

# BRIDGING THE ENGINEER-TECHNICIAN VIEWPOINT IN AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE



As a process engineer, Jimmy Kung had firsthand visibility into Textron Aviation's manufacturing facilities in Wichita, Kansas, where he split his time between the office and the factory floor to ensure aircraft were assembled accurately.

Kung and his team held vital roles in the build process, analyzing assembly from start to finish. One day could be spent investigating an electrical wiring harness to ensure it would properly transmit power to an aircraft. The next day could be spent assessing the size and design of an aircraft part and coordinating with other engineering teams to confirm the right dimensions.

"It's a very technical job with a focus on planning," Kung said of his engineering role.

After three years as a process engineer, Kung began to explore career growth opportunities within Textron Aviation. He was eager to combine his engineering knowledge with customer-facing experience, and to view the aircraft from a different lens.

"I wanted to see the planes already flying and doing their job for our customers," Kung said.

He initially interviewed for a Customer Service Representative role within Textron Aviation's service center network. It ultimately led to an offer with the customer team at the company's Mesa, Arizona location.

Soon after arriving at the service center, Kung's role expanded to incorporate a direct line of communication with the facility's aircraft maintenance technicians (AMTs). The role also came with leadership responsibilities – a first in Kung's career. His new title: Technical Service Manager, overseeing a crew of AMTs performing aircraft upgrades, routine inspections and maintenance.

"Technical service managers coordinate with support teams across Textron Aviation and our vendors to solve any issues the customer may have," Kung said. "I help technicians successfully complete maintenance on an aircraft by giving them the resources and time they need to accomplish tasks like troubleshooting and inspections."

The fast-paced world of aircraft maintenance and customer support perfectly suits the former engineer, who now works with Cessna Citation and Beechcraft King Air operators as well as certified AMTs.

*“In a service center there’s constant movement and it’s very dynamic. In Wichita, you see the assembly happen, but here you’re seeing the reverse: airplane sections being disassembled for inspection or the inside of an aircraft being removed for interior work. It’s impressive to see.”*

— Jimmy Kung, technical service manager, Textron Aviation Mesa Service Center

The move from engineer to leader means Kung now has a new set of duties, an important one being a mentor to the technicians on the hangar floor.

“I have an apprentice on my team about to finish his maintenance certification, and he’s interested in becoming an engineer,” Kung said. “I share a lot of my experiences with him and let him know the differences and similarities I’ve encountered so far.”

A desire to see – and work with – aircraft from a different perspective was mutual for Kung. He recently took advantage of Textron Aviation’s tuition reimbursement program for employees and enrolled in AMT school to earn his airframe and powerplant (A&P) license. Today, he’s on the path to completing the 1,900 hours of training and education required to service the Citation jets he helped build in Wichita.

His combination of customer service, aviation maintenance and engineering experience means Kung offers a unique point of view to the operators and customer service managers who rely on him for information and updates on their aircraft during service visits.

“A lot of our customers are long-term and have brought their aircraft to us for years,” Kung said. “They like the personal approach we take, and once they get back in the air, they also know we stand behind our work.”

In Mesa, he's joined a group of professionals always willing to help each other, from line service crew to the general manager. The service center operates with a close-knit team of experts all working together to return aircraft to service. For Kung, it's the best part of the job.

"They make me want to come to work," he said. "It doesn't hurt to ask for help because someone is always going to be available to share their knowledge with me."

With multiple roles and skillsets under his belt, does Kung have a favorite job? Not yet.

"They're all fun, and I'm fortunate to have all this experience so early," he said.

He advises other young professionals to embrace change and lean into new opportunities.

"I didn't know what to expect coming to this side of the business, Kung said. "But, I got to move back home and learn something new along the way, so I'm glad I made the move."

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