

Our Point of View: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

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by Kristen Tabar

Today, the second day of the tour began with a presentation on Toyota's global quality assurance operations, focused largely around the [comprehensive six-point quality plan](#) that is Akio Toyoda's personal priority. In broad strokes, his plan mandates a top-to-bottom review of our global quality assurance processes and works to renew Toyota's commitment to quality, responsiveness, transparency, training, technology and regional autonomy. But what does this mean in practice?

At a global level, Mr. Toyoda is leading a new Special Committee for Global Quality that has opened the lines of communication globally, enabling us to better share important quality and safety information across our operations. In the U.S., our new [North American Quality Task Force](#) — which is led by Chief Quality Officer and thirty-year industry veteran Steve St. Angelo — was established to give our North American operations more autonomy and decision-making power with regard to recalls and other safety issues.

In the field and in the lab, Toyota is collecting and analyzing more information from more sources to help make quality decisions closer to where our customers live and drive. One way we're strengthening our on-site information-gathering capabilities in the U.S. is through programs like our [rapid-response SMART investigation process](#), which is comprised of 200 highly trained engineers and field technicians who can pay "automotive house calls," conducting on-site inspections to address customer concerns surrounding unintended acceleration.

To get a sense of how field information is used, our group got a special look Toyota's amazing vehicle water leak chamber, which can hold any Toyota vehicle and subject it to water conditions ranging from "drizzle" to "monsoon". The equipment can even add maximum body torque for "worst case" leak testing. Three members from the group got to experience the test from a little different perspective – from inside the vehicle! It was a great demonstration to show how broadly our vehicles and parts are tested once a field concern is identified.

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