



# A CEO FOR **ALL SEASONS**

Magna's presidents describe Don Walker as a man who is ready to cope with any challenge, from the shifting mobility landscape to a global pandemic.

He is someone who is at home in every setting, from the factory floor to the boardroom – and even a ride at Disney World.

Their reflections about the Magna CEO who has been at the helm through calm and turbulent waters help us learn about our past and contemplate our company's future.

## **A TURNING POINT**



“ I joined Magna in 2019 after working for Daimler for 27 years. People asked me if I was crazy to switch to Magna and start from scratch. But my first meeting with Don in Cologne, Germany, was a one-of-a-kind interview. We talked about how he sees the future and how I see the future, and all the pressure that is coming from government regulations, electrification and new mobility. We talked about what mobility will look like in 10 or 20 years. It was mind blowing.

Talking to him was a turning point. I absolutely did make the right decision. He has a vision and it's a vision that inspires people. It's impressive to see the speed that this company has moving forward because of him.

**FRANK KLEIN**, President  
Magna Steyr



## THE DOWN-TO-EARTH CEO



I've been with Magna for 20 years in part because Don Walker is living proof that you can be a good person and make it all the way to the top in this company. Regardless of my position and level, he's always treated me exactly the same. He listens to you and he follows up. He offers to be available at all hours on his private cellphone. He talks to hourly folks on the assembly line. For a CEO, he is down-to-earth, humble and respectful. Don doesn't wield his influence or power. He truly seeks to connect with all levels of the organization in a very consistent way.

I share those same values. I identify with the traits that Don shows. I see him as an example to follow.

**TOM RUCKER**, President  
Magna Powertrain



## SO MUCH POTENTIAL



Shortly after I started with Magna roof systems in 2012, Don visited one of our plants in Poland. What he did really struck me. He greeted the operators and talked to them. If an operator asked him a question, he listened. He kept this approach to the end, and because of the way he acted, I always hold up a mirror to myself. Like Don, I never want to lose being reachable to any employee.

At the same time, he ensured that it wasn't all about one person. In some companies, everything is centralized around one person. He knew decentralization is an advantage for Magna. Because of that, Magna still has so much potential, thanks to Don. There's so much more we can do.

**UWE GEISSINGER**, President  
Magna Electronics





## A THRILL RIDE



In March 2017, I was attending a GM Supplier Awards event in Orlando, Florida, with Don. The evening before the main event, there was an informal gathering of suppliers at Disney World. Don turned to me and said, "Let's go for a ride!" A few minutes later, I'm racing along on the Test Track ride located in Future World, part of the Chevrolet Design Center at Epcot. It's one thing I never thought I'd do with Don Walker. But it speaks to his character. He's very accessible.

It was a nice moment and makes me remember how down-to-earth Don is. He's the kind of guy you can spend a few minutes with, have a little fun and share a Disney ride together.

**GRAHAME BURROW**, President  
Magna Exteriors

## BUILDING A GOOD- WILL BANK ACCOUNT



One of the reasons I always wanted to work for Magna was because Don Walker was such an icon in the industry. I had a job interview with him in 2004 at his office in Newmarket. He was disarming in demeanor, but could throw in some sharp questions. After the interview, Mike Sinnaeve phoned me and said everything went well. I asked, "Was there any feedback?" "Yes," he said. "Don said you smile too much." It was a testimony to Don's intensity. While I don't "smile too much" less, I have picked up a lot of other habits from Don.

When I go to plants, I go out of my way to meet people. I eat in the lunchroom with everybody. It builds a goodwill bank account. When Don came to visit me in the plants, he'd be wearing boots, jeans and an older shirt. People on the plant floor loved him. Whether at a Magna event, or on the shop floor, Don will be remembered as someone who went out of his way to connect with people.

**JOHN WYSKIEL**, President  
Magna Seating



**LEFT TO RIGHT,**  
John O'Hara, Don Walker, Randy Cori, John Farrell and Paul Stroz.



I was the general manager of Dortec Industries in 1999. At the time, it had only one customer and just a couple of products. We were losing market share and the customer wanted to pull back.

## A KEY QUESTION

During a plant visit, Don pulled me aside and asked me one question that still resonates with me today. He said, “Dortec is a great company, but what does the business look like 10 years from now?”

That really changed my thinking. As a result, the team went into action. Today, Dortec has over 10 customers and plants in China and Mexico. It also supports European production. We went from two products to eight, including electronic latches and keypads. Now we’re a leading supplier for GM. I tell that story a lot and I’ve asked the same question to many general managers. Don changed my whole way of thinking about the future. It’s not just what’s in front of you today as a general manager. Take a step back and consider the future.

**JOHN O’HARA**, President  
Magna Mechatronics, Mirrors, Lighting



**LEFT TO RIGHT**, Don Walker, John Farrell, Klaus Niemeyer and Ray Musson

## CELEBRATING SUCCESS

When we successfully launched the world’s first power liftgate system 20 years ago, we had a celebration in Toronto for the entire North American team. Knowing the amount of effort and the many “firsts” with this launch, Don joined us at the party.

He acknowledged our achievement, saluted our success – and even engaged in some good-natured teasing by pointing out that my job was on the line throughout the process. That got a big laugh from the group! Despite the kidding, everyone knew Don had challenged us to be our best during this critical launch. Now it was time to enjoy our accomplishments and get some positive recognition.

Don continues to connect with our teams, challenge us and celebrate our wins. It’s a way of cementing our unique culture and keeping us strong. We have to carry it forward.

**JOHN FARRELL**, President  
Cosma Body & Chassis



