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50 Years of Service with Doug Croley

Doug Croley has achieved 50 years of service at Americhem working his way up from running equipment in the plant to inventory management to his current role as National Account Manager for Packaging. He was hired on October 28, 1971 after hearing about an open position from Harvey Cooper, former Vice President. Doug was working at a machine shop and a student at the University of Akron at the time. When he first started, Bill Fowler, a fellow 50-year-Americhem-employee, trained him on all of the machines while they were on 2nd shift together.

To celebrate Americhem's 80 year anniversary, Doug 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?

When I first got into Americhem sales, territories were geographical. Since I was able to pursue multiple accounts, it was like having my own business, but with the safety net of an entire company behind me. After the 1980's recession, we realized that we needed to diversify our portfolio. That's when territories became fine-tuned based on specific business units and customers, creating new technologies for various applications.

What were some of the biggest challenges back then?

For me, the challenge was working full time on second shift and going to college at the same time; it required a lot of balancing. Another challenge was learning how to compound because it was hard work that had a major learning curve. Although, the comradery we built led to making Americhem, and all of us, successful in the end.

What changes have you seen in plastics?

Americhem is now diversified into thousands of products in various polymers and end markets. When I started selling into the PET packaging market, the only options

were liquid or precolor. For 1 year, we worked with our largest packaging accounts to develop our solid masterbatch for CSD bottles. As a result, we were able to develop colorants and additives for this market in multiple applications.



Picture 1: Doug at the first NPE in Chicago in 1988.

What have been the greatest developments in the field of plastics over the last 50 years?

The diversity of markets served and the thousands of products Americhem has designed for those end use applications have been phenomenal. The technology and product offerings Americhem provides to the plastics industry is a great success story.

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

The global expansion has been tremendous; starting from 2 plants in Ohio when I joined in 1971 to now 12 locations worldwide. The Juve family has always been committed to reinvesting

in their company. They remain dedicated to the well-being of employees, company culture, and customers.

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

No; the ownership has always made purposeful decisions that have been well thought out. We've always learned from different events over time and become better for it.

What are some of your fondest Americhem memories?

All of the amazing people that I've worked with over the years. One of the benefits of working your way up in the company is making all of the relationships along the way. I've made friends from all over the place and met people that have helped me so much in my career. Longevity is huge in this company and those individuals who have made a long career at Americhem provide valuable knowledge through their years of experience.

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

It was always our goal to get on mainland Europe and we just did that with the acquisition of Controlled Polymers in Denmark. I'd say that we should continue to now focus on bringing in the right talent to help us expand. We need to keep bringing in people who will challenge us.

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

There was plenty of goofing off that wouldn't fly today like "beaker golf," making grilled cheese sandwiches on the vertical press used to make pressouts for color validations, but the Volkswagen prank is my favorite. There was a ramp for deliveries and one day, we took one of the guy's cars and pushed it up the ramp to the back corner of the plant. We put a bunch of pallets in front of the car so you couldn't see it. The guy thought his car was stolen and was about to call the cops as we began to pull the bags away and show him where it was.



Picture 2: Doug Croley (left) with Frank Fire (middle) & Bob Platt (right)

Describe what Americhem means to you.

I would first like to thank the Juve family for all of the opportunities they've given me. When you enjoy your job, it doesn't seem like work, and it certainly doesn't seem like 50 years. Yes, some days are longer and harder than others, but it is so rewarding for me to be able to do what I do. Americhem is like my other family. Second, I'd like to thank Frank Fire for the 3 rules he instilled in me as well as the entire sales team at the time:

1. The customer is always #1
2. Carry on the Americhem culture
3. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so and get back to them

Thank you Doug 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.