagues, necessary resources are dedicated for each assignment to exceed client expectations.

Salveson Stetson Group embodies a rare and powerful value for its clients in terms of client and candidate experience. As a firm led actively by its two principals, SSG delivers the kind of strategic, responsive consulting services expected from a large search firm with the tailored attention and support of a boutique firm.

As part of the MPI family of companies, SSG has access to talent, resources, and expertise on a national level through our sister companies – Furst Group and NuBrick Partners. Furst Group, a retained executive search firm, is focused on identifying senior level executives for the healthcare industry. NuBrick Partners, a leadership consulting firm focusing on executive team performance, strategic team development, board effectiveness, physician leadership and executive team succession across all industries.

Salveson Stetson Group is also a member of IIC Partners, one of the top ten retained executive search groups in the world, we have the ability to leverage collective networks and experience to identify a broader slate of global candidates to serve our clients more effectively.

For additional information on SSG, please visit our website at [www.ssgsearch.com](http://www.ssgsearch.com). To learn more about this particular position, please call (610) 341-9020 or contact:



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