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27 Years of Service with Kim Sorensen

Kim Sorensen has achieved 27 years and 11 months of service at Americhem working her way up from QT Lab Technician to QT Lab Team Leader to her current role as Manufacturing Technical Support in Concord, NC. Kim was hired on July 19, 1993 after applying for an open position she saw in a newspaper ad. She had a Bachelor's Degree in Biology and had recently left medical school. Kim decided that medical school was not for her and wanted to gain lab experience, which is when she saw the opening at Americhem. After she got the job and started making close friends while enjoying her work, Kim knew it was the perfect fit that she had been searching for all along.

To celebrate Americhem's 80 year anniversary, Kim 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?

We had very basic equipment back then. Our entire manufacturing process has changed. Now we have spectrometers to measure the ideal color and FFC's (factory formula checks) to ensure accuracy and consistency. Today's operations are down to a science.

What were some of the biggest challenges back then?

Back then, we were actually producing our products in cube-like shapes. One of our biggest challenges was that our customers wanted a shape that would be easier for them to use. We did a lot of testing and "micro-ing" of products, which can get very messy when you get into smaller particle sizes. It did get us to our most common shape that we make today though: round pellets.

What changes have you seen in plastics?

The products are getting more technical with time and have more technology built into them. It's not just about getting the right color, but more on physical properties.



Picture 1: Kim Sorensen, 2021.

What have been the greatest developments in the field of plastics over the last 27 years?

The technology is built into the products now, which makes the customers' lives easier. They're able to run a more simplified version of production and enhance their overall product.

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

Opportunity has always been there. Being a woman, you often hear stories of glass ceilings, but I have never felt that at Americhem. I've always felt that if I did a good job, then I would succeed and be able to move up. Leadership is willing to learn about your career goals and help you achieve them through a strategic plan.

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

My only suggestion would be to increase cross-functional communication and contact. It's always nice to know people at other plant locations. If a project arises where you need to communicate with a different plant, you feel more comfortable reaching out to people you already know. I always liked the P&L meetings for that.

What are some of your fondest Americhem memories?

I've made a lot of friends working at both the Elgin and Concord plants. When I worked at the Elgin, IL plant, we would go outside after work and have cookouts. Tim Heiss was the plant manager then and when we would receive our safety rewards, we'd celebrate with steak cookouts with the team leaders. Right before Gary Dale's retirement from Concord, he bought the team a grill and we started doing cookouts at lunch like old times. It really brings everyone together as more than coworkers.

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

I think that overall company growth will be a major focus, but honing in on doing it effectively with new acquisitions. Sustainability is the future and especially in our industry, which means it is something that we have to look at when we are making growth plans and even when we are deciding on which companies to acquire next that can support that goal.

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

One of our production guys that will remain unnamed was emailing his wife a loving note, but mistakenly sent it from his work email and then mistakenly clicked the wrong email address for his wife. He didn't realize that he accidentally picked Roxanne's email address, our QT Leader. Their names started with the same letters so it was an easy mix-up. Roxanne was shocked when she

got the email, but had a hunch it was a mistake. We all had a good laugh about it and boy was his face red when he found out what happened! But, in the end, he even had a good laugh about it.



Picture 2: Kim (far right) on vacation with Americhem colleagues in St. Thomas in 2007.

Describe what Americhem means to you.

Since Americhem has been my career for the last 27 years, it has provided me with income, friends, job security to me and my family, and has set up my financial future. I was in my 20's when I first started at Americhem and didn't know anything about saving, but they encouraged me to utilize their 401k program. It has set me up over the years and I've built my whole life around it.

Thank you Kim 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.