

Anderson strives to motivate, manage, nurture

By Catherine Kavanaugh
Plastics News Staff

Daniel S. Anderson started his career in plastics in 1986 at a distributor for Asahi/America Inc., which was the exclusive importer of thermoplastic valves made by Asahi Yukizai Corp. in Japan.

He had accepted a customer service and warehousing job right after graduating from the University of Delaware, where he studied business administration and economics. Two years later, he was working for the manufacturer and on a path to become president and CEO of Lawrence, Mass.-based Asahi/America.

The wholly owned subsidiary sells plastic piping and fittings and does partial processing and assembly for the parent company, which has three divisions for valve and piping systems, resins and water treatment. The products are used for both fluid and air handling and solving problems related to corrosion and aggressive chemicals for mostly the semiconductor, water treatment, aquarium and mining industries.

The wide variety of applications has given Anderson, who performed almost every job in the sales and marketing department, an interesting 31-year career with Asahi/America.

“Each day would be different, as our diverse products provide solutions to virtually all industries,” Anderson said in an email. “One day I could be walking through a pharmaceutical facility, and the next day I could find myself in a steel mill or a brewery.”

Over the years, Anderson saw Asahi/America grow from a regionally focused firm to the largest importer of products from its parent company and then expand into industrial, environmental and high-purity piping systems.

When he stepped into the president and CEO role in January 2015, Anderson said job one was to set goals and communicate clear expectations.

“We’ve always been recognized as having one of the highest-quality product lines in thermoplastics, so my first key goal was to identify key areas of growth and expand on them,” Anderson said. “Asahi/America is listening to our customers and is bringing more value-added services to the supply chain.”

During his time with the company, Anderson said the best advice he received was a simple business philosophy about looking both ahead and back while dealing with day-to-day duties. He describes it like this:

“The present: Manage the current line of business at peak efficiency and profitability, without compromising quality and service. The past: Learn from the past and let go of old practices that are a drag on the business and do not add value to the company. The future: Be open-minded and convert breakthrough ideas into new products and businesses that



Asahi/America Inc. President and CEO Daniel S. Anderson joins the sales and development team — and a cutout of astronaut Buzz Aldrin — in a January meeting that launched the new year with a lunar theme. Asahi/America Inc. photo

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Daniel S. Anderson
Asahi/America Inc.

satisfy the customers’ needs.”

Anderson said his management style developed by observing how other people whom he has respected in the industry have motivated, managed and nurtured their employees.

“It’s always about the people,”

Anderson said.

He found out he had an affinity for sales and dealing with people as a teenager hawking old collectible items and gently used goods for money.

“During high school and college weekends, at 4 a.m. I would drive

the Ford family station wagon full of antiques and set up a tabletop at a rural flea market,” Anderson recalled. “I earned straight commission, so I had to sell. I learned a lot about buying signals at a young age.”

Now he’s the boss overseeing a subsidiary employing many young adults. He has some advice for his executive colleagues.

“All CEOs need to understand the new workforce; they are talented and likely to try different paths during their careers,” Anderson said. “Lifelong employees are extremely rare. I tell new hires that we’ll give them the best tools to succeed and advance their careers. When I

hear that an individual needs to move on, I take it as a compliment to our firm. We’ve given the employee the qualifications and skills that another company desires.”

For the employees who stay, Anderson said he is grateful to those who understand the changing dynamics of the global economy, believe in the theme “from concept to completion” and offer feedback.

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