

Executive Insider: 5 Questions for Kevin Voelkel

October 07, 2019

Image not found or type unknown



Kevin Voelkel, president of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Texas (TMMTX) in San Antonio, supervises more than 3,000 employees in the assembly of today's most popular trucks, such as Toyota's Tundra and Tacoma.

As president of TMMTX, what motivates you?

Two things. The most important is to give back and watch people grow. Watching those who take interest in developing their careers and giving them the opportunity to do that. The other is problem solving. In manufacturing, there's no lack of problems throughout the day. Being able to bring people together to solve problems is something I'm passionate about. I try to be hands-on, with a little bit of energy. The most important values for me as a leader are integrity and humility. I like to be involved and lead with passion.

Most people will never step foot inside a plant. What's it like at TMMTX?

This is the heart of our company, where we build the products that touch our customers. They should know that there are 3,200 team members here who are highly passionate about building trucks. That's the culture here. And they're excited to come to work every day. Manufacturing is challenging and rewarding, but this is where Team Texas comes together to build the world's best truck at a pace of about a thousand trucks per day.

What compelled you to work in the automotive industry?

All of my career has involved some kind of manufacturing. But I actually started in the chemical industry. I had a career with Alcoa Aluminum first, then joined Toyota in 2005. It was a fortunate opportunity to switch over to automotive, and it's been a blessing. It's a good match for me. I like working on things that involve bringing people together to solve something or build something.

As a successful executive, what career advice can you offer?

Everything is possible. Keep working on your professional and personal growth. The day you stop learning is the day you start giving up on your personal potential. Toyota is a great place to start a career. But just know that in Toyota, change is ever present, and challenge is always possible. Through those two things, it's a pathway for career development. So, keep chasing your dreams and keep striving to make yourself recognized.

What are you driving?

A Tundra, of course! I drive a 1794 edition. It's got all the power I need. Probably a little too much when I don't need it. In fact, ever since I've been driving, I've only owned one car. All the rest have been trucks.