

Innovation: The Connective Thread at Toyota

August 07, 2019

Image not found or type unknown



In 1891, in what is now Kosai City, Shizuoka Prefecture, Sakichi Toyoda stood in front of an impressive, if not intimidating, wooden structure. At just 24, Toyoda had received his first patent for the [wooden hand loom](#) — a device that could be used with one hand instead of two, increasing efficiency by upwards of 50 percent.

At the time, Toyoda didn't know that his patent would be the first in a long line of innovations, spanning well over the course of a century. He simply understood the power of innovation and how it can connect people by improving the very fabric of their lives.

Nobody understands that better than Steve Basra, executive vice president of Toyota Connected and vice president of Connected Technologies, Toyota Motor North America.

"Our goal here at Toyota Connected is to enhance mobility, to make people's lives better when they drive vehicles," says Basra. "It's about improving society."

Threading Technologies

Basra, who heads up numerous initiatives from vehicle connectivity to shared mobility, wants to make movement safer and more convenient. His goal is to use new forms of technology to transform the customer experience by creating seamless environments, autonomy for groups who currently depend on others and allowing for exploration on a larger scale.

"We know there's a lot of technology out there, but how does that technology help the consumer?

Well, consider your morning commute. Using integrated sensors and analytics to connect different technologies, your vehicle could anticipate your behavior and needs. Let's say there's traffic on your route and you're going to be late for a meeting. Your car could send a note to the meeting organizer then dial you into a voice conference if needed.

"These are just examples of the many predictive and contextual solutions that we are building to create customer value," says Basra.

Connecting People

Indeed, innovation stands on the shoulder of giants. With each new feature, and with every service added to our offerings, we aim to deliver in the pursuit of improving mobility. By bringing together a suite of technologies, data, and talent, Toyota is capturing lightning in a bottle — one idea at a time.

"How do you take something, and how do you make it better?" asks Basra. "Technology to me is having those sparks of ideas.