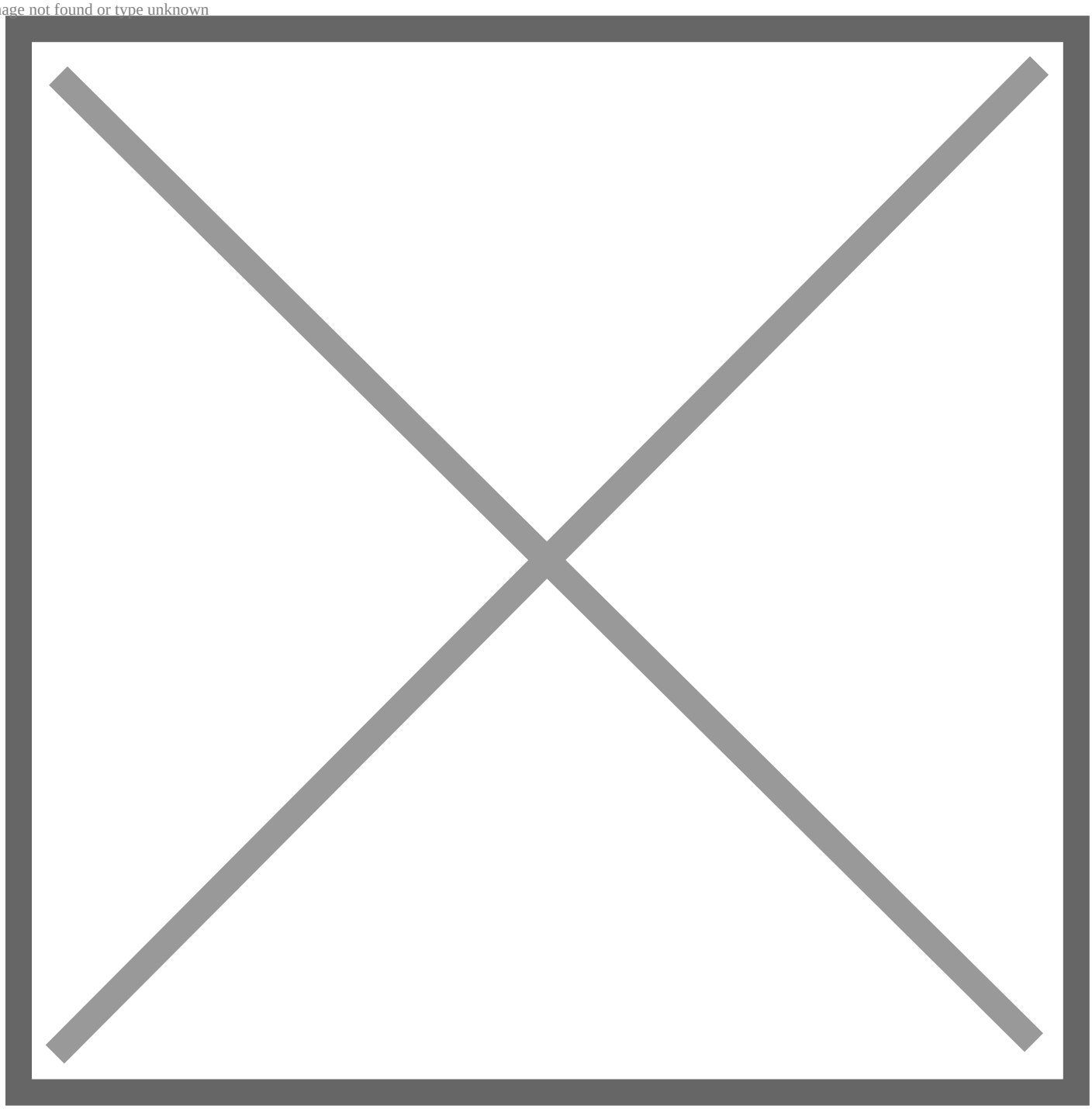
From Loom to Global Automaker: Toyota’s Legacy of Continuous Improvement

October 19, 2026

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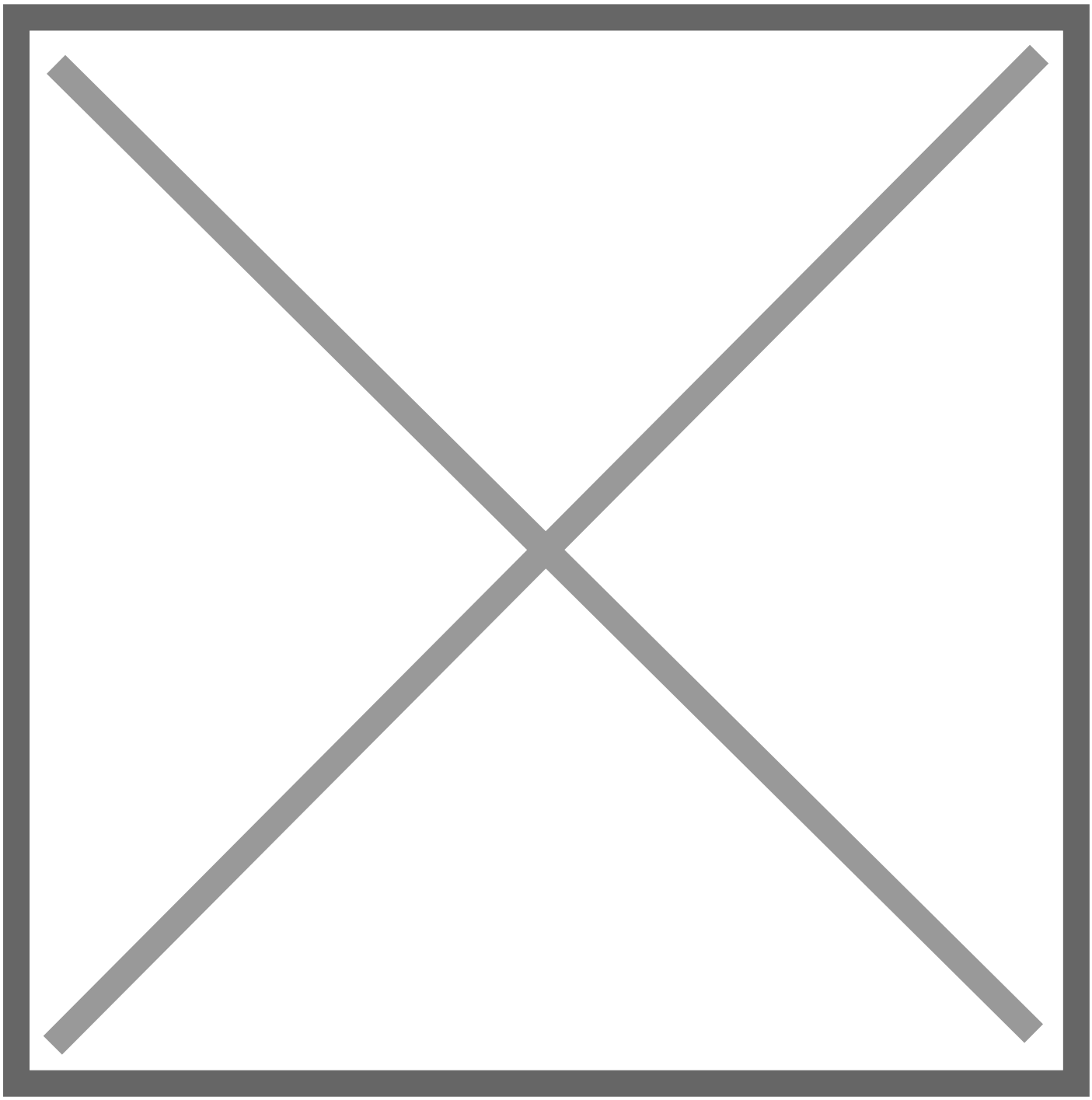


Toyota’s story began long before its name was globally renowned. It started with the steady rhythm of a loom — and with an innovator’s determination to make work easier, solve real problems and improve lives.

Sakichi Toyoda recognized how demanding loom work could be and set out to ease that burden. After years of continuous improvement, he introduced the Type G Automatic Loom in 1924.

The machine revolutionized textile manufacturing through innovations that transformed a painstaking process into a highly efficient one. More importantly, Sakichi’s belief that technology should support people inspired the principle of *jidoka*, or automation with a human touch, which later became a foundation of the Toyota Production System.

His son, Kiichiro Toyoda, carried that *jidoka* spirit from weaving to mobility. Proceeds from the loom patent helped fund early engine and vehicle research, eventually establishing Toyota Motor Corporation, and marking the beginning of a company that would grow into a global automotive leader and pioneer of lean manufacturing principles.



A Legacy Built in America

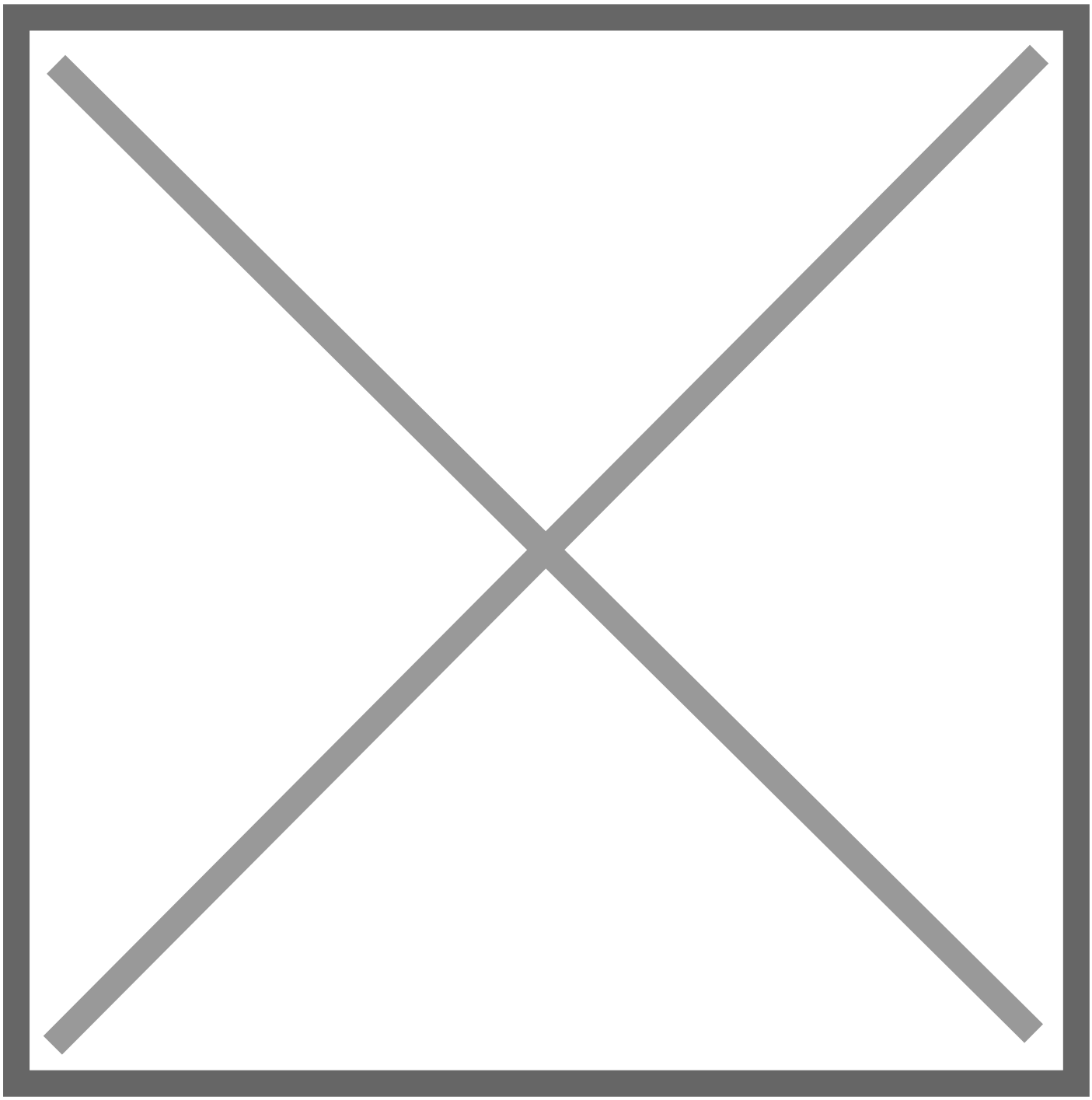
As more American customers chose Toyota vehicles, the company saw an opportunity to serve them in a more meaningful way: by building vehicles closer to the people who drove them. Guided by its enduring principles of respect for people and continuous improvement, Toyota began expanding its manufacturing operations in the United States to better meet customers' needs.

That simple idea – build where we sell – grew into a manufacturing legacy shaped by generations of team members and strengthened by suppliers and communities across the nation. For more than 60 years, Toyota's

commitment to U.S. manufacturing has seen the company plant roots in Alabama, California, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia bringing the total to 11 U.S. manufacturing plants and employing over 48,000 team members. Together, their ideas, skills and dedication help design, engineer and assemble the vehicles customers drive – and the components that keep them moving. Toyota's U.S. output exceeds 36 million cars and trucks in the United States, transforming steel, aluminum, technology and teamwork into mobility for customers across the U.S. and the world.

"Toyota's U.S. manufacturing legacy is built by generations of team members who bring our values to life every day," said Kevin Voelkel, senior vice president of manufacturing, Toyota Motor North America. "From our earliest operations to the advanced technologies we have today, our commitment remains the same: invest for the long term, support our team members and communities, and make ever-better vehicles for our customers."

Since 2020, Toyota announced more than $22 billion in U.S. manufacturing investments to support electrification and create more than 9,300 high-quality jobs. An additional $10 billion commitment over the next five years will help expand those capabilities for the future.

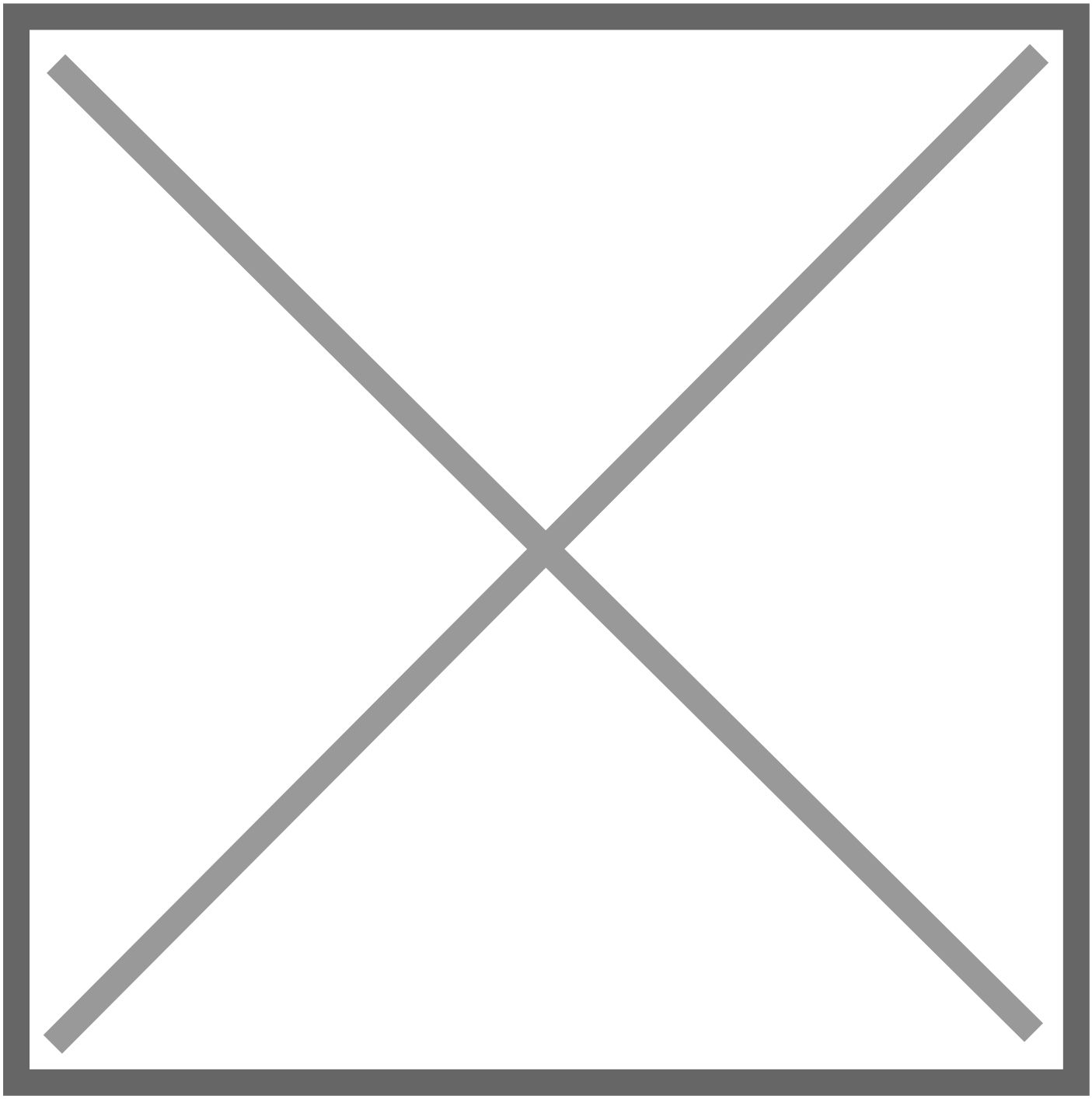


Innovation and the Future of Manufacturing
Innovation is not new to the global automaker. Since the beginning, Toyota was built on continuous improvement and understanding how new technologies and advancements can help team members and customers.

Toyota’s manufacturing and research and development locations throughout the U.S. are an integral part of translating these advancements into the vehicles that meet customer demand. Through examples like predictive maintenance and quality inspections, team members are connecting how AI technology can serve people in

meaningful ways.

Advancements in technology, sustainability and the integration of AI are reshaping manufacturing, and this transformation requires equipping the people and processes leading these efforts, because technology does not build vehicles alone – people do.



Building Mobility and Opportunity

Toyota’s U.S. manufacturing story is about more than what rolls off the production line. It is also about opening

doors for the people who will build what comes next. Through education partnerships, scholarships and hands-on learning, Toyota helps students discover STEM and career-and-technical pathways that can turn curiosity into opportunity. Programs such as Toyota USA Foundation's Driving Possibilities unite schools, nonprofits and communities to strengthen career readiness and help remove barriers between students and their goals.

For students drawn to advanced manufacturing, programs including 4T Academy and Advanced Manufacturing Technician pathways blend classroom learning with paid, real-world experiences. Plant tours and Experience Centers offer another way in, giving visitors a firsthand look into modern manufacturing and the careers and people behind it.

Through the ingenuity of its team members, investment in communities and commitment to happiness for all, Toyota is carrying a legacy of manufacturing excellence forward — creating opportunity, serving customers and helping move the next generation toward what's possible.