Foreword

The What We Should Keep & the What We Should Change

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Since becoming involved in research and development, I have been constantly thinking about what it really takes to be an innovative engineer. Maybe I am just brainstorming to work out exactly what my aspirations and ideas are in terms of what I expect from myself and others as engineers.

I have had contact with many exceptional peers and senior colleagues in Japan. I respect and admire their abilities, and have learned all kinds of things and gained many insights from them. In the process of learning and applying Komatsu's technical and design standards, I noticed the hard work of predecessors and their strong desire to hand down their knowledge. We will further enhance our technical skills through repeated attempts, successes, or failures, and the corrective actions and safeguards we implement. We must carry on with this serious commitment, never ceasing to standardize and hand down those standardizations. Komatsu's technological track record has produced comprehensive, technical skills which are infused into the 3D models and drawings that we create and turn into products. There is no question that it is important to properly cultivate, hand down, and protect these technical skills.

I have also had the opportunity to meet many exceptional peers and senior colleagues in other countries, as well as engineers and researchers outside the company. These encounters have greatly influenced my current approach. They have a sincere approach to technology and the ambition to improve their own technical skills. But they were also willing to quickly restructure and change their previous approaches/stories in a flexible and highly rational manner in response to changes in the environment and circumstances. At first I was resistant to this frame of mind, but soon I learned that this was necessary to survive in a foreign market environment with many strong competitors. I also learned that change itself is a given, and that the speed at which the change is made is actually more important. For them change is perfectly natural and came about as part of the evolutionary struggle for survival.

That alone will never make you an innovative engineer. I do feel strongly that it is very important for engineers to keep up with standardization and handing down knowledge, and to change their approach in response to changes in the environment in a perfectly natural way. I think it is very important for each of us to think about what we should keep and what we should change, and to do so with a clear sense of the importance of each individual's role.

Komatsu's research and development will become truly globalized. In the process, I would like to contribute as much as I can to speeding up that transition.