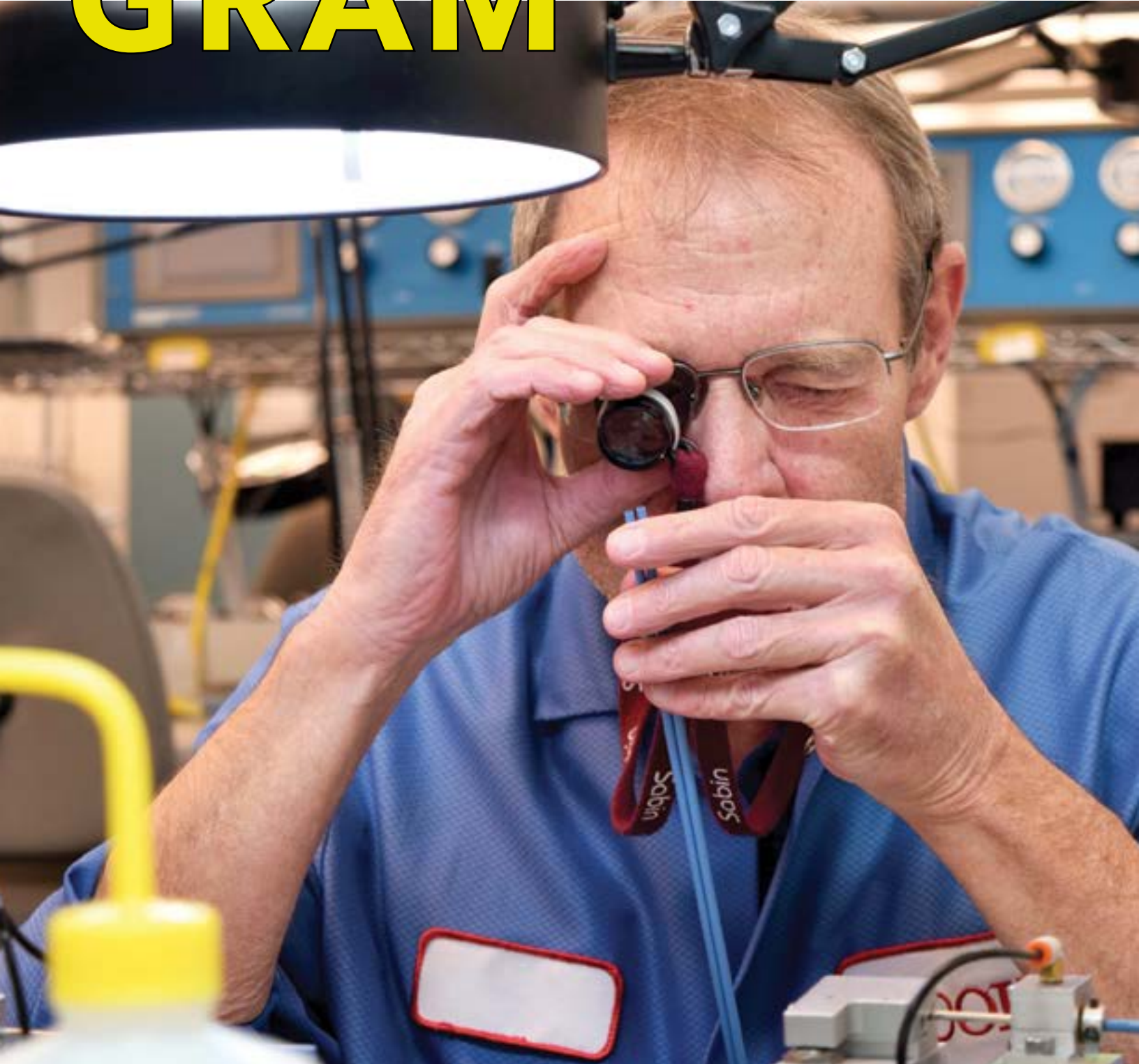


ANGIO GRAM

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► **Mark Sink** inspects a product at Cook Polymer Technology in Bloomington. Photo by **Ally Stanfield** (Alexandria.Stanfield@CookMedical.com). Ally is an Editorial Content specialist for Corporate Marketing & Communications at Park 48.

Our mission

We invent, manufacture, and deliver a unique portfolio of medical devices to the healthcare systems of the world. Serving patients is a privilege, and we demand the highest standards of quality, ethics, and service in all that we do.

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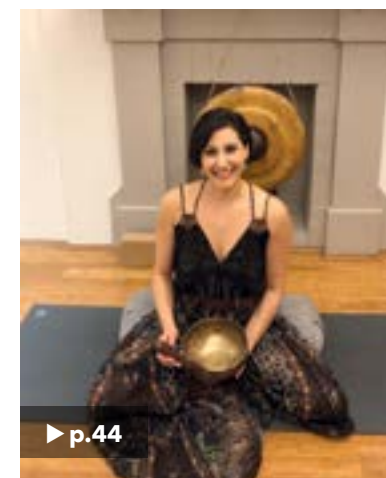
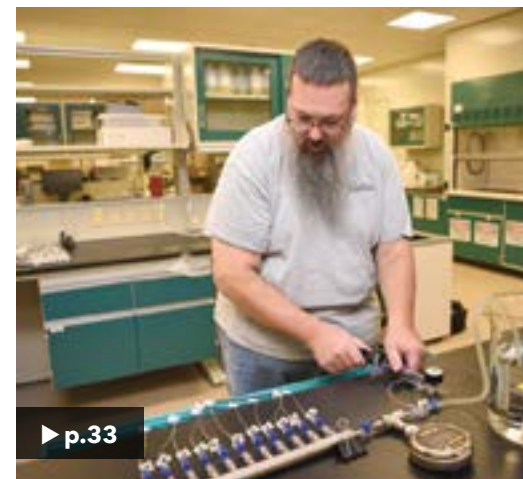
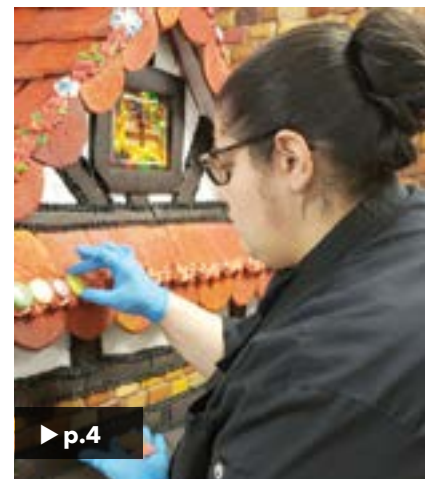
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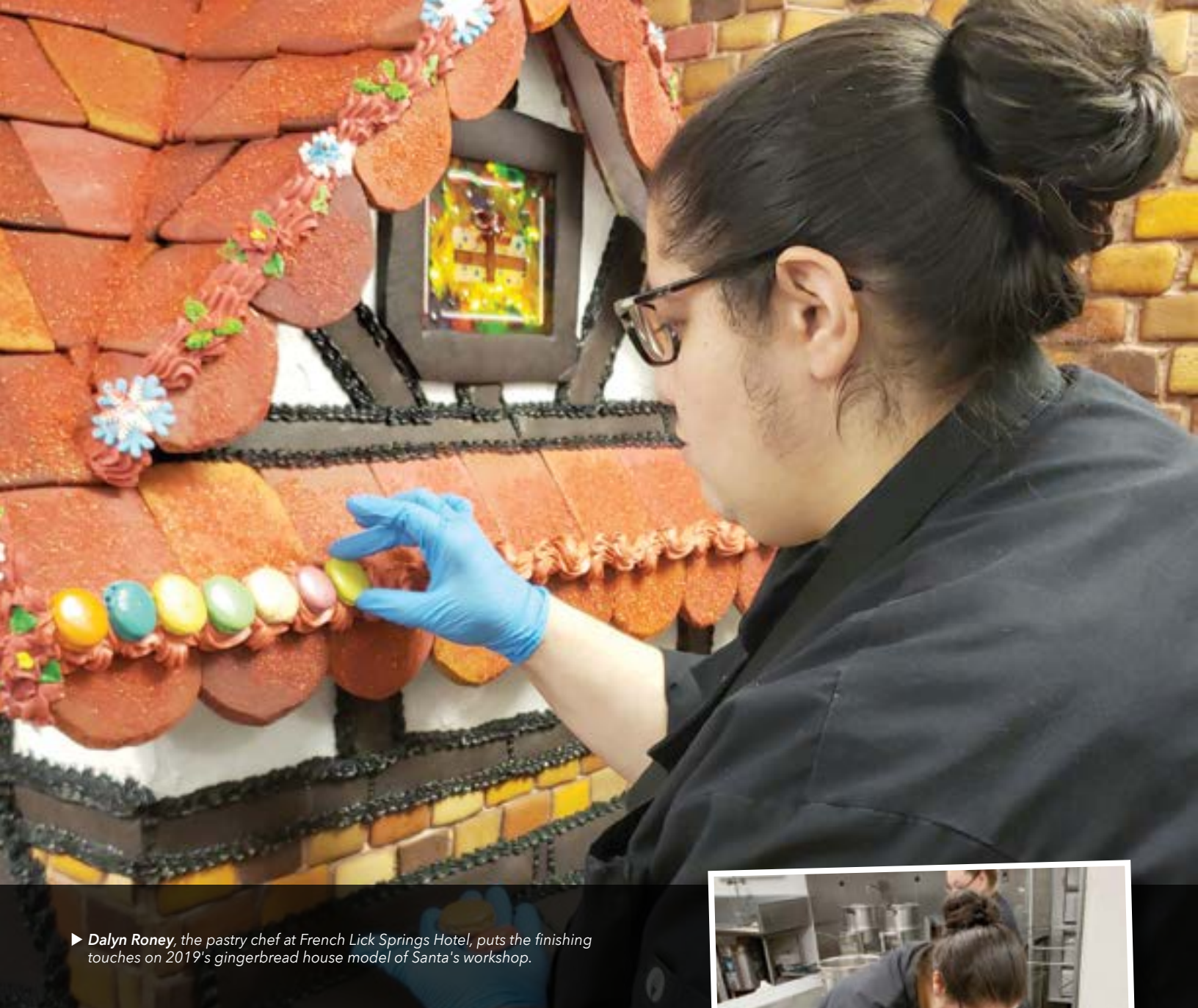
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How are we doing? We want to hear from you!

What are your favorite parts of the *Angiogram*? What would you like to see more of? Send your comments and suggestions to Angiogram@CookMedical.com.



► Dalyn Roney, the pastry chef at French Lick Springs Hotel, puts the finishing touches on 2019's gingerbread house model of Santa's workshop.



Bringing the wow factor

Dalyn Roney and her crew create a sense of holiday wonderment at French Lick Springs Hotel



▲ Santa's workshop on display at the French Lick Springs Hotel.

When the grand gingerbread house is unveiled at French Lick Springs Hotel during the start of every holiday season in November, chances are Dalyn Roney hasn't slept that day. If she hasn't pulled an all-nighter, chances are she's clocked 16-, 17-, even 18-hour days for a few days on end.

"But that's why I'm here. I'm here to be pushed," said Dalyn, the pastry chef at Cook-owned French Lick Springs Hotel.

Nothing will push you quite like concocting a 600-pound gingerbread house within six weeks –and keep in mind, it's essentially an extra-credit project on top of the regular business heaped upon the hotel's bakery department during an already-hectic season. Despite all this, Dalyn and her staff make time for a holiday tradition that's become a guest favorite.

Every year, they get a completely new theme. Past themes have included a Tudor-style gingerbread house and a scale replica of the French Lick Springs Hotel. In 2019, it was Santa's workshop. Made from the 187 pounds of flour, 165 pounds of sugar, molasses, honey,

and spices, and 150 pounds of icing, everything but the electric lighting is 100% edible.

And shortcuts? You won't find any.

In 2018, Dalyn counted all 264 windows on the actual French Lick Springs Hotel exterior and ensured the gingerbread hotel replica had all 264 as well.

"It makes you appreciate our window washers here," Dalyn said with a laugh.

On 2019's gingerbread house, one window alone took Dalyn six hours to create through a painstaking process of pouring and re-pouring melted colored sugar to create a stained-glass effect. The resort's Audio Visual team even got involved, adding animated projections onto windows of the house to create an illusion of Santa and his elves working inside.

It's those kind of touches that have consistently earned French Lick Springs Hotel high marks on Historic Hotels of America's list of top 25 gingerbread displays. In 2018, the gingerbread hotel replica earned the No. 4 ranking. The acknowledgment is nice, but it's a different

type of recognition that motivates Dalyn while she's creating one of the largest gingerbread houses in the Midwest.

"What I would want to be recognized for is that other people in the industry would want to have their events here or want to come work here or suggest to their family member to come do an internship here," Dalyn said.

Or maybe a wedding? That's a business segment that's blossoming at French Lick. Dalyn remembers the days when she only made a few wedding cakes per year for the weddings on property. Now, there's one practically every weekend during prime wedding season. Dalyn pointed out that practicing decorative elements for the gingerbread house pays dividends later when the bakery staff is decorating wedding cakes or applying creative embellishments on desserts for resort guests.

The wow factor is always in season, especially when it's gingerbread time for Dalyn and her crew.

"When you're able to make art out of something edible, it's a very visceral, passionate way to connect with other people, and that's what the purpose of the gingerbread house is. It evokes emotions of doing these types of things as a child, or family traditions," Dalyn said. "It really captures that sense of wonderment that we want to showcase as a resort. Seventy percent of our leisure guests come because of the amenities that we offer. People are coming here for just a really unique experience, and the ability for us in French Lick, Indiana, to be able to put something like this on, is something that I'm so proud of."

• **Brendan Perkins** (bperkins@frenchlick.com) is a copy writer at French Lick Resort.

A competitive gamer

Drew Saddle mire takes his passion for Call of Duty to a new level

Growing up, **Drew Saddle mire**, a stock associate at the AMER Distribution Center in Bloomington, played a lot of video games. He was always on the computer or had a game controller in his hand. It all started when he was six years old with a PlayStation 2 and *ATV Offroad Fury 2*, a four-wheeler racing game. Several years later he was introduced to Call of Duty (COD), a series of first-person shooter videogames. He started with *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* on the Nintendo Wii.

"It was pretty terrible, but I just loved playing it," Drew said. "It was a blast."

Taking it to the next level

In the beginning, playing COD was a way for Drew to destress with friends after school. Over the years it has evolved into much more. Today, Drew plays COD competitively with a team called Recon 5 Solar.

"Anybody can go out, buy the game, and pop it in and play, but more recently, games are coming out with competitive play lists so players of higher skill can be matched with people of their skill level for a greater challenge within the game," Drew explained.

Some players take it to the next level and create a team.

"To me, what defines a good COD team is the communication of the players, and their ability to think on the fly and utilize teamwork as much as possible," Drew said.

These teams consist of five players, all tailored to a specific role within the game. For example, Drew is in a long-range support role for his current team.

"Playing the long-range role forced me to slow down my pacing, and that really helped me grow as a player because it gave me more time to think about what I could do next or predict what I think my opponent might do next, which is a huge part of the game," said Drew.

Once formed, these teams can attend e-sports events (organized, multiplayer video game tournaments) and compete for cash prizes or even sponsorships. Drew explained that there are two types of



▲ **Drew Saddle mire**



▲ **Drew** (second from right) and the Recon 5 Solar team.

these events, local and Challengers. Local events are organized by people who use their own money to put together a tournament for local teams to come in and play. He said these events are generally cheaper to compete in and the competition isn't as great as it is in the Challengers. The Challengers are put on by the COD League.

Finding a sponsor

After attending a few of these e-sports tournaments, Drew and his teammates recognized the need for an organization to back them. Drew and his team joined Recon 5 under the name Solar at the beginning of 2019. Recon 5 is a privately owned company that sponsors teams that play competitive games, including COD, *League of Legends*, and *Counter Strike: Global Offensive*. They met Recon 5 through another teammate that later joined their group.

"We were just going into these things blind, we didn't have jerseys, nobody knew who we were. We wanted a name to represent," said Drew.

Communication is key

To prepare for events, Drew and his teammates look for scrimmage games online to practice through

"To me, what defines a good COD team is the communication of the players, and their ability to think on the fly and utilize teamwork as much as possible."

– **Drew Saddle mire**,
Stock Associate at AMER DC

repetition. According to Drew, it all comes down to how well a team can communicate with each other.

"When it comes down to it, the best teams can think on the fly and do the most with the least," Drew said. "As far as actual practice, there are really not actual drills that you will do. You will talk things over and do a little bit of run through, but there are no layup drills or pitching drills. We don't do anything like that compared to other competitive sports."

Drew's current team is spread all over the map, but they still find time to practice with each other online. Drew spends anywhere from 18-24 hours a week playing COD, not counting the time spent over

weekends. This is in addition to the shifts he works at AMER DC. His shift ends around 7:30 pm and he is usually online and ready to practice by 9:00 pm. He then spends several hours practicing.

According to Drew, he is able to balance his team duties and his work with Cook with no problem. The imbalance comes with his sleep schedule.

"It can be tough from time to time because it is just killing everyone that we can't get something right, and we might stay up just a little longer perfecting it, and that can cut into your sleep schedule a little bit," he said.

During the off-season, Drew continues to play video games, but steers away from COD. Instead, he enjoys playing the Grand Theft Auto 5 with friends in his downtime.

"I still enjoy playing COD casually, but I've played so much that it's not as enjoyable to play as it once was to me," Drew said. "For that reason, I'll play other games such as Grand Theft Auto 5 with friends to switch things up."

• **Makayla Hughes** was the Editorial Content intern last summer. **Ashley McGuire** (Ashley.Mcguire@CookMedical.com) is an Editorial Content Generalist at Park 48.



▲ **Drew** reimagined as a video game character. Illustration done by **Tiffini Upchurch**, a stock associate at AMER DC.



For the love of movies

Ian Novak uses YouTube and podcasting to share his passion for film

► Ian poses with just some of the many movies in his collection.

Ian Novak and I met about 10 minutes earlier. Now he is sitting across from me at the table in my office at Park 48. He is wearing a black, short sleeve t-shirt for a heavy metal band called Rivers of Nihil. His head is shaved bald except for a shortly cropped black mohawk that runs down the center of his skull. On his exposed forearms I can see several elaborate tattoos—including a rather intimidating one of a knife with the words “gallo loco” above it.

He speaks quickly, excitedly—his voice veering from a low rumble to a higher register which Ian uses almost exclusively to punctuate disbelief or self-deprecation. He’s riled up—but in a good way—as he expounds on one of his favorite topics—Disney movies.

“The last video I uploaded to YouTube was about the new *Lion King* and I was not really nice to it,” he says, then continues prophetically, “Disney will basically be our currency someday.”

I think I understand what he means.

Since July of 2017, Ian, who works in the Packaging Prep area at Park 48, has been sharing his opinions on movies in a series of, first, YouTube videos, and now on his Crazy Poultry Ink Podcast.

Finding his voice

A lifelong movie fanatic, who goes to see almost every movie that makes its way to the theaters, Ian has always loved talking about cinema. The decision to start posting his opinions online was driven by his desire to engage even more people in movie discussions.

“I am always open to another interpretation and how someone else sees a movie,” Ian said. “I’m not going to say, ‘That’s a stupid opinion, go away.’ Even if it’s something that I hated, I am going to hear them out.”

Despite never having done any sort of recording before, he went all in, buying a camera, tripod, and microphone. He picked up some pointers from YouTube and then

About Ian Novak

A lifelong Bloomingtonian, Ian studied culinary arts at the Hoosier Hills Career Center while in high school. After graduating, he spent years working in restaurant kitchens.

He comes from a cooking family. His mother and father actually met while working at Noble Roman’s, a pizza chain that was founded in Bloomington in the late ‘60s.

“The family joke is that we don’t have blood, we have marinara in our veins,” Ian said.

The origin of his knife and “gallo loco” tattoo can be traced back to the time he spent working in kitchens. At that point, his mohawk was dyed red so some of his co-workers started calling him “crazy rooster.” Then his Hispanic co-workers translated it into Spanish. Ian decided to embrace the nickname, eventually getting it tattooed on his arm along with the image of the chef’s knife.

After seven years of working in a restaurant, Ian was starting to feel the need for a change. After learning he would be without work for a month while the restaurant relocated, Ian followed some friends’ advice and started applying for jobs at Cook. He was hired in the fall of 2018.



▲ Above: Ian’s recording setup for his Crazy Poultry Ink Podcast. Right: The logo for Crazy Poultry Ink.

“I am always open to another interpretation and how someone else sees a movie. I’m not going to say, ‘That’s a stupid opinion, go away.’ Even if it’s something that I hated, I am going to hear them out.”

– Ian Novak, Packaging Prep at Park 48



sat down to make his first recording after seeing *The Emoji Movie*—which he saw literally by himself: he was the only person in theater.

The first video was made as soon as he got home from the movie. It’s a tad under eight minutes long, and it’s just him sitting in his room in front of a Batman movie poster. The picture quality is definitely more along the lines of what you would see on cable access back in the ‘80s and early ‘90s. Part of the reason for that is because Ian was so unfamiliar with the equipment that he accidentally hit a 3D effect button.

He added titles and credits to the beginning using an editing program he downloaded from the internet. As seen in the opening, he originally intended to call the series “Cinema Club.” But found out that name had already been taken. That set off an exhaustive search for an original name—a search that ended with the decision to go with “Crazy Poultry Ink”—a nod to his knife and “gallo loco” tattoo (see the sidebar above for the story behind that).

His approach was simple.

“I just got back from the theater and I was like ‘What was that?’ for eight minutes,” Ian said.

Over the next two years, he went on to make over 40 other videos (with ever-improving production values) in which he reviewed movies, video games, and even odd foods (e.g., Cherry Cola Oreos). Sometimes he was alone, sometimes he was joined by friends. The format and length varied widely, depending on the subject matter. He promoted it using his social media accounts.

During this time, he also became involved in podcasting. First, he appeared on a friend’s National Football League (NFL) podcast. As his interest in the sport waned, he decided to start his own podcast—the Crazy Poultry Ink Podcast.

Continued on next page

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"I am way more into movies," Ian said. "It is a whole year thing—instead of just a season."

Using a couple of different platforms, he has put out close to 40 episodes so far. Again, like the videos, the length and format vary—but that's by design.

"I feel like I have to try to keep changing up stuff to stay relevant," Ian said.

And the goal is still to engage people in conversations about movies—and to provide a safe space for doing so.

"I want to interact and I want people to not be afraid to voice their opinions; it's not going to offend me in any way," he said. "I'm not always going to agree with it. But I always felt like people were telling me I was stupid and lame for liking stuff—and I didn't want to be like that to other people."

Ian is using the internet to attempt to connect with people who share his passion. It's a channel—and an opportunity—that wasn't available 20 years ago.

"I am a terrible writer, I am much more of a vocal person," Ian said. "This is just a fun way to get something out to the public. I would actually like to have a career with this."

"But as long as I can gather around my friends and do this, I'll be happy and fine."

• **Jon Hancuff** (*Jon.Hancuff@CookMedical.com*) is the manager for Global Editorial Content at Park 48.

Ian's take



We asked Ian to weigh in on his top five favorite movies. Check out his picks below.

Empire Strikes Back

Star Wars is the film saga that made me feel what film can do as an art form. Empire is the best of them all when it comes to storytelling, acting, effects, themes, and the biggest twist!

Mad Max Fury Road

A non-stop action thrill ride, with some of the best non-verbal storytelling, amazing stunts, and great acting.

Big Lebowski

Maybe my most watched comedy EVER. It's full of one liners and quotes that I still use to this day, while showing life can throw curve balls out of nowhere.

Get Out

This horror film not only has a clear underlining message about racism in America, it is also very well-acted, terrifying, and makes you think about every little detail.

Pulp Fiction

Made by one of my all-time favorite directors, **Quentin Tarantino**. This movie has inspired me as a possible filmmaker as far as how the medium can be played with and it is insanely quotable.



► Gary Piazza, sales specialist for K-Tube, at work in his home office.

More than one way to tell a story

Gary Piazza pursues his love for storytelling through film, writing, and photography

There are more ways than one to tell a story. Gary Piazza, a sales specialist for K-Tube, can attest to that. While Gary's 30-year career at K-Tube has taken him around the world, his storytelling hobby has taken him on inspiring journeys as well—real and imaginary.

Gary's family had a significant influence on his love for the written word. As a child he was captivated by "The Cat, the Rat, and the Chartreuse Horse," a children's book written by his grandmother, who was a publisher and editor.

"My daughter read the book, and she is now writing and illustrating her own comic book at the age of ten. Writing runs in the family," said Gary. "My great grandmother wrote poetry. Both of my grandmothers have been inspirations to me."

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In the '80s, you would have found Gary on the newspaper staff of his high school, creating his niche in journalism and photography and discovering a creative outlet in music video filming and script writing.

"I was producing music videos at the age of 17. Nobody was writing scripts for music videos back then, but I loved to write, and it just fit. My love for film-making began during those years," said Gary.

After high school, Gary joined the Navy and served for six years. When he left the Navy, a friend referred him to K-Tube, and he was brought on as the company's sole quality control inspector. His dream of writing persisted, and it led him to the Hollywood Script Writing Institute where he learned the nuances of script writing while he continued his career at K-Tube.

Screenwriting debut

Although he had written a few features beforehand, Gary's most significant inspiration was sparked by lunchtime conversations among his Vietnamese colleagues in the cafeteria at K-Tube. Many of them had moving stories of coming to America. He decided it was a story that needed to be told. He titled the script, "Breakaway Heart."

"My Vietnamese colleagues are more than coworkers now," said Gary. "They are family to me. They are great friends with whom I have a close relationship and a huge amount of respect."

According to Gary, "Breakaway Heart" is the story of their journey, told through the eyes of a fictional protagonist in her lifelong pursuit of her father and a new life. The story describes how she escapes Vietnam, barely survives while on a boat in the South China Sea, witnesses life and death in a refugee camp, and experiences the uncertainty of living with a host family in the US.

The final script took years for Gary to polish. He wrote the first draft in two months and rewrote it completely a few years later.

Gary wanted to showcase as much of the refugee experience as possible. His first draft was nearly 300 pages. A standard screenplay should only be 90 to 120 pages (or a minute of screen time per page).

"I did a lot of editing and rewriting to get it where it is today, and if I had the money, I'd make the film myself," Gary explained.

As Gary worked to publish his screenplay with the dream of his script making it to the big screen, he discovered an audience who enjoys reading scripts in book form.

"Breakaway Heart" was a winning script at the Moondance International Film Festival, the Hollywood Blvd Film Festival, and the Los Angeles International Underground Film Festival, among others during 2017-2018. In 2019, it was a finalist at the Scriptapalooza competition.

The story of Starvation Ridge

Gary's storytelling hobby took a new twist when he made a documentary and published it on YouTube. The film was about his journey as part of a team participating in a 24-hour dirt bike race on a track called Starvation Ridge in Centerville, Washington. He has been an off-road racing enthusiast for more than 40 years.



▲ The cover for Gary's screenplay, Breakaway Heart.

"As a writer, there are times when you have to hunt for the words for the next page and times when you need to dig deep. It's not always easy to find the time to write when you are working full-time."

– Gary Piazza, sales specialist for K-Tube



► Among his many hobbies, Gary is also an off-road racing enthusiast.

"I like the sport because it offers not only the physical aspects, but the pure freedom of being one with the bike in the outdoors," Gary said.

One day, Gary's dad brought a bike home, and he started racing a couple of weeks later. He earned his first trophy at age 11. His sister was also hooked soon after. She participated on the team during the Starvation Ridge race.

Gary calls the documentary, "Pinning the Ridge." He wrote the script and filmed the race himself using a single camera for interviews, B-roll footage from racers, and a GoPro camera for the helmet cam footage while riding. His goal was to convey the perseverance and determination of his team, the courage of an ironman rider that rode solo through the race, and the history of the track and its owners.

"From an endurance standpoint, it's important to condition your muscles for the long ride. Each lap around the track is 20-plus miles of bumps, rocks, dust, mud, and ruts. You're doing this relay for 24 hours straight with very little sleep along the way," he said.

Capturing imagery from around the world

Another favorite pastime of Gary's is photography. An amateur travel photographer, he takes photos on his own time while traveling for business or during vacations and portrays a visual account of his travels in an annual calendar. Scenic photos of varied destinations like Costa Rica, Amsterdam, Boston, and Louisiana grace the full-color pages of the calendar.

"Photography, film making, and writing are things I love to do. I don't do it for fame or fortune. As a writer, there are times when you have to hunt for the words for the next page and times when you need to dig deep. It's not always easy to find the time to write when you are working full time," said Gary.

Yet, he finds time when his kids are in bed and the house is quiet. He'll be up late tapping at the keyboard writing the next chapter. When he has the time, he's writing or he's taking photos on the road or planning the next documentary project.

"I have a lot of irons in the fire, but it's very rewarding to create this type of content," he added.

• Teresa Nicodemus (Teresa.Nicodemus@CookMedical.com) is a written content specialist for Corporate Marketing & Communications Park 48.

“ What's your story? ”

What are your hobbies? Are you involved in a cool group? Do you do volunteer work or donate your time to helping your community? Or maybe somebody in your department, clinical division, or company does?

We are always looking for stories like these.

Send your story ideas to Angiogram@CookMedical.com.



Going back to the farm

A look at Cook Biotech's tissue-sourcing process

► Pictured are, from left: Ron Jordan, Josh Carr, and Kevin Tepool. Photos by Susan Erb (SErb@CookBiotech.com). Susan is a Marketing Communication Specialist at Cook Biotech.

Believe it or not, Cook Biotech used to pay for its raw material with donuts. Kevin Tepool would travel to a packing plant with dozens of donuts to be given out to the plant workers in exchange for allowing him to harvest the intestines of a select few animals and bring them back to Cook Biotech for processing. Now, Kevin's team works to procure top-quality porcine intestines that will be manufactured into life-changing products.

Since 1995, Cook Biotech has been using the small intestinal submucosa (SIS) from pigs to create medical devices. President **Umesh Patel**, PhD, and Senior Vice President of Research and Development and Chief Scientific Officer **Michael Hiles**, PhD, were part of a team that discovered the healing properties of SIS in the late 1980s while conducting research at Purdue University. Today, Cook Biotech's products are used in human and animal patients to treat hernias, wounds, nerve damage, and numerous other conditions.

Did you know?

After processing, SIS is manufactured into products for a variety of treatments, including:

- Hernias
- Burns
- Wounds
- Nipple reconstruction after mastectomy
- Eardrum damage
- Nerve damage

Cook Biotech began sourcing tissue from packing plants in 1996. When he first started at Cook Biotech in 1997, Kevin recalls traveling to the packing plant himself, harvesting materials directly from the production floor, and transporting the intestines back to the facility for processing. His first day on the job started at 4:00 am and was spent at Cook Biotech's first qualified packing plant, but now most of the material is collected and shipped to the Cook Biotech facility in West Lafayette, Indiana.

Most of the qualified farms and packing plants that partner with Cook Biotech to provide materials are located in the Midwest. This ensures a stable supply. In addition to transport time, documentation is required to verify traceability of the materials before processing can begin. Materials can be traced all the way back to the farm.

"We made a business decision about 22 years ago to go all the way back to the farm, such that we can share with our customers that we have more oversight of our suppliers than just to the packing plant," Kevin said.

Kevin's official title is tissue acquisition manager, but he jokes that he really works for the assistant manager of tissue acquisition, **Josh Carr**. Kevin's desk is covered in regulations and other official papers that require his attention. He explained that he handles all the regulatory issues now so that Josh can visit farms and do more of the fieldwork. Josh is responsible for maintaining qualifications for farms and packing plants and for conducting annual recertifications.

Farms go through an annual recertification process that includes updated veterinary evaluations, vaccinations, and feed rations. Josh also conducts a walk-through of each farm, which can sometimes include multiple showers and clothing changes to ensure the health of the animals.

Josh explains that when it comes to qualifying a farm to do business with Cook Biotech, the biggest difference comes down to documentation.

"Farms do nothing special for us, except provide us a little bit of extra paperwork," Josh said.

Pigs that will be sourced by Cook Biotech are kept and raised with the rest of the herd until the time of transport, when they are segregated. They are then transported to the packing plant. After the intestines are harvested, the remaining raw materials are processed for other

products from food to pharmaceuticals. Almost no piece goes unused, making pigs a sustainable option for the medical industry. Kevin said that this information is crucial when it comes to educating consumers.

"Any chance we get to say that the modern hog farmer is a good steward for the environment and for the world, we try to do that," he said.

• **Skylar Pearson** (Skylar.Runnels@CookBiotech.com) is a Marketing Communication Specialist at Cook Biotech.



▲ Ron and Josh unload the raw materials off a truck upon their arrival at Cook Biotech.



Providing solutions

Cook India opens integrated office and warehouse facility

► Vijayan Govindaraman, general manager of Cook India, welcomes John Kamstra, Executive VP & CFO, Cook Group Incorporated & Cook Medical Holdings

In Indian tradition, the lighting of a lamp signifies auspiciousness, prosperity, and abundance. Light brings brightness, dispelling darkness and representing the victory of knowledge over ignorance. So it is only natural that this was done during the inauguration of the Cook facility in Chennai, India, in September.

This new facility is spread over 20,000 square feet (1,858 square meters). It is easily accessible by metro, closer to the local airport, and located in the city's major business district with easy access to freight stations. There are separate floors dedicated to a modern office and a state-of-the-art warehouse to support the growing needs of the Indian market.

Since 1996, Cook India has expanded its market presence in India and South Asia.

"We are pleased to open this modernized facility in Chennai. It has been designed to offer best-in-class service to both our employees and customers,"

Pete Yonkman, president of Cook Group & Cook Medical Holdings, said during the opening ceremony.

The investment on a modern, integrated office and warehouse stresses the importance and significance India holds for the future



▲ Vijayan gives a tour of the new facility and stops at a photo of Bill Cook.

business of Cook Medical in south Asia. The eco-friendly office has a board room, a large training room, and small discussion rooms with video conferencing equipment and presentation aids. There are many, smaller flex-offices for phone calls and short discussions.

The state-of-the-art warehouse promises to provide excellent customer support for faster dispatch of goods across India.

"This new facility will allow us to support our customers better by reducing the lead time in

dispatching goods," **Vijayan Govindaraman**, general manager of Cook India, said during his inaugural address. "At Cook Medical, we believe that we should always provide solutions, rather than just sell products. The new logistics center will ensure prompt delivery to our customers."

The training facility offers an atmosphere for collaborative learning. The facility was designed to maximize space and use natural light to reduce the company's carbon footprint and to keep employees refreshed throughout the day. The open office stands true to the company's value of transparency and encourages employees to collaborate at work. The warehouse has adopted good distribution practices for effective and efficient management of inbound and outbound logistics.

Since its inauguration, many trainings, workshops, meetings, and events have been conducted in the new Cook India office. The cafeteria has been a hangout for birthday parties, celebrations, and informal catch-up meetings.

• **Adarsh Natarajan** (Adarsh.Natarajan@CookMedical.com) is the HR manager for Cook India.



▲ The tour makes a stop at the new warehouse.

Powering MyoSite

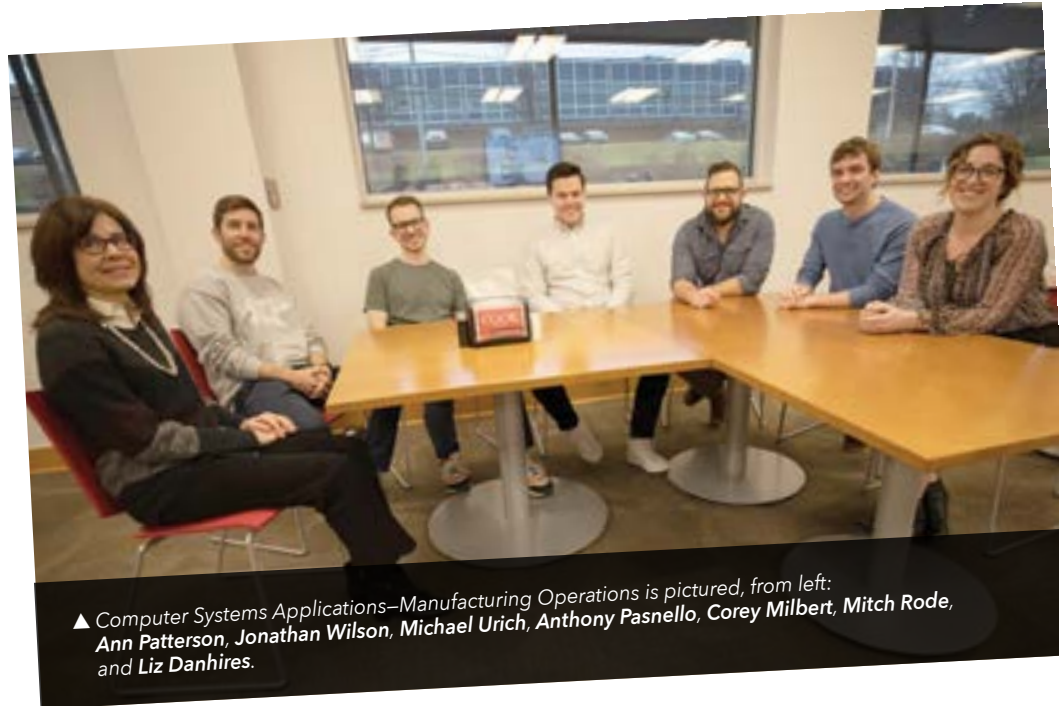
A look at the facility's Information Services directorate

The Information Services (IS) directorate at Cook MyoSite, led by Director **Tom Joos**, works every day to implement, maintain, and improve the systems and networks that power the company's cell therapy business.

According to Tom, the directorate is organized like any other traditional information services unit with departments for Computer System Applications, Computer System Validation, and Information Technology services. However, the IS group at Cook MyoSite faces some unique challenges due to the nature of the investigational AMDC cell therapy technology and its manufacturing process.

AMDC—which stands for autologous muscle-derived cells—is a biological product that consists of a patient's own muscle cells. Clinical investigators procure a biopsy from a patient's thigh, send it to Cook MyoSite's Pittsburgh facility for processing, and then Cook MyoSite returns the processed cell product back to the investigator where it is injected into the target area (a damaged urinary sphincter, for example) with the goal of regenerating damaged muscle tissue.

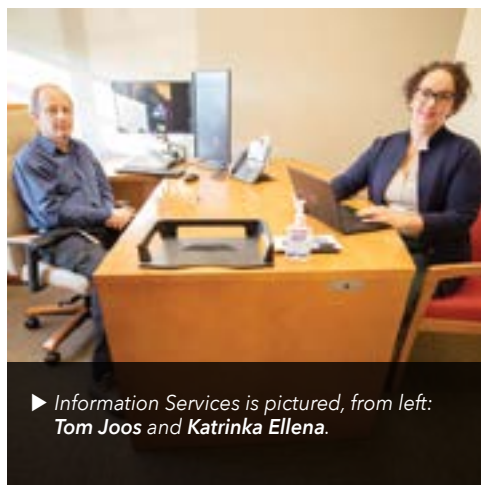
In order to ensure patient safety and regulatory compliance, those cells must stay in a controlled aseptic environment throughout the entire production journey.



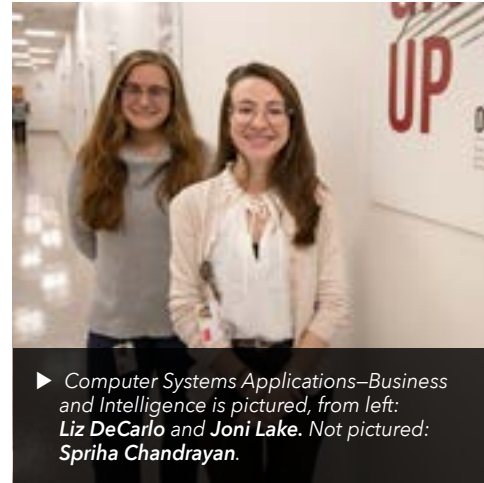
▶ Computer Systems Applications—Manufacturing Operations is pictured, from left: **Ann Patterson, Jonathan Wilson, Michael Urich, Anthony Pasnello, Corey Milbert, Mitch Rode, and Liz Danhires.**



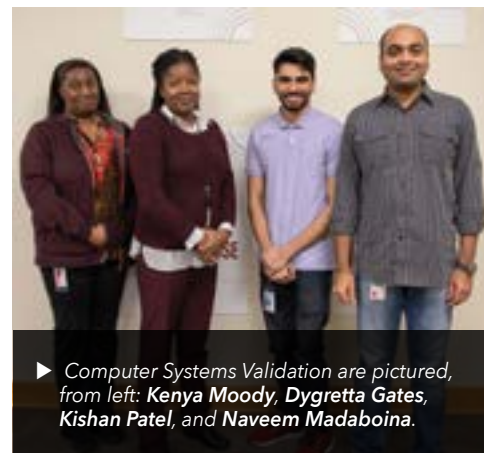
▶ The Information Technology team, from left: **Dylan Wilkerson, Will Kass, Chad Brown, Erik Dolan, and Jon Totin.**



▶ Information Services is pictured, from left: **Tom Joos and Katrinka Ellena.**



▶ Computer Systems Applications—Business and Intelligence is pictured, from left: **Liz DeCarlo and Joni Lake.** Not pictured: **Spriha Chandrayan.**



▶ Computer Systems Validation are pictured, from left: **Kenya Moody, Dygretta Gates, Kishan Patel, and Naveem Madaboina.**

This requires an intertwined web of computer systems that monitor everything from clinical trial cell product data to the pressure and humidity inside the areas processing patients' cells.

"When you go into most businesses, you won't find this plethora of intermeshed computer systems," said Tom. "At most businesses, if it's too hot or cold, they pick up the phone and say, 'Hey, it's cold.' For us, that's not acceptable. If it's too hot in our clean room, we can't make product. So, we have a variety of systems monitoring all aspects of the clean room and recording that data, ensuring patient safety."

Most systems are maintained by just one person, with each person typically supporting multiple systems. This means lots of individual responsibility, but according to Enterprise Architect **Katrinka Ellena**, it can also be an opportunity for growth and collaborative problem solving.

"In a lot of ways, the one-person model does add some pressure," she said. "But it also builds an environment where people aren't scared to bounce ideas off of each other. We'll go to each other and say, 'I know this isn't your core focus, but how would you handle this engineering problem?' And that sense of team membership is tremendously helpful."

• **Justin Kelly** (*Justin.Kelly@CookMyosite.com*) is a communications specialist for Marketing at Cook MyoSite.



Changes ahead

Cook Canada's Pricing and Contracts team faces developments as hospital structures evolve

▶ Pictured are the members of Canada's Pricing and Contracts team, from left: **Sue Cavanaugh, Rose Smirnov, Tammy Cochrane, and Ellaine Benjamin.** Not pictured: **Deanna Filipchuk.**

The Canadian Pricing and Contracts team's five members have a combined total of 106 years at Cook. Their experience is evident as they quickly adapt and respond to our customers' needs as hospital structures evolve.

"Our team is sort of like Chameleons. Instead of changing color, we can rapidly modify our contribution by adjusting to our surroundings, whether it be Cook internal changes or the constant external changes in our customer environment," said **Deanna Filipchuk**, a contracts coordinator for the team.

There have been some important developments in Canada's healthcare environment over the last few years: the group purchasing organization (GPO) Medbuy has merged with the shared service organization (SSO) Mohawk, forming Mohawk Medbuy Corporation (MMC), Central Ontario Healthcare Procurement

Alliance hospitals have been integrated into Plexxus, and this year MMC and Plexxus announced their plans to amalgamate. MMC Plexxus Sourcing Collaborative (MPSC) has been established, representing a large number of hospitals in Ontario, as well as hospitals in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Western Canada contracts provincially, and Quebec's GPOs are also becoming part of a single larger entity. What these changes mean to the Pricing and Contracts team is lots of reporting, analysis, and contract maintenance.

"We continually learn from one another, enabling us to improve our individual skills, develop team best practices and efficiently serve our customers," said **Ellaine Benjamin**, team leader.

• **Sherri Redshaw** (*Sherri.Redshaw@CookMedical.com*) is the HR manager for Cook Canada.

Growing a team

The evolution of Cook's Reproductive Health team in China

In 2006, Jianguo Dai (JD), director of China-MedSurg, joined Cook and started the Cook China Reproductive Health (RH) team. Over the years, the team has grown from just one employee to one of the largest clinical specialties within Cook China with 22 employees from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Cook was the first to provide in vitro fertilization (IVF) products and introduce the advanced obstetrics gynecology (OB-GYN) technologies of the Bakri® Postpartum Balloon and Cook® Cervical Ripening Balloon in China. According to Vivian Li, field product manager, Cook's market spans almost all the 499 reproductive health centers and all the OB-GYN departments of the hospitals in the country.

"Physicians choose us because we can provide a full service in the IVF life cycle, we provide quality products, and moreover, we have a team that is expert in the clinical field," said Vivian.

In 2018, the China RH team restructured itself and branched out into two teams: the IVF team and the OB-GYN team.

"I think it's a good strategy because only by more delicate management of our teams can we provide the physicians with immediate support and also reach to the unmet needs of the patients in China," said Vivian. Since 2011, the team has provided



▲ Members of the Reproductive Health team during a team-building activity after their mid-year sales meeting in Xining City, Qinghai Province, in 2019.

"Physicians choose us because we can provide a full service in the IVF lifecycle, we provide quality products and moreover, we have a team which is expert in the clinical field."

– Vivian Li, field product manager

topic-specific and hands-on medical events throughout China while dedicating itself to meeting the highest ethical and compliance standards. For example, in 2019, they partnered with the national medical associations to deliver 60 medical talks with more than 4,000 people in attendance.

"We value these medical education programs a lot, because we believe that advanced medical technologies will benefit a wider group of people

when physicians and stakeholders are educated with the safe and appropriate use of the products and excellent procedural practices," Vivian added.

The team is now led by Songming Duan, sales manager of Greater China, who joined Cook in 2014.

"The RH team has seen many challenges, but we have demonstrated the resilience to overcome them and forge ahead," Songming said.

Looking into the future, Songming said the team will continue to be a reliable partner to physicians by providing them with strong clinical support. Through ongoing training and management programs, the team will also continue to improve their ability to serve local patients and take the overall patient-care standard in China to another level.

• Joy Zhang (Joy.Zhang@CookMedical.com) is a Corporate Communications specialist for Cook China.

Providing Hoosier hospitality

A closer look at Cook Aviation



Bill Cook purchased Torp Aero Service in January of 1988 and, with that, Cook Aviation, a fixed-base operation, began. The company offers superior customer service and is based out of the Monroe County Airport. They are the first impression the flying public see of Bloomington and they welcome their customers with "Hoosier hospitality."

Cook Aviation values longevity and views its employees as an asset. After 32 years of operation, two of its original employees are still with the company: Office Manager Rhonda Stafford and I (Rex Hinkle). Currently, there are a total of 11 employees, and most of them have

over 15 years of experience with the company. The management team alone has over 131 years of combined experience in the aviation field.

Cook Aviation specializes in a wide array of aircraft services including the marshaling of aircraft, baggage handling, fueling, and cleaning. They also offer concierge services, provide and arrange catering, and serve as a rental car company.

The Monroe County Airport, which consists of two runways, accommodates many business-class jets. There are about 98 aircraft that are based at the facility. Cook Aviation

greet various-sized aircraft ranging from the J-3 Cub Aircraft, which only seats 2 people, to the Boeing 757 Airliner, which can seat between 200 and 300 people.

If the airplane can hold 61 passengers or more, then passenger screening is required. A security company based in Indianapolis is used for these screening services.

Cook Aviation provides general customer services for athletic team charters that use the airport, both visiting and Indiana University teams. The company has become busier with these customers than in years past because the teams prefer to fly directly into Bloomington instead of taking a commercial flight into Indianapolis followed by an hour-long bus ride. These athletic teams usually arrive on airplanes with 50-150 passengers, depending on the sport. Cook Aviation is very busy during team arrivals and departures.

The company also welcomes transit aircraft that visit Bloomington and surrounding communities. In addition, they service several fractional timeshare airplanes. The list of companies Cook Aviation services includes, Jet Linx, United Airlines, Delta Airlines, Sun County Airlines, and Miami Air International.

• Rex Hinkle (Rex.Hinkle@CookGroup.com) is the president of Cook Aviation.



▲ Greg Chance, a Cook Aviation line serviceman, refuels an Astra Jet Aircraft.

PEOPLE NEWS



▲ Chie Tanaka



▲ Miyoko Yokoi



▲ Fumie Momose



▲ Aki Ishii



▲ Jaye Gaddis



▲ Ryan Wasson



▲ Kieran Forde



▲ Brooke Myhre



▲ Avery Dillon



▲ Sara Batman



▲ Rachel Powell



▲ Alex Linn



▲ Blossom Prevette



▲ Brian Feng



▲ Kade Milloy

Corporate Branding

Chie Tanaka has been named a graphic design specialist for Cook Medical Japan.

Events Management

Miyoko Yokoi, Fumie Momose, and Aki Ishii have been named Events specialists for Cook Medical Japan.

Global Procurement & Supply Chain

Jaye Gaddis has joined Cook as the director of Indirect Global Procurement.

Ryan Wasson has been named global category director for metals and coatings. He has been with Cook since 2011.

Kieran Forde has been named global category manager for metals and coatings. He has been with Cook since 2009.

Brooke Myhre has been named global category manager for polymers. She has been with Cook since November 2019.

Avery Dillon has been named global category manager for IT, telecom, and office. She has been with Cook since 2016.

Sara Batman has been named global category manager for the Distributed By, OEM, and contract manufacturers. She has been with Cook for 9 years.

Sterilization

Rachel Powell has been named team lead for Sterility Assurance & Sterilization Operations. She has been with Cook since 2015.

CAPA and Nonconformance Leadership

Alex Linn has been named team lead for Quality Engineering–Nonconformance Investigations. He has been with Cook since 2018.

Blossom Prevette has been named team lead for Quality Engineering–CAPA. She has been with Cook since 2018.

Global Vascular programs

Brian Feng has been named global programs manager for Access Technologies. He has been with Cook for 16 years.

MedSurg

Kade Milloy has joined Cook as a Marketing specialist for the Endoscopy specialty.



▲ Tadashi Koshimizu



▲ Philip Deeney



▲ Nina Hourigan Smith



▲ Alphonse Moran

Distribution Channel Management (DCM)

Tadashi Koshimizu has joined Cook as the Governance & Contracts manager–Japan.

Philip Deeney has been named legal counsel, DCM and Governance manager –EMEA & Greater China.

Nina Hourigan Smith has been named senior legal counsel, director, DCM.

Alphonse Moran has been named senior manager for Global Audit, DCM.

Leadership updates

Derek Voskuil has been named vice president, Quality Assurance and Corporate Operations, Cook Group and Cook Medical. In his new role, he will assume leadership over all matters at Cook Medical companies related to Quality Management and the Cook Medical Management System (CMMS). He will remain on the Cook Medical Executive team. The global Quality Assurance, Continuous Improvement, and Post-Market Engineering functions will report to Derek. In addition, the teams that support the operations of Cook Medical as a legal entity, including the corporate Project Management Office and the CMMS policy team, will report to Derek.

Matt Graf has been named director, Global Corporate Quality, Cook Medical. In his new role, Matt will be responsible for the establishment and ongoing oversight of the Quality and Regulatory Compliance elements of the CMMS. He will work along side the CMMS policy team. In addition, he will provide primary oversight globally for the Cook Medical Quality Assurance function across Cook sites.

Gene Baker has joined Cook as vice president, general manager, Cook Inc. Gene, who is new to Cook, will be assuming leadership for Cook Inc. and will be responsible for continuing to connect and coordinate the local direction and work with the global business, values, and culture. Gene will be responsible for preserving Cook's culture and values and continuing the viability and performance of the entity at Cook Inc. Gene will report to **Scott Eells**.

Andrea Gadsby has joined Cook as director, Quality Assurance, Cook Inc. She comes to Cook Inc. with a long list of various roles as a quality professional in the medical device industry. Some of her experience includes quality system management, change management, and supplier quality.

Greg Mullinax has been named chief operating officer and representative director for Cook Medical Japan. For the past 7 years, Greg has led the Regulatory Affairs team at the Cook Medical Japan office. In 2015, he joined the Aortic Intervention specialty as the leader for the SBU in Japan. Most recently, he has been performing the role of director of Regulatory Affairs for APAC and, at the same time, helping to manage the daily operations of the Cook Medical Japan office. Greg will report to Jean-Marc Creissel.



▲ Derek Voskuil



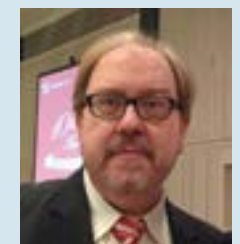
▲ Matt Graf



▲ Gene Baker



▲ Andrea Gadsby



▲ Greg Mullinax



► From left: Justin Rains and Alyvia Koharchick during the wire guide inspection process at Cook Polymer Technology in Bloomington.

It's all about empowerment

CI efforts encourage employees and help patients

• All Continuous Improvement articles and photos by **Ally Stanfield** (Alexandria.Stanfield@CookMedical.com). Ally is an Editorial Content specialist for Corporate Marketing & Communications at Park 48.

Bill Cook said, "Come to work every day excited by a problem, get busy working on a solution, and make a difference in the life of a patient."

All around the globe, Cook companies have embraced this idea and have been striving toward the idea of solving problems and continually improving for years. Different facilities have progressed at various speeds, but nonetheless, Cook as a company has collectively dedicated a great deal of attention to bettering our processes, products, and work environments for employees across the board.

Joe Voss, the Continuous Improvement (CI) manager for Cook Inc., described how Cook's continuous improvement efforts have really started to manifest themselves in more tangible initiatives in recent years, like creating CI teams at different facilities. Some of the primary focuses that the CI teams have worked on tackling include:

- Finding ways to provide added value to our customers
- Identifying waste in our processes and systems
- Developing and improving upon day-to-day and long-term aspects of our company
- Coaching and encouraging employees to take up the continuous improvement banner as well

"For me, CI at Cook is about taking an already great company and making it more successful and ensuring its longevity to make sure that we can continue to help patients, employ awesome people, and support local communities," Joe said.

"CI gives us a chance to see obstacles and issues as opportunities for improvement and ways to get better," he continued. "And it's rooted in the foundation of the company's values that Mr. Cook instilled in the company from the very beginning."

Focusing on people development

In the United States, a lot of the continuous improvement efforts have been centralized around concepts based in manufacturing and operations. The focus put on production work and employees has already impacted the company in a number of positive ways and continues to do so as we stick with pursuing continuous improvement at Cook.

While these efforts have greatly benefited the company, the most resonating aspect of continuous improvement, to me, is how it has affected and impacted the employees.

"If you take away all of the bells and whistles of continuous improvement, it really boils down to people development," Joe said. "It's about empowering people to do the work and improve the work. It's about reminding people that they have the power to make things better for themselves, for Cook, and for the patients we help."

What's in this section

- Pam Hill - 26
- Sam Hedrick - 27
- The evolution of CI - 28

Pam Hill

A trailblazer

During my visit to Cook Winston-Salem in North Carolina, I had the chance to chat with **Pam Hill**, a Quality Control Packaging (QCP) employee, and her supervisor, **Kassidy Powell**. While both ladies seemed a little shy at first, our conversation quickly became one of excitedly swapping CI stories.

Change begins

After working at Cook for years in QCP, things started to change for Pam in September of 2018. Cook Winston-Salem rolled out its first continuous flow line, and Pam had been selected to be a part of this new process. Due to her dedication to her work, along with her infallible self-motivation, Pam was the perfect candidate to be a part of this team.

"To be honest, when they first explained the idea to me I wasn't very confident at all. I thought it was a good idea, but I didn't really know how well it was going to work," Pam said.

"The way things operated before on the floor, was that the different departments and employees worked in their own little bubbles all across the room," said Kassidy. "You didn't really have to rely on anyone else."

Becoming more efficient

With the switch to a continuous flow line, employees now have to work together as a team.

For the line that Pam works on, there are four steps in the process, and five employees that work together to move all 120 products in each order along. One employee handles the final quality control check of the products, and then passes it down



▶ Pam Hill at her work station.

"To be honest, when they first explained the idea to me I wasn't very confident at all. I thought it was a good idea, but I didn't really know how well it was going to work."

– Pam Hill, Quality Control Packaging at Cook Winston-Salem

the table line to someone focused on label control. Once all of the labels have been run, the product packages move on to two packaging employees who prep each product for Pam's final inspection.

Jon Reynolds, a Production Engineering Manager over the CI team at Winston-Salem, explained that, before the continuous flow line, it would take approximately five days to process a package, and it would have to travel about 250 feet around

the room in large, heavy bins. With the new system, the first person in the line takes the product out of the bin and processes it in about 50 minutes, and it only travels 45 feet in total.

Prior to the change, there was often a backlog of product piled up at different areas in the process.

"Now we can be so much more efficient without having to work faster and risk making errors," Kassidy said.

Since the continuous flow line has been put in place, non-conformance rates have decreased and immediate feedback and help can be provided from the employees working together on the line.

"My biggest piece of advice to others trying out new continuous improvement ideas would be to give it time and stick with it," said Pam.

"Be patient, because in the end it's really great for the company. We get to send out more products, and that means we get to help more patients."

Sam Hedrick

Empowered and idea driven

While **Sam Hedrick** might have once considered herself to be just a cog in a machine, her innovative mind and newfound passion for continuous improvement reminded her that she was so much more than that.

At Cook Canton in Illinois, you can find Sam working hard on the east dock, loading and unloading trucks of incoming material. For six years, she would receive the incoming cartons of packages, check them, and then copy down the 11-digit barcodes, lot numbers, dates, along with more information from approximately six individual packages in each carton, all the while walking back and forth to the loading area to the label printing station in a different area of the building. Then, one day, **Lynsey Staes**, a Production engineer at Cook Canton, came to speak to the employees about continuous improvement and how they could improve their work and time with the company.

"I started thinking, and realized I had an idea that I wanted to share with my manager," Sam said.

She explained her idea that having a scanner and label printing station in the dock area would save me a lot of time and help decrease errors.

"I wasn't really sure anything would come from it, but sure enough, my manager and Lynsey came to me, and we all started talking, testing, and working on a solution together.



▶ Sam Hedrick works in Raw Materials Packaging at Cook Canton.

"I know that I used to think I didn't matter, but Cook empowered me."

– Sam Hedrick, Raw Materials Packaging associate at Cook Canton

Then one day, they came to me and we were going to implement my idea," said Sam.

"I know that I used to think I didn't matter, but Cook empowered me," Sam said. "They listened to me and helped me to make my job easier, and I felt heard. It's made me become an advocate for continuous improvement, and it has inspired me to encourage others about it."

Lynsey later explained that Sam has gone on to suggest numerous ideas, and seen some more of them come to fruition. Her ideas have helped

save her roughly three to four hours a week of labor, decreased risk of contamination on products from another dock area near a controlled manufacturing area, and overall been a great contribution to Cook.

Both women advocated Lynsey's point over and over again that, "No idea is too small, and it's important to submit it. While it might not solve a problem necessarily, it could start other conversations and make all the difference."



The evolution of CI

CPT makes CI part of their culture



▲ **Barry Watson** observes the automated tipping operation process at Cook Polymer Technology in Bloomington.

Continuous Improvement (CI) has become part of the culture at Cook Polymer Technology (CPT) in Bloomington.

"We have been able to implement hundreds of CI suggestions and ideas from employees," said **Nate Myers**, the general manager for CPT-Bloomington.

During my visit to the facility, Nate, CI Coordinator **Rachel Anderson**, and Manufacturing Operations Manager **Paul Kinder**, all sat down together to talk with me about the CI initiatives at CPT-Bloomington.

In 2016, CPT decided to dedicate some structure to their CI efforts. Since then, they have taken tremendous strides to accomplish a lot with their initiatives, including developing visual management tools and specialized trainings for employees.

Nate said that standardizing their work through CI has helped them to create better outcomes.

"It makes products more consistent for patients and customers, and if there are errors or hiccups in consistency, it makes it much easier to assess and improve on the situation," he continued.

During CPT's CI pursuits, these three folks have been able to witness the effects and encourage growth in truly inspiring ways.

Rachel's favorite part of the CI efforts has been the empowerment of their employees.

"There's just a positivity from CI that I've been able to see brighten up people's days," Rachel said. "It is about involving and empowering the people on the floor who are doing the work daily and encouraging it to be a habit to chase that positivity."

According to Paul, CI really gives them a chance to be proactive and positive in the work that they do every day.

"CI really has helped everyone be on the same team, united with one



"It is about involving and empowering the people on the floor who are doing the work daily and encouraging it to be a habit to chase that positivity."

– *Rachel Anderson*, CI Coordinator for CPT-Bloomington

voice, working towards a common goal," Paul said.

CPT's dedication to CI embodies the very idea that it is important to reinvigorate the roots we have in continuous improvement, which have been a part of our company since the very beginning.

Nate said that in order for Cook to be successful as an organization, it will need to continue to embrace CI, and he is looking forward to seeing the company's plans for the future.

"It is important for our organization to continue to improve and transform to meet ever-changing demands. Continuous improvement is inherently suited for this. Committing to, and executing well against our CI strategy, will be a key part of our evolution," Nate said.

Scan the QR code to visit the *Life@Cook* blog and search for more stories about CI





Cook China gives back

► Elsa Wang, tendering supervisor of Cook China, is enjoying her coffee at A Coffee.

In China, people who are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are called "children of the stars."

According to some statistics, more than 1 in 100 children in China are on the autism spectrum. There are many rehabilitation institutions, care centers, and volunteer organizations nationally that help these children improve their social and communication skills. A Coffee cafe is one of these organizations.

The cafe functions as a support base for autistic children and adults and provides them with opportunities to work in the cafe, such as by making or serving coffee.

The friendship between the Cook China Sales Operations team and A Coffee started in October 2019, when the team visited the cafe and spent a beautiful afternoon with the children, the volunteers, and the supervising team.

Cafes have always been a great place for people to talk and get to know each other, and it is the same here in A Coffee. The cafe's supervising team guided the Sales Operations team, and they began with simple coffee ordering dialogues, which then transitioned into more natural conversations.

When nervousness melted and everyone became more relaxed, the team got to know a boy who could recall his favorite animations with all the funny details, one who couldn't help but share his excitement about celebrating his birthday the next day, and one who was interested in cuisines from all over the world. In the middle of the conversations, one of the quieter boys played a piano piece.

During the latter part of the activity, **Shirley Xu**, manager of Sales Operation Accounts at Cook China, used her expertise on international trade to provide a presentation on how coffee beans are imported, shipped, and sold with the intention



"I'm impressed with the generosity and kindness of everyone, the selfless love of the parents, the kind companionship from the volunteers, and the patient tutoring from the teachers."

– **Shirley Xu**, manager of Sales Operation Accounts at Cook China

of triggering the boys' interests in business and broadening their professional horizons.

"From the initial outreach to the in-person meeting with the youth and the supervising team

in A Coffee, I'm impressed with the generosity and kindness of everyone, the selfless love of the parents, the kind companionship from the volunteers, and the patient tutoring from the teachers. This helped me to understand more about autistic children and people who are caring for them." Shirley said.

According to **Sonny Xu**, senior manager of Sales Operations at Cook China, as part of Customer Support & Delivery's global give back initiative, this activity was a good reminder of what the team can give back and what volunteer opportunities in their community they can pursue in the future.

• **Joy Zhang** (Joy.Zhang@CookMedical.com) is a Corporate Communications specialist for Cook China.

Post-Market Engineering

Maintaining the life cycle of a product

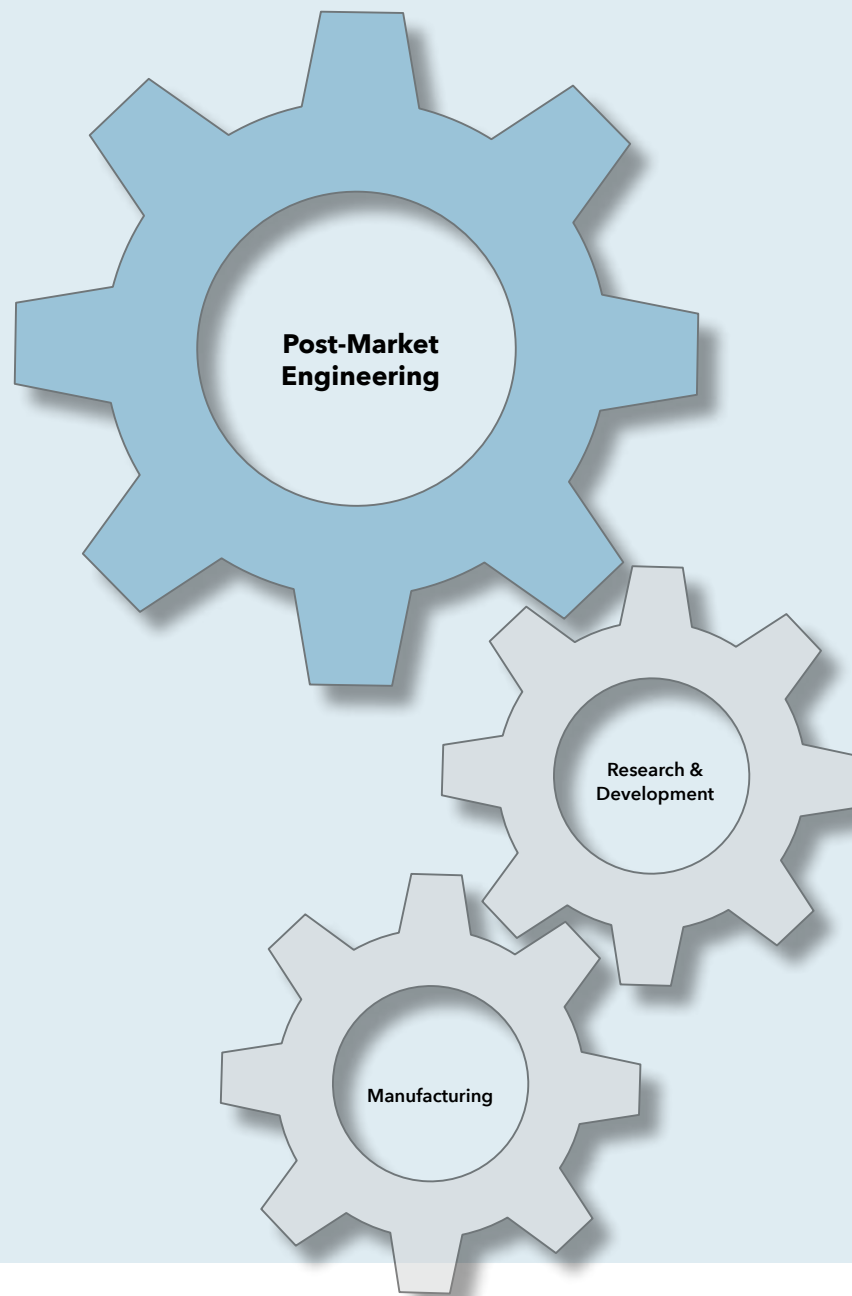
In the last issue of the *Angiogram*, we learned about Manufacturing Engineering, which is where our products become reality and are mass produced for the market. In this issue, we will learn about the final stage of engineering a Cook product: Post-Market Engineering. We will also discover that nearly everything Post-Market Engineering does is cross-functional and that they work closely with Manufacturing Engineering and Research & Development (R&D).

According to **Tom Roberts**, vice president of Quality Assurance for Cook Group, R&D Engineering does the original design work for a product and Manufacturing Engineering handles the process of production. The Post-Market Engineering team is design focused, maintaining the product's design throughout its life cycle after it has been introduced to the market.

How is product performance monitored?

Once a product is introduced into the market, Cook has certain expectations about performance, including risks and benefits. After a product has been commercialized, Cook monitors its expectations against performance and patient outcomes. This is done mainly through complaint investigations.

"If we are getting good results, fine, but if something changes, we initiate action to improve," Tom explained. "We also continually review clinical evidence and customer feedback.



This is the third and final part of a multi-issue series. This final edition focuses on Post-Market Engineering.

▲ Illustration by **Ashley McGuire** (Ashley.McGuire@CookMedical.com). Ashley is an editorial content generalist for Corporate Marketing & Communications at Park 48.



► **Gary Eager**, design specialist at Park 48, checks for liquid leakage in sheaths in the Bloomington Headquarters engineering test lab. Photo by **Doug Wright** (Doug.Wright@CookMedical.com). Doug is an archival specialist for Corporate Marketing & Communications at Park 48.

Specific quality engineers are assigned to investigate complaints and monitor risk levels for all of our products."

The Quality Assurance (QA) team monitors product performance in the field. When product performance needs to be improved, the QA team works with Post-Market Engineering to improve design. Any time a product is updated, the regulatory submission requirements need to be updated as well, and the Regulatory team becomes involved to maintain appropriate regulatory submissions.

"All of these teams work together to ensure products work well. Our work

is cross-functional in nature, but each team has a specific responsibility," said Tom.

Remediation efforts in Post-Market Engineering

When Cook Inc. received a warning letter in 2014 from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), they recognized that their quality system processes needed to be improved. These improvements were completed as part of a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Temporary, dedicated product remediation teams were formed to evaluate design and risk, manufacturing processes, and test methods for all existing products.

"All of these teams work together to ensure products work well. Our work is cross-functional in nature, but each team has a specific responsibility."

— **Tom Roberts**, VP of Quality Assurance for Cook Group

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"When the CAP implemented our new quality system, there was a need to evaluate what product records needed to be updated and how we would approach remediation for our legacy products," said **Andy Hoffa**, engineering manager for the Product Remediation team at Cook Inc.

Legacy products are Cook's foundational products, some of which are more than 30 years old. One aspect of the remediation effort was getting these products up to speed with design history files required by the FDA and other regulatory bodies. Over the years, regulatory expectations have changed, and the remediation program is working to ensure that Cook's legacy products are compliant with these expectations.

One of the first activities that the Remediation team needed to accomplish was to organize Cook's products in a way that would allow leveraging of testing and design control documentation for similar designs. The Remediation team accomplished this by grouping products into medical device families. There currently are over 1,500 active Cook Inc. medical device families (MDFs).

The Remediation team looked at complaints and other post-market data to put together a priority list for all MDFs, and then, through a series of protocols, they systematically began remediating the products to address requirements around complaints, standards, and the new quality system procedures.

"The result should be a design history file and risk management file that meets the FDA's expectations and also allows other groups like CAPA, Production and Supplier Engineering, and Post-Market Quality Engineering to use the file



► **Brian Lloyd**, lab technician, performs a length verification study on an Embryo Transfer Catheter in the engineering test lab at Park 48. Photo by **Doug Wright** (Doug.Wright@CookMedical.com). Doug is an archival specialist for Corporate Marketing & Communications at Park 48.

"It's a new level of accountability for us, and now other departments are using a similar whiteboard/dashboard method to track projects."

– Andy Hoffa, engineering manager for the Cook Inc. Product Remediation team

to help perform their functions and meet new quality system requirements," explained Andy.

Innovative strategies

The Remediation team needed a way to track progress and hold people accountable in the areas of test method validation (TMV), process validation, and design remediation. The project management group developed a series of creative whiteboards, to visually track the progress of each of these functions, and a Sharepoint website that was updated regularly to show progress and achievements. According to Andy, they have received positive feedback on the ease of understanding their progress through these whiteboards, which are regularly updated.

"It's a new level of accountability for us, and now other departments are using a similar whiteboard/dashboard method to track projects," Andy said.

Other examples of project management innovations that never existed in remediation work until recently include using Microsoft OneNote to help with consistency in work instructions and to provide editing capability for accuracy and the use of SharePoint for documentation purposes.

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Subfunctions within Post-Market Engineering

Mark Hiatt, director of Post-Market Engineering for Cook Inc., defined these five engineering roles that support Cook's products through the post-market process:

Sustaining engineering

The entire focus for this group is to maintain the product, making sure the product remains available and relevant in the market, which includes ensuring the product is meeting regulations. They serve as the design experts on our products and provide design input across numerous activities. A temporary subset of this group at Cook Inc. is the Product Remediation team.

Corrective and preventive action (CAPA) engineering

Corrective and Preventive Action (CAPA) engineering addresses known product problems from complaints in the field and other sources. They run the problem through a defined process of investigating, determining the root cause, determining action, and implementing that action. These specialized engineers also validate any actions taken through a verification of effectiveness (VOE) process to make sure the problem has been corrected.

Supplier engineering

Supplier engineering evaluates change requests from external companies that supply components used to build Cook products. They determine if the affected, finished products still meet requirements. They also work to improve the incoming inspection process and initiate changes to improve quality, decrease cost, and/or ensure reliable supply of components.

Test engineering

Test engineers perform mechanical testing on Cook devices to determine if they meet requirements and then generate formal test reports for use internally and in submissions to regulators. They also develop new test methods and fixtures, when necessary, to perform new tests or test new devices.

Engineering systems and support

This group works to ensure that Engineering has the appropriate design processes, documentation, and tools, including electronic systems, to maintain compliance with regulations and standards and to do their work effectively and efficiently. They also coordinate with the Human Resources and Training departments to help ensure that Engineering personnel have the appropriate skills to do their work.

A product improvement example: Post-Market Engineering in action

In 2019, Cook received five complaints from the Japan Distribution Center about the Ring-McLean Sump Drainage Set. The set is distributed to the overseas market, specifically to EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Turkey, and Liechtenstein.

Cook immediately placed a stop-ship order on the product in order to determine what was happening with the product. A CAPA engineer, **Jennifer Miller**, was assigned to the investigation. The cause of the complaints was due to the needle sliding out of the protector during shipment.

"We determined the 6 cm needle protector was not effective, and we contacted Manufacturing. They changed their manufacturing process to a similar method used for a product in the same medical device family. They extended the needle protector so it is now flush with the bushing and cannot slide during shipping and expose the needle," explained Jennifer. "We will be implementing this change to the product early this year."



▲ The Ring-McLean Sump Drainage Set product with the needle exposed before product improvement (above) and (below) the Ring-McLean Sump Drainage Set with the extended needle protector after product improvement took place. Photo by **Doug Wright** (Doug.Wright@CookMedical.com). Doug is an archival specialist for Corporate Marketing & Communications at Park 48.

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"Our remediation effort serves two functions," Andy said. "It creates the design and risk records and also pilots and debugs the new quality system. We didn't have the opportunity to test the quality system before it was implemented, but now we can, and we can make improvements as well."

Ongoing need

Each Cook company has a list of products that they own and are responsible for. According to **Mark Hiatt**, director of Post-Market Engineering for Cook Inc., different numbers and complexities of products, and the age of those products, are indicators of how much work is involved in remediation and beyond at each Cook company.

"Post-Market Engineering is responsible for bringing products to the level they need to be and keeping them there, as requirements and market needs continue to evolve. The level needed today is different from what it will be tomorrow," said Mark.

Most of Cook's products must meet recognized standards from various organizations, which can include the FDA, international standards organizations, and quality organizations around the world.

"If standards change, our products need to comply," said Tom. "Those standards are continually monitored in some cases by multiple teams that can include sustaining engineers, regulatory teams, and QA teams."

EU Medical Device Regulation (EU MDR) is an example of evolving requirements for Cook companies across the globe.

"Parts of EU MDR require bringing our products, documentation, and supporting information to a higher level than they are at now," Mark said.

• **Teresa Nicodemus** (Teresa.Nicodemus@CookMedical.com) is a written content specialist for Corporate Marketing & Communications Park 48.

Honoring our people

Sarah Miller,
Nylon Catheters at
Park 48

Hired in: 1996

Sarah was born in Indianapolis, but lived in Santa Monica, California, and Cleveland, Mississippi, for a couple years before her family moved back to Indianapolis after her grandfather passed away. Shortly before her seventh birthday, Sarah's family moved to Owen County, Indiana, where she grew up on a small farm. She met her husband, **Doug Miller**, on the school bus, and they recently celebrated their 38th anniversary. They have two children and three amazing grandsons. In 1992, they moved to eastern Greene County, Indiana, where they currently reside. Before coming to Cook, Sarah worked for Kentucky Fried Chicken, a residential cleaning service, and a coil manufacturing company. She also worked as a social services and activities director for a small local nursing home.

Sarah started her Cook career in Nylon Catheters, where she still works today. Over the years, she has helped out in several other departments including the Warehouse and Wire Guides when Cook was still located on Curry Pike and also in Balloon Catheters, Dilators, and Boroscopying at Park 48. She currently has a two-year perfect attendance streak. Sarah's brother-in-law, **Jim Miller**, also works at Cook and is a graduate of the High School Equivalency program.

Outside of work, Sarah has lots of hobbies and interests, such as crocheting and writing essays, poems, and songs. However, two of her biggest passions include photography and singing. She also enjoys cooking and creating her own special dishes. She and her husband love dogs. They have a miniature Schnauzer and a miniature Schnoodle, who they refer to as their "baby girls." They even took them on vacation to the Smoky Mountains this past spring.



"The best thing about working for Cook is knowing that what I do truly makes a difference in people's lives. Building quality products is something I take very seriously. It's an awesome responsibility, because whether it's a stranger, a friend, or a family member, their health and well-being depends on me, on all of us at Cook, doing our very best work. I've been afforded some great opportunities to work with the Angiogram staff and the Video department on a couple projects, which is super cool and inspiring for my creative side. I've met so many interesting people and made some really good friends, too."

Remco van der Meel,
Global program manager—
Interventional Therapies based
at Cook Netherlands

Hired in: 2003

Remco was born and bred in Leiden, Netherlands. He studied medical imaging technologies and began his career in a university hospital where he specialized in interventional therapies and CT scans. It was at this hospital that he met a rep from Cook Medical who was leaving the company, and Remco decided to write an open letter to apply for the role.

Remco was hired as a product specialist selling Diagnostic & Interventional devices in the west of the Netherlands and was fueled by an interest in the products. He later became a field-based product manager in PI, managing Drainage and Venous Access in EMEA. When Peripheral Intervention (PI) and Interventional Radiology (IR) split in 2009, Remco was appointed a global product manager and started a team in EMEA managing all the IR product families.

At the end of 2009, Remco received the Spirit of Cook award for his work in IR. It was also during this phase in his career that he went back to school part time for almost three years to complete a degree in higher business management.

In 2015, Remco and the team managed the Drainage and Gastrointestinal product families worldwide, until transformation, when some legacy IR product families moved to MedSurg and Vascular. He is currently working as a global program manager for the program Interventional Therapies within Vascular, responsible for Drainage, Liver Access, and Needles products.

Outside of work, Remco loves to spend time with his wife, **Joyce**, daughter, **Yasmine**, and son, **Wessel**. He also enjoys playing the trombone in a small orchestra.



“It has been an absolute privilege to see people in the team develop professionally as well as personally throughout the years. Without the team members it wouldn’t have been such a fantastic journey.”

Lesley Markoski,
District manager—Lead Management—
Southern California and Hawaii

Hired in: 1998

Lesley was born and raised in Dixon, Illinois. She was adopted at birth and is an only child. She graduated from Dixon High School and Illinois State University. Her college degree was in elementary education. After college, she lived in Peoria, Illinois, for 20 years and taught for Peoria Public Schools.

After she was hired by Cook to represent the Reproductive Health division, Lesley moved to Naperville, Illinois, where she lived for 13 years. In late 2010, she moved to Lead Management and relocated to the San Diego area. She currently lives in unincorporated Vista, California, with her three cats.

Lesley is the proud mother of two daughters, **Allison** (35) and **Julie** (33). In her personal time, she enjoys spending time with her cats, cooking, gardening, reading, decorating, and entertaining her family and friends. She is a member of a summer theatre venue and a sports member of a country club. Three years ago, she sold her home and purchased a “true disaster of a house.” She has been working to turn this house into a home.



“There are many things I have enjoyed while working for Cook, specifically my coworkers, customers, and the Cook culture. I feel my best compensation is knowing we have helped make a positive impact on others’ quality of life. I would like to thank Dexter Elkins and Carol Tow for hiring me.”

Elie Zaknoun,
Account executive—Vascular

Hired in: 1997

Elie was born in a village in Southern Lebanon. He attended Elston High School in Michigan City, Indiana. He studied at Purdue University for a year, Indiana University for three years, and Louis Pasteur in Strasbourg, France, for a year. He earned a degree in biology and a bachelor of arts in Arabic and French. Elie has lived in Chicago for the past 10 years. He began working for Cook shortly after graduating college.

Elie began his Cook career as a sales rep based in San Antonio, Texas. His territory was half of the state of Texas. He moved to Dallas in 2004 to further develop the North Texas Territory. He was voted sales rep of the year in 2002 and then regional rep of the year in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2007. He was also voted the number one rep for Zilver stents in 2006 and the number one rep for IVC filters in 2007. In 2008, he accepted a corporate account manager position and was responsible for the central corridor of the US. He later moved to Chicago in 2009 to be more centrally located in his region and to be closer to family. His brother, **Fadi Zaknoun**, is a rep for Peripheral Intervention in North West Indiana.

Outside of work, Elie enjoys the outdoors. He likes to go hiking and kayaking on the Chicago River. He also loves to ski, travel internationally, try new restaurants and do wine tastings with friends.



“Despite being with the company for 22 years and experiencing some pretty significant changes in shaping our company into who we are today, one aspect that has remained the same is how friendly our employees are. I have always been and continue to be amazed how well we, as a company, adjust to changes and make the best of the challenges we are faced with. Our perseverance and dedication to patient care is truly unrivaled in the industry. It’s something I am proud to be a part of.”

Rachel Elvena,
District manager—
Aortic Intervention—
Vascular division

Hired in: 1998

Rachel was born in Manila, Philippines and grew up in New Jersey. She attended Freehold Township High School, Middlesex Community College, Georgian Court University, and Rutgers University. She currently lives in Boca Raton, Florida. Before coming to Cook, she worked at Monmouth Medical Center and Jersey Shore University Medical Center.

Rachel began her Cook career as a district manager (DM) for Cardiology in New York City and New Jersey. Then, she became a DM for Peripheral Intervention (PI) in New Jersey, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. She later moved to Aortic Intervention (AI) as one of the original 12 reps when the division started. She eventually relocated to South Florida where she worked her way from a DM to a regional manager for AI for the southeast region and then to a product specialist in Advanced Technology. She later decided to go back to being a district manager in South Florida after having her son.

Outside of work, she likes to spend time with her family and friends. She enjoys cooking, sightseeing, bike riding, and going to the beach. She also volunteers for her church’s youth group.



“I have enjoyed learning and growing up with the company. I have also enjoyed working in different business units and different roles and responsibilities.”

Ken Calabrese,
Account executive—Vascular

Hired in: 1998

Ken's family moved to Bloomington from the Chicago area when he was 9 years old. He graduated from Bloomington High School North and attended Indiana University where he earned a bachelor's degree in telecommunications and a minor in business. His first job out of college was managing advertising for a small publication called *Bloomington Monthly Magazine*. He then worked for a computer software company that sold processing software to banks and credit unions. He later moved to St. Petersburg, Florida, to work for a company that managed payment processing for utility companies before deciding to go back to school to receive a degree as a veterinary technician.

He began his Cook career fresh out of veterinary technician school working with the Veterinary division. When the Veterinary division was closed two years later, he moved to the Urological and OB/GYN divisions located at Cook Spencer. During his time with Cook, Ken has worked in 5 different physical locations, had 18 office relocations, and held 7 different titles, including pricing coordinator, national accounts manager, corporate account executive, corporate accounts manager for Interventional Radiology, Cardiovascular accounts manager, and Vascular account executive.

Outside of work, Ken likes to travel to different places whenever he can. So far, he has been to 45 of the 50 states in the US and 19 different countries. He also enjoys being outdoors and attending both high school and college sporting events. He is currently working on earning a master's degree through the My Cook Pathway program.



"My time with Cook has always been enjoyable, and I learn something new almost every day. I made up my mind early on that if you stay engaged in your job and never stop learning, you will go places that you didn't ever expect to go. Take advantage of the different learning opportunities, cross-train on different products and departments, help others, and stop and think about how lucky we really are to work for such a great company like Cook Medical."

Lila Jones,
Disposable Needles/Plastics QC at Park 48

Hired in: 1996

Lila was born in Bedford, Indiana and grew up on the edge of Monroe County, Indiana on Hunter's Creek. She attended Heltonville High School where she met her husband of 48 years, **Jim**. They bought some land on Hunter's Creek and that is where they reside today. Before coming to Cook, Lila worked as a housekeeper for a sorority in Bloomington and as cook for Midwest Trail Ride Campground in Lawrence County, Indiana.



"I have enjoyed looking back and seeing how much things have changed over the years and the constant learning. The classes we took on self-awareness were really good. I enjoy Christmas the most. I enjoy giving gifts to my inspectors, whether it is food or a small gift, to show how much they are appreciated."

In 1996, Lila began her Cook career as a wire guide stuffer at the Curry Pike facility. After moving to Park 48, she transferred to Final Packaging QC and eventually became a group leader and then a supervisor. She is currently a supervisor for Disposable Needles/Plastics QC. She has 13 years of perfect attendance.

Outside of work, Lila and her husband enjoy fishing, hunting, and gardening. Each September, they host a party for their friends, family, and neighbors with anywhere from 50 to 150 guests. Lila loves spending time with her two sons, **Travis** and **Trevor**, and their families. Her hobbies also include sewing and crocheting afghans.

Troy W. Wingler,
Global product manager—OHNS—MedSurg

Hired in: 1998

Troy was born in Greencastle, Indiana, and raised in Coatesville, Indiana. He graduated from Cascade High School in Clayton, Indiana, and attended Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, where he pursued a degree in mechanical engineering. His family currently resides in Greenville, Indiana, where they have lived for a little over five years.

Cook Medical was Troy's first job after attending college. Prior to and during his summers at Rose-Hulman, he worked for his parents at Amo Feed and Grain and for his uncle at Wingler Concrete and Construction.

During his time at Cook, Troy has worked in several different areas. He started out as a product development engineer for Cook Urological (now Cook Spencer). In 2005, he transitioned into a global product manager (GPM) role for the assisted reproduction line for what is now the Reproductive Health specialty. After a few years in this role, he was given the opportunity to manage the Urology and Reproductive Health engineering teams. Over the next seven years, he managed seven different engineering teams: Urology, Reproductive Health, Regenerative Medicine, Otolaryngology, Design Controls, Lab Support, and Engineering Operations. In 2014, he became a field product specialist for Otolaryngology-Head & Neck (OHNS). In 2018, Troy transitioned into his current role as GPM for the OHNS team.

Outside of work, Troy's family keeps him busy. He has four daughters: three biological and one exchange daughter. He and his wife both love to travel and try to do so once a year by themselves. He volunteers with the All Pro Dad Program as the regional team captain for Indiana and the local team captain at Greenville Elementary School. Troy is also very involved in his church. He likes to hang out with friends often and enjoys hosting parties. Some of his other interests include boating on Patoka Lake, being outdoors, spending time with his family and friends, and golfing.



"There are a lot of things that I love about Cook, and it all starts with the family! In my 22 years at Cook, I have worked with many amazing people and have made great friendships. Cook is a part of my family. I have worked here for nearly half of my life, and I still love the family values of this great company. I feel incredibly blessed to be able to work for a company I love, with great values, and awesome people who truly put the patient first. I look forward to many more years of collaboration to ultimately transform healthcare for the benefit of patients and the physicians that serve them. Thanks for all the opportunities along the way!"

Treating blockages endovascularly

CXI® Support Catheter

Peripheral vascular disease (arterial or venous) is commonly used to describe diseases that cause narrowing or blockage of peripheral blood vessels that prevent blood flow to or from your arms and legs. There are two major ways of treating peripheral vascular disease: either through open surgery or endovascularly. Cook Medical provides the tools physicians need to treat these diseases endovascularly, and one of the stars in that product portfolio is the CXI® Support Catheter.

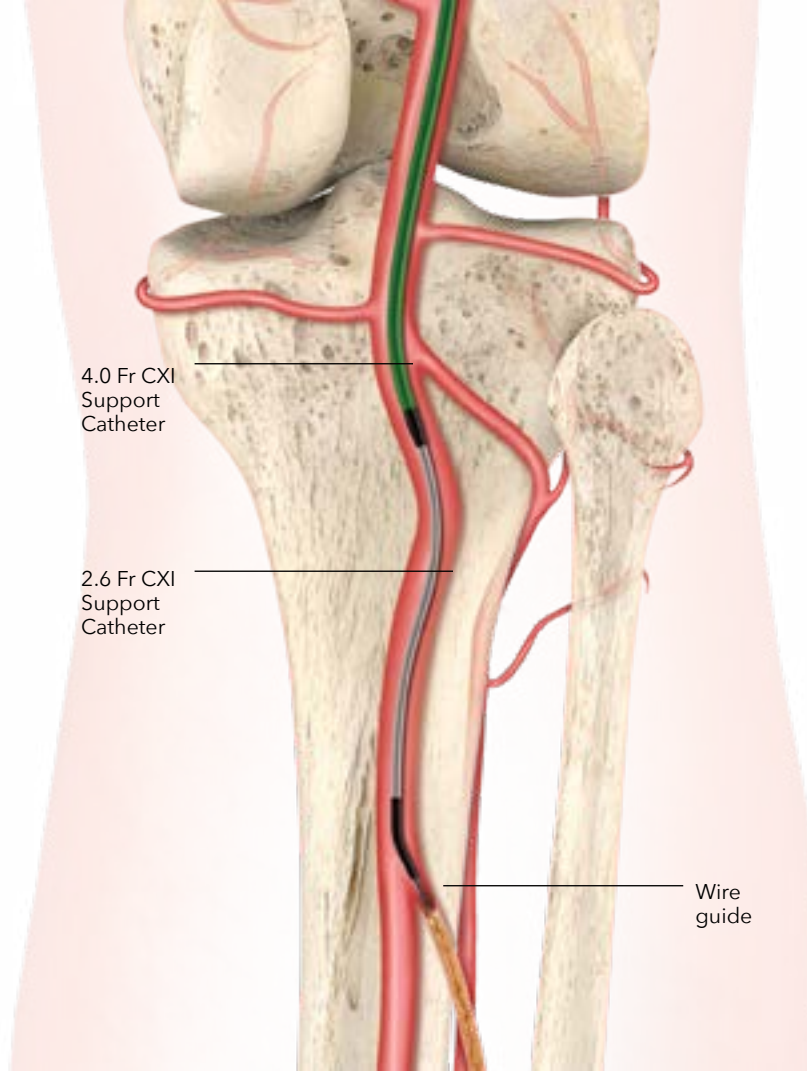
How it works

CXI is used in small vessel or superselective anatomy for diagnostic and interventional procedures, including peripheral use. CXI is made in the Balloons department 85 managed by **Lisa Fitzgearld** at Park 48 in Bloomington. CXI helps wire guides cross through blockages in peripheral blood vessels so that they can be treated endovascularly.

One way to think how CXI works together with the wire is to imagine a mechanical pencil. A mechanical pencil holds and supports the lead so that the writer has the ability to push down and write. This is similar how CXI provides support to the wire. By itself, the wire guide has a floppy tip so that it doesn't damage the vessel. The wire relies on CXI to help support it as it travels through the vessel and crosses through blockages.

Key features

The design of CXI provides pushability, trackability, and flexibility. There's a hydrophilic coating on the distal end (the far end) that makes the catheter slick and allows the catheter to move through the vessel. The platinum-iridium marker bands, which can be seen under fluoroscopy, help physicians know where the catheter is inside the body. The stainless-steel braiding on the catheter helps provide support to the wire guide.



▲ Coaxial use of CXI Support Catheters in a peripheral blood vessel.

Glossary

Support catheter: Type of intravascular catheter that is designed to provide support to a wire guide during access of the vascular system, including instances when a wire guide needs to cross a lesion

Endovascularly: Minimally invasive way to treat problems impacting blood vessels through an incision

Platinum-iridium marker bands: Bands made of a combination of metals that make the product easier to see under fluoroscopy and allow vessel measurement

Fluoroscopy: An x-ray that helps physicians see where the catheter is going inside the vessel

Stainless-steel braiding: Stainless steel braiding is a stainless steel wire braided in a specific pattern and embedded in a layer of the catheter shaft

Lesion: The damaged area of the vessel

Coaxial: When one catheter is inserted into another catheter to create a stiffer, more supportive system

The CXI catheter throughout the years

2010

The first generation CXI catheter became available and included 4 Fr and 2.6 Fr sizes.

2013

Cook created a second generation 2.3 Fr platform CXI catheter with platinum-iridium marker bands and a new design.

2015

A second generation 2.6 Fr platform with platinum-iridium marker bands is launched in EMEA.

2019

The second generation 2.6 Fr is launched in the US, Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Canada, and Hong Kong.

The design also includes a tapered tip that hugs the wire. This creates a seamless transition from the tip of the catheter to the wire guide and is designed to minimize vessel damage. The different tip types give the physician more options for how they use the tool. Angled tip options allow the physician to move the wire in different directions within the vessel, while a straight tip provides a direct approach to the blockage.

Making an impact

CXI is relatively new compared to the other catheters offered by Cook. Since its launch, CXI has made an impact on the Cook Medical Vascular product portfolio.

"The smaller sizes of CXI can help physicians in many ways including instances where the doctor needs to cross lesions below the knee," **Natalia Budaeva**, global product manager for specialty catheters and micropuncture, said.

CXI holds strong brand recognition in the US, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, and Australia, and Cook expects continued growth through 2020.

"CXI is a strong product that makes an impact on both physicians and the patients they treat, and I look forward to continue to see its impact," Natalia said.

• **Molly Cunningham** (*Molly.Cunningham@CookMedical.com*) is a written content specialist for the Vascular division.

Scan the QR code for more information.



Living a Mindful Life



I originally started practicing yoga in my mid 20s at a local gym and, at the time, I thought it was just for fitness and stretching.

Three years ago, my family and friends pointed out to me that I seemed to be constantly stressed and in a hurry. My mother highlighted that I had lost my spirituality. I was so far down the rabbit hole of fast-paced living, consumerism, and materialism that I questioned, "What exactly is spirituality?"

So, I decided to attend a yoga retreat. We meditated daily, and after each session I felt like I was on cloud nine. I felt so relaxed and calm. Every morning before dawn I woke to the beautiful call of birds. The morning after I returned home, I awoke to birds singing. I couldn't believe it—had these birds suddenly appeared? Of course not, but I was living such a fast-paced life, that I hadn't previously noticed. The worst part about this realization was the fact that I had been living in the same place for eight years and had never heard the birds.

That was my "aha" moment, and everything has evolved from there. As cliché as it sounds, I started to stop and smell the roses—literally—becoming aware of and appreciating the beauty around me. I started practicing yoga at a different studio and one teacher was instrumental in teaching me that slow is better than fast—both on and off the mat. I began meditating just over two years ago and started to realize that yoga is a lifestyle. This year I graduated from a level two yoga teacher training course.

The personal growth I have experienced has been and continues to be very rewarding and life changing. I feel balanced, grounded, calm, and focused when I practice yoga. When I let my practice slip, I notice a difference in myself, as do those in my life.

Every morning I practice the attitude of gratitude—I list at least five things I am grateful for. Gratitude is a part of mindfulness, and you don't need to practice yoga in order to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness can help relieve stress, lower blood pressure, reduce chronic pain, improve sleep, and alleviate gastrointestinal difficulties.

• **Pascale Delcour** (Pascale.Delcour@CookMedical.com) is a corporate accounts manager for the Urology division, based in Sydney Australia.

My biggest lessons are being mindful off the mat and being present with myself and with others. Here are a few ways you can practice mindfulness:

Declutter
your schedule, desk, home, and garage; this also helps declutter your mind.

Work on one task at a time. You will be more focused, more productive, and less likely to make mistakes.

Think of 5 things that you are grateful for.

Be present.
Getting swept up in the past or caught up in the future is what keeps us from being present in the moment and enjoying life right here and now.

Slow down, don't rush. Take your time and give yourself plenty of time to get from point A to B. You'll feel less stressed and also start to notice the beauty around you.

One of the gateways to being mindful is becoming **aware of your breath.**
In moments of stress or anxiety, take a deep, conscious breath and extend the count of your exhalation compared to your inhalation.

Eat slowly.
Really taste the food in your mouth. Chewing instead of gulping your food down can aid with digestion.

Spend time in nature—by the bush or forest.

► Page design by **Kennis Wong** (Kennis.Wong@CookMedical.com). Kennis is the design manager for APAC. She is based at Cook Hong Kong.

GRIP

GRIP

CATHETER
TUBING



CATHETER
SETS

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