

Our Longest Serving Customer Service Technical Representative.



For this issue of Connections we are interviewing Kim Glende our longest serving Customer Service Technical Representative. Kim works on a rotating basis out of our Burnsville, MN Corporate Office and the Montgomery, MN manufacturing plant. Her duties require her to juggle many items every day, from assisting customers with placing orders and tracking shipments to answering advanced technical questions and dealing with our engineers. We caught up to Kim during one of her typically hectic days and were able to get a few minutes of her time to ask some questions about her experiences.

How long have you been at MiTek Builder Products?

It will be 25 years in May 2016. I was originally hired for the packaging department in the Montgomery, MN plant, after my first month I was recruited into Customer Service Department.

Tell us how you found the position at MBP? Did you have extensive building products experience?

I did not have any experience in building products, like most people I had given little thought on how buildings were constructed. I had decided to move back to my home town of Montgomery, MN as I enjoyed living there growing up and wanted to raise my family in a small town atmosphere. MBP was one of the largest employers in the area and I applied for a job. I had previously worked as a cosmetologist for six years. When they were looking for Customer Service Representatives they thought my background in dealing with customers in my previous employment would be helpful.

What do you find is the most challenging aspects of your position within Customer Service at MBP?

The rush shipments can always be a challenge, especially late in the day as you try to coordinate if the items are available, if we have someone available to pull the order and if freight lines have not already arrived. The number of new products is also a challenge with remembering technical and product information as we have expanded our product lines.

You are a technical representative, how long did it take you to become comfortable with handling technical issues at USP?

Probably at least two years to become familiar with our many products, detailed drawings and understanding the manufacturing process. Of course as I discussed earlier we did not have the extensive product line that we do now, fortunately we are able to learn about these as they are introduced.

What is your most common technical question that you receive from customers?

Probably the most common is a beam size that the customer needs to specify a hanger for a job. This requires us to ask a series of questions to help find the best solution for that specific application. This can be a challenge for our customers as there is a high number of variables so I am always happy to assist them in helping meet their customer needs.

Since you have been with USP for close to 25 years, what are some of the biggest changes that you have experienced?

I have many items, we have gone from a 55 page catalog to our latest that is 234 pages, so the scope of products has grown tremendously. At the time we had 5 people in Customer Service versus the 18 currently. We had three locations in 1991 and with the upcoming expansion to Indianapolis we will have a total of nine locations. The product mix has changed as we had somewhat unrelated items like Gazebo Kits, Tow & Stow trailers and a few other items that seem strange by today's standards. Of course computers have gone from having a "dumb" terminal hooked up to the mainframe computer to the laptops of today. In more recent years the expansion of our inventory levels and upgraded software have enabled better service levels and tracking of important items.

What do you do outside of your work for fun?

I love to camp, it is a mini-weekend vacation to spend outdoors with my extended family and friends. We will travel to southern Minnesota to get away from the city and enjoy the peace and quiet in the woods. We will use these opportunities to "tube" down a river or fish.