



CEO Spotlight: Stoneridge's Jon DeGaynor

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Jon DeGaynor is the president and chief executive officer of Stoneridge. MICHauto spoke with **DeGaynor** about his priorities and passions as an automotive executive.



What is your number one priority as CEO?

As a CEO, it is important to establish a clear vision for the company and communicate that vision to all stakeholders, including employees, customers, and shareholders. It's a priority for me to develop a strong team – one that is not only capable of executing that vision, but also creatively enhancing the vision as the company moves forward.

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about creating something new. I love to find value and opportunities that others may have overlooked. One way I do this is by building teams, then winning through those teams. It is talent that wins, and it is incredibly satisfying to pull together a talented group of diverse individuals who work collaboratively to solve problems and excel.

Who do you look up to for inspiration or mentorship?

I have been blessed with many mentors over the years. I look for those who demonstrate experience and capability-based perspectives that make me consider something new. I connect with mentors who provide me with both a sounding board and discernment as I consider a direction or an idea.

What would you tell young professionals about our automotive industry to keep them in Michigan?

I have been able to live all over the world and work in different industries. The automotive industry is one of the greatest industries because it is global, technical, fast-moving, and challenging. The technology is advanced, the margins constantly challenged, and the competition very capable. Therefore, if you can sustainably win in this business, you know that you have done it with capability not luck.

What are you grateful for?

I am grateful for parents who invested in me and my education. They trusted me at an early age with responsibility in the family business, which helped set my passion for business and leadership. I am grateful for my supportive wife and children. Leadership roles can be challenging, and I would not be where I am as a CEO without the support of my family.

What advice do you have for the next generation?

I love this question because I am energized by the next generation. Take risks! See various roles, geographies, and challenges early to build an experience base to refer to in the future. Do not follow the “herd.” Work is hard, so find things that interest you and that you can feel passionate about. That will fuel you on the tough days.

What is your essential TV series, hobby, or book?

I race cars. I love the challenge. Racing is like running a business – you must have a great team, you must prepare thoroughly, and you must think two to three steps ahead. Racing humbles you and requires total focus. I am competitive and racing feeds that competitive “need.”

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