

Mike Mayer '83



Mike Mayer '83, Shanghai, China is the vice president and managing director AP for ABC Technologies Inc. in China. Previous to this, he worked 20 years at Ford and 10 years at FCA. 70% of that time was spent living outside the US in places like Mexico, Germany, Japan and China - the lion's share of that in China, 16 years. He returned to Michigan in the summer of 2017, retired from the big boys and joined the supplier ranks. Mike says, Shanghai is a long way from the Sault and LSSU, but he still looks fondly on his life experiences and educational training at LSSU - great education, great school. More details on Mike's adventures overseas:

I was born and raised in the Soo, attended Sault High and LSSU. Graduated from LSSU in 1983 with a BS in Industrial Engineering Tech and AS Occupational Technology. Wanted to be a builder, I guess I made it there, however I build automobiles instead of buildings. I've built vehicles on 4 continents, North America, South America, Europe, and Asia, and lived in all except South America. Sure is a long way from the Soo!

Upon graduating from LSSU in 1983 I moved to Menominee Falls, Wisc. where I worked for Chemrite Industries as plant engineer and jack of all trades. I quickly moved back to Michigan in the summer of 1988 to work for Ford Motor Company as a manufacturing engineer at the Milan Plastic Plant. I spent 20 years at Ford/Visteon with ever changing positions and responsibilities. I started my Ford career as a manufacturing engineer on the floor and ended as Director of Current/Past Programs for Visteon. In between I've worked in several disciplines, Manufacturing, Finance, Quality, Product Engineering, and Program Management.

My first stint in China was from 2002 – 2005 as Interior Integration Director for Shanghai GM, employed by Ford/Visteon delivering interiors for the new Regal and Lacrosse vehicles. Once this assignment ran out I was repatriated back to US in 2005, but by then I had already fallen in love with China, where I met my current wife. When Visteon went bankrupt in 2008, I had a chance to go back to China with FCA so I took the Visteon buy out and jumped the proverbial "fast boat" back to China. I spent 10 years with FCA China as; Head of Interior System, 2008 - 2012, then switching to Head of Manufacturing B/C class vehicles, 2012 – 2017.5. I've had the pleasure of launching every FCA vehicle in China with the exception of Jeep Commander. I was very heavily involved in the launches of the Viaggio/Ottmo, Cherokee, Renegade, and Compass vehicles. By 2017 Expats were being sent home in droves, so I was sent back to S.E. and worked on the new Jeep Gladiator located in Toledo.

I spent a year in Michigan before China called again. We had an opportunity to move back to China so I retired from the big boys and was asked to join ABC Technologies as VP/Managing Director of their AP operations, and the rest is history.

No matter where I've been, what I've done, or who I've worked with, I've always felt well prepared from my experiences learned at LSSU. LSSU taught me many things, how to be a better student, how to work hard, and most important of all "how to work with people". I still remember some of my favorite professors, Keith Schwiderson, John Madl, Madan Saluja, Randy Sanderson, and Petra Kornmueller. I hope LSSU has these types of role models for the younger generations.

During my long journey I've had the pleasure of having two great daughters in my life, one 25 and one 6, yes I'm one of those ole fools who never gets enough. They say having kids keeps you young, I need to find out who this "they" person is and give him a piece of my mind. The first one is an MSU grad who is currently working for Vanguard as stock broker in Scottsdale, AZ. And the second, well she's in 1st grade and I get to do it all over again.