

LAWRENCE CRAWFORD JR.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR // DIVERSITY VUTEQ



COMPANY

Diversity Vuteq

LOCATIONS

New Albany, MS - Headquarters

Provides injection plastic parts and glass assembly for the Corolla

Blue Springs, MS/On-Site Operation in Toyota Facility

Provides onsite picking for production line assembly

Princeton, IN/Near-Site Operation on Toyota Property

Provides injection plastic parts for Sienna and Highlander

TOYOTA RELATIONSHIP

Tier I Supplier to Toyota for 10 years.

CERTIFIED



HOW HAS "THE TOYOTA WAY" CHANGED OR IMPROVED YOUR BUSINESS OPERATIONS?

Utilizing the Toyota Way in our daily business practices has enhanced our reaction to the current market and environment in 2020. We must be able to operate optimally for the customer plus create business advantages for ourselves, so "How can we do this better?" is asked often during our meetings.

Our company operates in several regions, each with different levels of exposure to COVID-19. We addressed issues such as lack of PPE, childcare, and transportation in the first few days of the pandemic. Toyota's weekly online supplier meetings kept us informed about the status of the shutdown nationwide and advised us how to open safely when the time came.

As an MBE, we are dealing with the pandemic as well as assessing where we stand relative to social changes happening in this country. We support our team members by providing the PPE they need and being creative in how we social distance. But we also support those wanting change and talking with those having difficulties with the changes.

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON FOR YOUR COMPANY?

Diversity Vuteq will continue to support Toyota in every way we can as we continue working together on the Alabama project. We want to take the lessons we have learned and improve upon them. It will be hard work, but I have faith our company will be successful. These are trying times but we all must be humble and thankful for what we have. As we have seen in 2020 nothing is certain, and tomorrow is not promised.

AS THE SUCCESSOR TO YOUR COMPANY'S FOUNDER, WHAT STEPS HAVE YOU TAKEN/ARE YOU TAKING TO LEARN THE BUSINESS?

In the 10 years I've been with the company, the most important lesson I have learned is that I don't know everything. Each day offers opportunities to discover something new, whether it's a big idea or a small suggestion.

I spent three years in Japan working with Vuteq and Toyota at the Tsutsumi Plant. While there, I learned a lot about the industry and just as much about myself. I adapted and absorbed as much information as possible. In fact, when I got home, I could speak Japanese well enough to communicate at work and in social situations.

My Father was proud, but told me, "Now comes the hard part." Business ownership and maintaining the legacy isn't easy, but it's worth the effort. So, I put in long hours at the plant and attended countless meetings to understand more about the company's direction.

There are people who have dedicated their lives to see me and young men like me in positions that were considered impossible 75 years ago. I take seriously my responsibility to the past, present, and the future and will continue working to ensure success for Diversity Vuteq.

