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NEWS RELEASE

How to Build Tools That Change the Game

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If you asked Richard McKamie to describe his 25+ years at Visteon in a single sentence, he'd keep it simple: "I've always been encouraged to be creative."

That creative drive has defined Richard's journey—from Flint, Michigan, to software development for global automotive systems, and through a string of innovations that quietly transformed how Visteon teams analyze data, develop requirements, and solve real-world challenges.

A Return Home, and a New Beginning

After graduating from college, Richard began his career working for a defense contractor in Colorado. But when the Cold War ended and layoffs loomed, he made the choice to return home to Michigan to be closer to family and to chase new opportunities.

One such opportunity came through a friend who connected him with Ford. He applied, got the offer, and in 1994, started developing software for body modules – the start of what would become a long and inventive career with Visteon.

Tools That Make a Difference

What sets Richard apart is not just his technical acumen, but his passion for building tools that solve problems in elegant, often surprising ways.

One such tool was born out of a Pinewood Derby race. Frustrated with the lack of an efficient way to schedule and

run heats, Richard taught himself VBA (Visual Basic for Applications) and built an Excel-based race scheduler. The tool worked so well it was used for over a decade.

That side project sparked an idea at work: why not apply the same logic to systems engineering? Richard went on to create a tool that generates and reduces input combinations for system requirements – shrinking hundreds of possible test cases down to a handful of logical groupings. The result? A smarter, faster way to define system behavior… that's still in use today.

Turning Raw Data Into Clarity

Another standout project was born from Richard's time as an application engineer. "I didn't love reviewing raw CAN logs or viewing CAN Data in CanAlyzer," he admits. "So I built a program that could decode CAN signals into something readable in Excel."

His tool didn't simply translate data—it decoded CAN messages using DBC files, allowing engineers to see human-readable values like Run, Off, or Start instead of just hex or decimal output. Because the output is an Excel file, it also allows a user to easily quantify timing between different events in the CAN traffic. And for users not fluent in tools like CANalyzer? No problem. "Many users don't know or care how CANalyzer works. With this program, they don't have to."

A Compiler Dream Realized

One of Richard's crucial moments came in 2010 during a massive instrument cluster reflash operation. After struggling with limited tools and data, Visteon made a shift to the MyCanic system. But with no native software, they had to build their own.

That's when Richard's long-held dream came full circle. "In college, I wanted to write compilers," he says. So he proposed a custom programming language for reflash scripts—one that could record and diagnose every step. While he didn't write the software himself, Richard constructed the language and collaborated closely with engineers to bring it to life using classic tools like lex and YACC.

Advice for the Next Generation

Richard's advice for newcomers at Visteon?

"If you don't understand something, don't be shy, ask questions. And if you have a passion, pursue it, even if it's not part of your current job."

He recalls a fellow engineer whose goal was to switch from systems to electrical engineering. “He made it clear that was his goal. Eventually, he switched over, and returned years later as a Technical Fellow.”

The Core of Creativity

For Richard, Visteon has always been a place where curiosity is rewarded. Whether it's through weekend side projects or mission-critical tools, he’s shown how passion and persistence can turn “just an idea” into something that transforms how an entire team works.