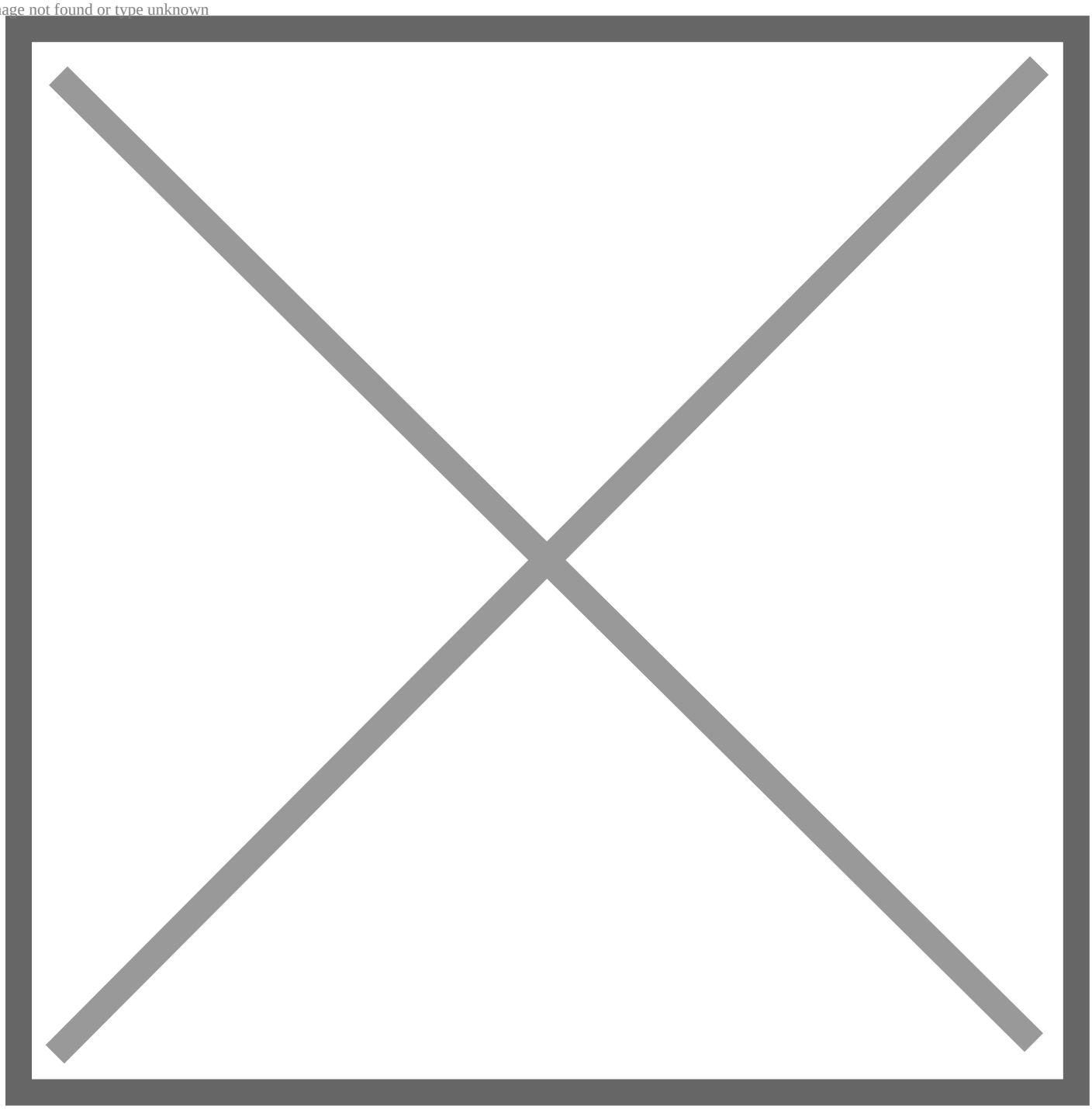
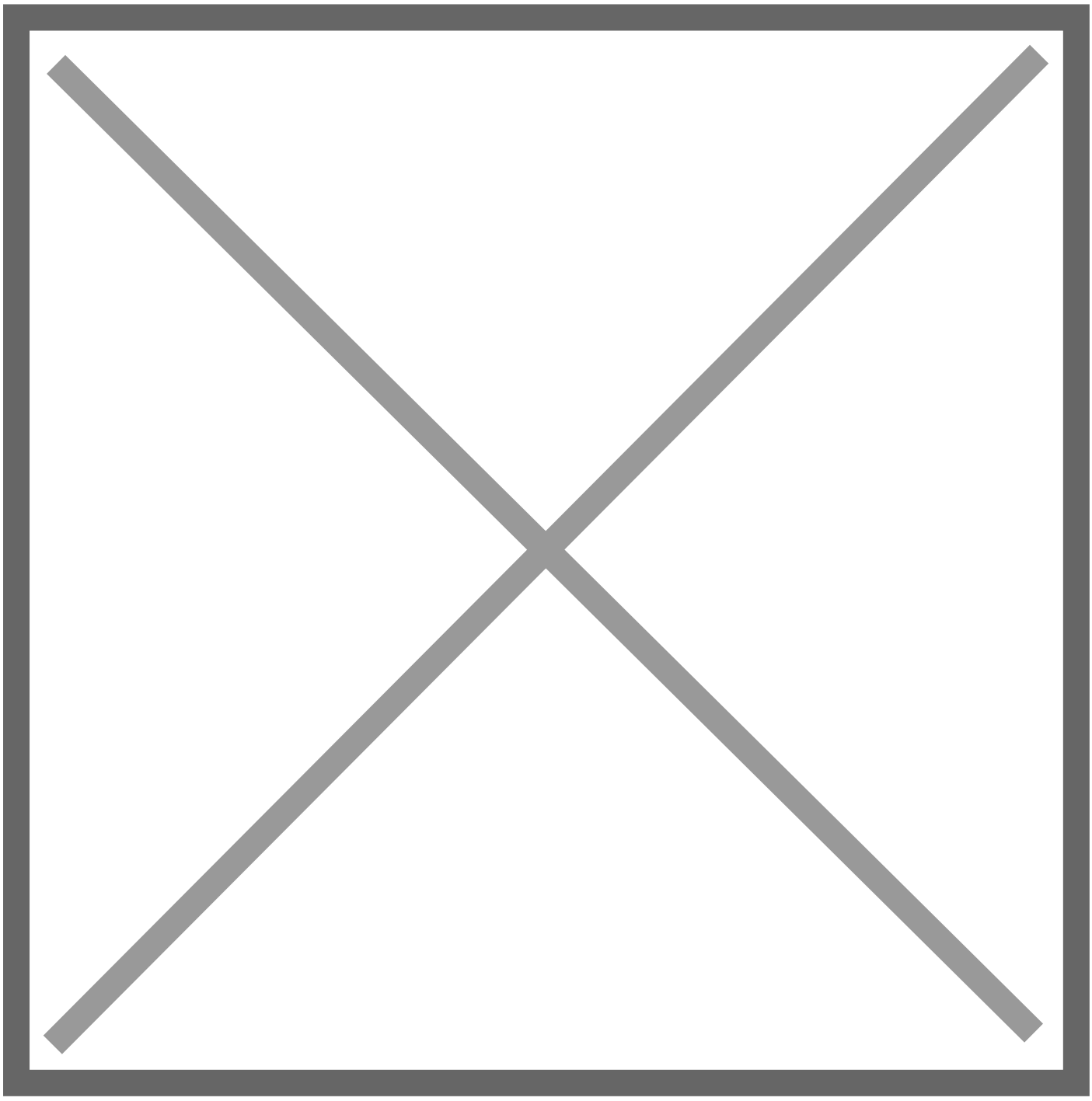
Inside Toyota Research & Development: Engineers Innovate Mobility for a Changing World

June 05, 2026

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At Toyota’s Research & Development (R&D) locations, engineers are tackling some of the biggest challenges in mobility — from autonomous driving and advanced safety systems to clean energy and breakthrough technologies. Their work is shaping not just the cars of tomorrow, but the entire ecosystem of how we move and live. Get to know the engineers pushing boundaries and driving innovation forward.



Can you share your engineering background?

I’ve been an engineer — and sometimes a lawyer — for over 35 years in the automotive industry. My early career involved supplier engineering on wire harnesses and seating systems. I earned master of business

administration and juris doctor degrees while working and used my legal expertise defending Chrysler and Ford in product liability cases. Later, I returned to engineering and program management at Ford, contributing to the first autonomous vehicle prototypes. Now at Toyota, I support multiple projects including self-driving vehicle programs and focus on safety and customer privacy.

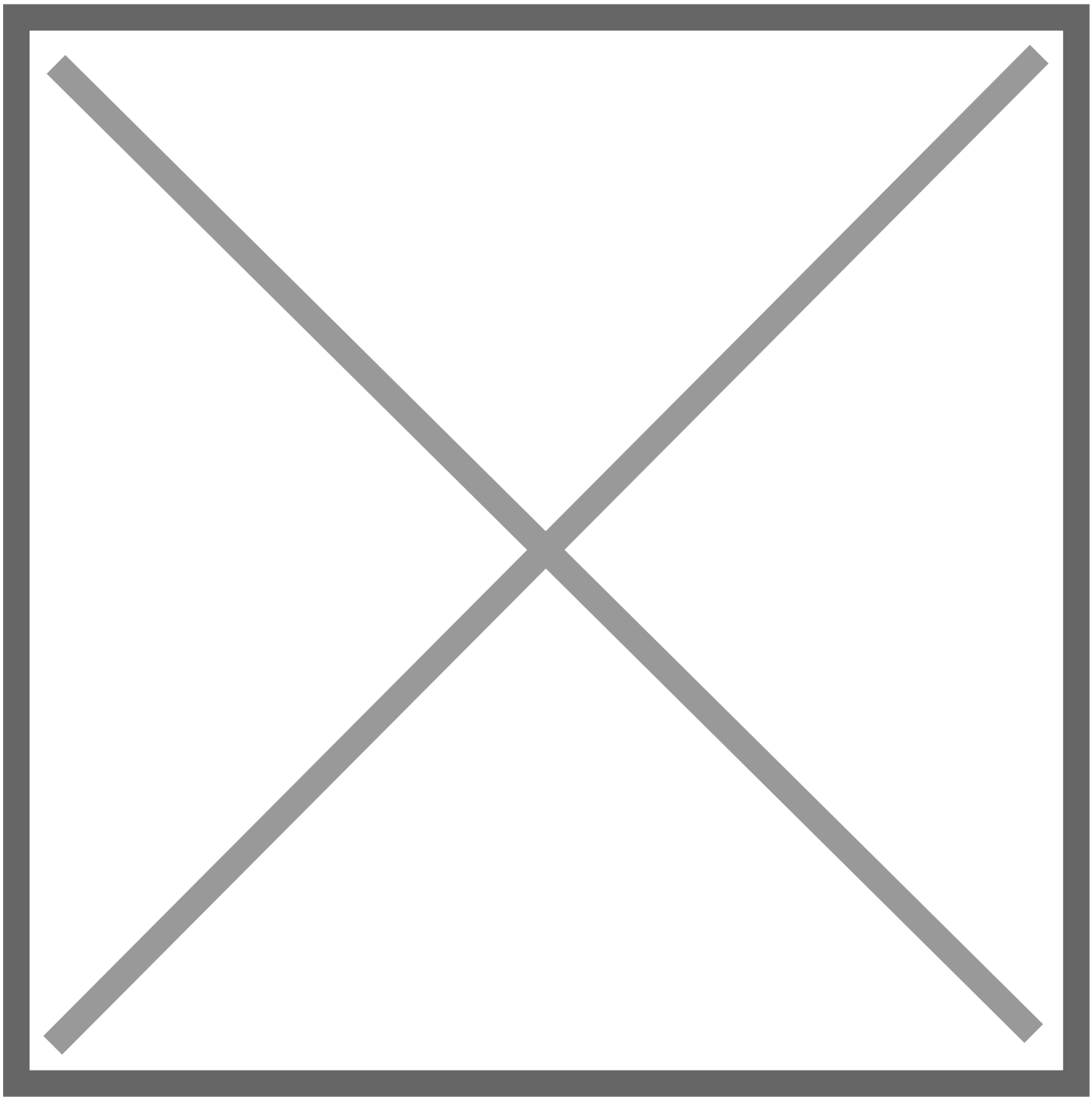
What's your current role?
I support several TMNA (Toyota Motor North America) projects including MaaS (Mobility as a Service) self-driving Sienna programs developed with customer partners. I mentor engineers new to autonomous driving and lead efforts to review safety and privacy aspects of these technologies.

How does your work impact customers?
My daily focus is supporting and improving the customer experience of our partners as they develop and provide safe and exciting self-driving services. I also focus on ways to help make the vehicle environment safer and understanding customer privacy opportunities. I strive to surprise and delight all customers.

What inspired you to become an engineer?
I was fascinated by how things work and how to make them better. My grandfather was a blacksmith, and my father was an engineer. While I believe I was born to fly airplanes, I also believe I was meant to be an engineer.

Any interesting facts about your role?
I've driven autonomous development vehicles using just a laptop in everyday conditions, a unique experience few get to have.

Favorite thing about Toyota?
The best part is working alongside talented people across many organizations. Great products come from respectful relationships and teamwork.



Tell us about your background.
I've been with Toyota since 2012, holding a bachelor of science, master of science and PhD degrees in mechanical engineering from the University of Maryland, plus an executive master of business administration completed during the pandemic. Before Toyota, I was a graduate research assistant focused on mechanical engineering.

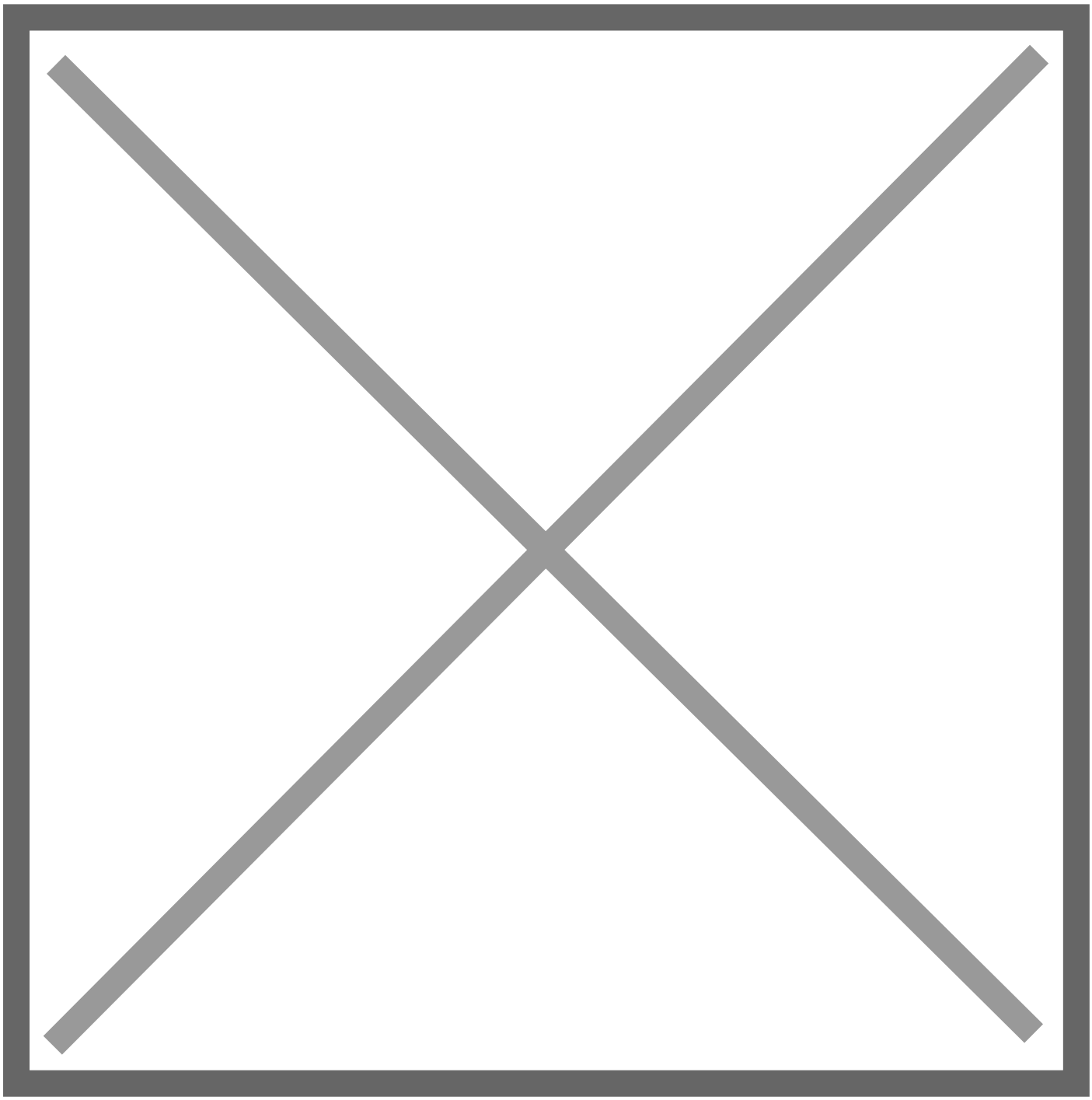
What's your role now?
My team is responsible for developing and executing Toyota's vision for zero-emission mobility. In my role, I

help translate that vision by aligning stakeholders, shaping the path forward and keeping the work moving from concept to launch.

How does your work impact customers?
The Advanced Product Planning Office is involved in every phase, and project management is a big part of my day-to-day. As the project owner/leader, I work across functions to align priorities, advocate new processes and apply learnings as we move from development into execution.

What inspired you to become an engineer?
I've always wanted to be an engineer. Growing up sailing competitively taught me about efficiency, adaptability, and problem-solving — skills that naturally led me to engineering and automotive innovation.

What do you love about engineering at Toyota?
Seeing a design go from concept to production — and then driving down the road — is incredibly rewarding. The spirit of continuous improvement (kaizen) keeps us evolving. Each team member brings something unique to the table. New thoughts, ideas, perspectives and considerations. I'm constantly inspired by the people around me — and by what we're able to achieve together as a team.



What's your engineering journey?
I earned a bachelor's and master's degree in mechanical engineering from Ohio State University while completing multiple co-op roles at Toyota in manufacturing ergonomics, robotics, crash safety and Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS) development.

Describe your current role.
Currently, I am the function lead for Toyota Safety Sense, specifically aspects of Trailer Driving Assist (TDA). In this role, I oversee the software development lifecycle and cross-functional alignment necessary to bring these

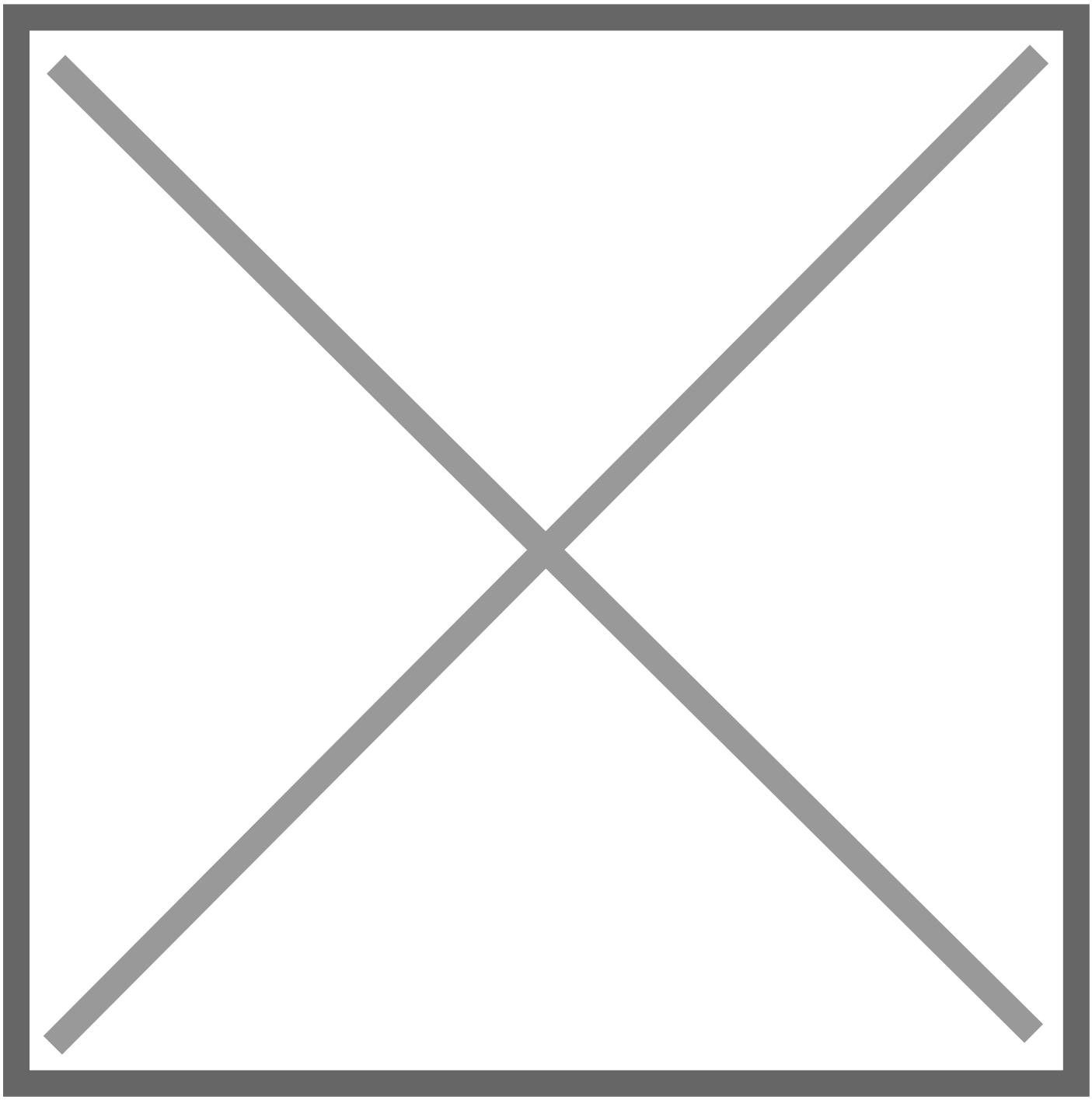
trailer ADAS features to production. These ADAS functions allow the use of a trailer with existing Toyota Safety Sense functions.

How does your work impact customers?
These features launched on the 2026 Toyota RAV4 and help enhance safety and convenience for many North American customers who tow trailers for work or recreation.

What inspired you to become an engineer?
Like many engineers, I was drawn to math, science and problem-solving from an early age. My father instilled values of hard work and helping others that align perfectly with what I do today.

Any interesting insights about your role?
Developing software means rapid testing and iteration —sometimes tweaking code directly in the vehicle to quickly solve issues before full testing.

Favorite thing about Toyota?
The collaborative culture stands out. Everyone is willing to help solve problems together — it's a unique environment that fosters long careers. The selflessness, respect and collaborative problem-solving mindset is something I believe is unique to Toyota.



Can you share your background?

I have 28 years of engineering experience in the automotive industry, with a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering from Michigan Technological University and a master of science degree in engineering management from the University of Dayton. I started my career at Delco Electronics working on validation for Honda, GM and Toyota projects, then gained expertise in Ford audio systems and controller area network communication at Delphi and Clarion. Since 2012, I have been with Toyota leading innovation efforts at the Silicon Valley Office, developing new technologies and collaborating with startups to advance automotive electronics.

What's your role now?
I lead efforts connecting startups with Toyota divisions to explore new technologies that can enhance mobility beyond traditional automotive products.

How does your work impact customers?
Customer first is our motto. We focus on innovations that improve customer experience not just in vehicles but in broader mobility solutions that affect daily life.

What inspired you to become an engineer?
My dad was a car mechanic, and he told me about the importance of education and hard work. One day, he told me that he didn't want me to be a mechanic to take over the business. But I wanted to work on cars, so I decided to be an engineer.

Any fun facts about your role?
I attend Consumer Electronics Showcase almost every year —it's a great place to discover cutting-edge tech.

Favorite thing about Toyota?
The culture of continuous improvement is everywhere. Everyone strives to make things better for customers.