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39 Years of Service with Ron Beitler

Ron Beitler has achieved 39 years and 8 months of service at Americhem working his way up from a designer in customer service to supervisor in R&D to his current role as Technical & Innovation Director in China. During the 1980's recession, Ron was laid off from Harshaw Chemical, but quickly took his experience over to Americhem when he was hired on October 22, 1981. Ron has been critical to building the product and technology portfolios at multiple global plant expansions for Americhem. Kicking off his career at Americhem's Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio location, he then moved to the Manchester, UK plant as the Technical Manager for 10 years, then moved to the China plant as Technical Advisor in 2006 and has resided there since.

To celebrate Americhem's 80 year anniversary, Ron was kind enough to be interviewed as one of Americhem's longest tenured employees. The dialogue was as follows:

What was the field of plastics like when you first started?

It was dirty and the equipment was harsh. When I first started, we were using two roll rubber mills to produce our products. As time went on, we moved to single screw extruders and eventually to twin screw extrusion.

What were some of the biggest challenges back then?

Larry Campbell was my manager and he put the plant on an efficiencies system that motivated us. We were working on a lot of new technologies so efficiencies were key. I actually worked on the first fiber line we ever had and tested almost every color and chemistry possible.

What changes have you seen in plastics?

Today, everyone has very tight tolerances. In the fibers industry in China, there are a lot of intricacies that we have to accommodate for. We gained our reputation by being able to do tight tolerance work and duplicating our customers' processes for our own testing.



Picture 1: Ron when he first started.

What have been the greatest developments in the field of plastics over the last 39 years?

One of the coolest developments I worked on was a glass filled nylon program for a well-known OEM in appliances and tools. It was new for us and we worked closely with the customer to custom manufacture this product. We ended up becoming one of their premiere suppliers.

From your perspective, what would you say are Americhem's greatest accomplishments?

Being able to develop new technologies and getting into new markets. Adding compounding expertise was a great addition to our product portfolio when we used to only do masterbatch.

In your opinion, is there anything that Americhem should have done differently?

When I first started here, all of the plants produced the same products and had the same expertise, but now, every plant is specialized. It would be nice if we did more cross training by sending our employees to different plants for a week or two, which would allow them to learn our business better. Especially as some of the longer tenured employees start retiring, that knowledge is important to pass down.

What are some of your fondest Americhem memories?

All of the comradery that I've had over the years. I was always blessed with great leaders and superiors who pushed me to do better, but never crossed the line. Larry Campbell and Rick Mathew played major roles in my career and I thank them for that.

What are the key issues that you see Americhem addressing in the future?

Our expansion and future growth in our Americhem Engineered Compounds business looks very promising. Those types of products that go into high heat applications for aerospace or highly technical medical device applications have really taken off for that division.

Please share one memory of a funny situation that you encountered at Americhem.

One night, when I was working the late shift at our plant in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, tornados came ripping through and blew the back doors right off the building. When I saw the doors get sucked out, that was my que to go running into the offices and hide under the desks. When I came back out to see the damage, I saw the cars that were previously in our parking lot were now on the other side of the street along with a couple trash drums. It's funny to look back on it now, but it was certainly a scary moment at the time.



Picture 2: Ron Beitler & Stanley Teoh at the Great Wall of China.

Describe what Americhem means to you.

Americhem is a very progressive company and has had some great leaders such as Rick Mathew and Stanley Teoh. They understand people and appreciate their employees. Stanley, especially, has always looked for new opportunities and what the next big thing is. He'd bring me these innovative and cutting edge ideas, we'd sit down and work through them, and I'd try to get it off the ground as soon as possible. We've made a great team over the years by putting one thing first: the voice of the customer.

Thank you Ron for your endless commitment to Americhem and your timeless friendship to many of us. We wish you continued success in your long standing career and look forward to your ongoing positivity you spread across the company.