



Alicia Boler-Davis

GM Appoints Boler-Davis Senior VP, Global Quality

GM CEO Dan Akerson took the time to announce at a special celebration the appointment of Alicia Boler-Davis to senior vice president, Global Quality and Global Customer Experience.

The announcement was made during an employee gathering at the Tech Center in Warren June 26 to mark the high grades given to GM quality by a J.D. Power owner survey.

The new post extends Boler-Davis's customer experience role from a U.S. position to oversee the rest of the world where GM does business.

The expansion of her responsibilities to include the global customer experience, said Akerson, continues GM's efforts to transform itself into a customer-centric organization committed to providing the best overall customer experience in the automotive industry.

In her new role, effective July 1, Boler-Davis reports to Akerson. She will also be a member of GM's Executive Operations Committee.

"Alicia Boler-Davis is a proven leader whose diverse experiences in manufacturing, product development and customer experience give her a unique insight into customer expectations," said Akerson. "She will lead a companywide, global approach to infusing the voice of the customer into everything we do."

GM has several initiatives under way to improve the overall customer experience, said Akerson:

- Most substantial dealer renovation in GM's history;
- GM call centers transformed into Customer Engagement Centers, staffed with expert advisors who are proactive and empowered to resolve most issues on the spot;
- Connected Customer Specialists located across the coun-

try to interact with dealers and customers on their needs and terms – Cadillac CUE, Chevy MyLink and Buick and GMC IntelliLink.

Before being named vice president, Global Quality and U.S. Customer Experience, Boler-Davis was plant manager of the Orion Assembly and Pontiac Stamping plants in Michigan.

She joined GM in 1994 and has served in various engineering and manufacturing leadership positions, including vehicle line director/vehicle chief engineer, small car; plant manager for Lansing's Consolidated Operations and Arlington Assembly.

She earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Northwestern University and a master's degree in engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

New \$4.6 Million Marriott Proposed

Auburn Hills Director of Community Development Steve Cohen reports that a new three-story, 80-room Marriott TownePlace Suites Hotel has been proposed to be constructed near Great Lakes Crossing Outlets, just south of the former Borders Bookstore.

The total investment is estimated at \$4.6 million. Cohen notes this will be owner/developer Basil Bacall's third hotel adjacent to the Great Lakes Crossing Outlets. He built the Hampton Inn in 2011 and the Holiday Inn Express in 2007, which are both located to the north of this site along the Mall's ring road near I-75.

The facility will offer a full kitchen in each room, complimentary breakfast and an on-site fitness center. It will feature studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units.

Quality Victory in Hand, GM Executives Praise Employees for Their Handiwork

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only manufacturer to score below 100 defects per 100 vehicles in the survey. GM had eight vehicles finish in the number one slot in their categories. And fully 50 percent of GM's vehicles finished in the top three in their categories.

She said the workers of CAW Local 222 deserve credit because their plant – Oshawa in Ontario, Canada – makes the Impala and the Equinox. The Impala took first in its category and the Equinox finished among the top three in its category.

"Special congratulations go to all team members within all of our plants," said Boler-Davis. "Clearly, we're making good progress building quality into our manufacturing.

"But let's remember that quality is a team sport that requires the commitment and engagement of the entire enterprise. It's about understanding our customers – how we design, engineer and manufacture our vehicles . . . and the experience our customers have with our dealer partners during and after the sale."

In the past, Boler-Davis said, people might complain about something in a vehicle if it broke down, but today's customers are more demanding and they will complain about something if it doesn't look right, feel right or operate the way the customer wants it to operate.

"I cannot stress enough how important customer retention and loyalty are to achieving our long-term business goals," Boler-Davis said. "That's why we need to continue listening to our customers and anticipating their wants and needs well before we build any new vehicle.

"Long gone are the days where we could launch a vehicle with problems and plan to fix them later. Today, we need the first car off the line to be as good as the last.

"A great example is the Buick Encore, which is one of our eight segment winners in its launch year. Now, that is what we need to achieve with every new vehicle we introduce."

And Boler-Davis said Scherzer was right when he talked about not resting on last year's success. GM must sell to its customers every day and every year.

She wants the June 26 celebration to become an annual event at GM.

David Sargent, vice president, Global Automotive at J.D. Power, said he's not surprised by the survey results.

"It's important to remember that this quality just didn't happen last Tuesday," Sargent said. "In 2010, I spent a lot of time talking to the media, answering the question why the government should let GM and Chrysler survive when their vehicle quality was so poor. I said that's a perception that isn't accurate. I want to say thanks for making me right."

Sargent said that in the last couple of weeks he's been getting a similar question. When did GM get so good?

"I told those same reporters, 'Don't you remember our conversations from a couple of years ago?'" Sargent said. "This kind of quality just doesn't happen one Tuesday. This is the result of years of hard work by a lot of people. The survey results are no surprise to those of us who have been following what GM's been doing."

And, he said, J.D. Power surveyed drivers and they were the ones who liked what GM did. The products, said Sargent, were actually built for people and not for engineers.

But achieving quality is only half the battle, he said – changing people's perception is also very important. He said if someone were to ask 100 "civilians" away from Detroit who had better quality cars, GM or Toyota, 90 people out of 100 would probably say Toyota.

And repeating next year will be difficult, Sargent said. GM will have a number of launches in the next few months. Many of the GM vehicles that placed high in the survey results were at the end of their life cycles, he pointed out, adding that Ford's survey results show that launching a new product has its own difficulties. He said he fully expects Ford to be strong next year.

And Toyota is working hard to get back on top, Sargent said, adding that he was amazed at how quickly it turned itself around after its recent accelerator problems. But, he said, that's because Toyota has a lot of brand equity and they built on that.

But GM is doing the right things and he said he expects they will continue to stay on course.

Akerson said he was glad the press was at the celebration.

"Sometimes it's nice to report good news for a change," he said. "More than anything else, I'm glad to have this chance to speak directly to all of you about quality. Whether you work in design, product development or on the factory floor, it's the decisions you make every day that either satisfy customers or convince them to shop somewhere else. It's that simple.

"And by working together, you have achieved something that's never been done by GM in the 27-year history of the J.D. Power Initial Quality Study. Congratulations."

He said that what has happened during the last four tumultuous years make what has been done that much more impressive.

"This recognition from J.D. Power confirms that when we put our minds, our hearts and our resources into a goal, we can achieve great things," Akerson said.

"This is a tremendous honor that we should all be proud of. We earned this because we satisfied our customers, and that's a terrific feeling.

"We will take a few minutes to celebrate, but then we have to get back to business and keep improving. The truth is, this honor will mean very little if we do not build on it.

"It's hard getting to the top. And as we all know, it's even harder to stay there."


Akerson said that GM has a ways to go, many miles to walk, but those who have worked so hard should take a few minutes to appreciate what they have done.

"The last thoughts I'll leave you with are these," Akerson said. "Remember how good it feels to win."

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