

Foreword

The Importance of Co-creation

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On my desk, the Chinese character for “creation” is displayed. This is the character I chose when I was asked to think of one character that is meaningful to me at the 2020 New Executive Officer Seminar. Creating things, creating value, creating businesses, creating people I believed that “creation” will become the most important aspect of my future work.

In the past, I worked on a wide range of products as a designer at Komatsu. Starting with industrial robot controllers, touch panels for factory automation, touch screen information terminal platforms, projector servers, multi-monitors for construction machinery, KomVision for mining machinery, iMC machines, and more, development has always been fraught with hardships. Some products never became a business, while others encountered inexplicable problems at the last minute before being commercialized. Fortunately, I was always able to be involved in creating highly innovative products.

Some of the exemplary innovations created by my predecessors so far include KOMTRAX, AHS, iMC machines, and hybrid excavators. I believe that all such innovations were created by overcoming difficulties and, moreover, through co-creation. KOMTRAX may never have been released if BIG RENTAL had not adopted it at the time. AHS would not have been possible without the collaboration with the dispatch system of Modular Mining Systems Inc. at the time. The iMC machine could not have been released as a world-first product without the collaboration with Company T, and even the hybrid excavator was made possible by the in-house mass production of capacitors through the collaboration with Company P.

Recently, I attended CES, the world’s largest tech event. Komatsu exhibited innovative equipment including lunar construction machinery, underwater construction machinery, and electric construction machinery. As this was our first time exhibiting at CES, we attracted a great deal of attention and were widely featured in domestic and international media. These products are also created through various collaborations. At other companies’ booths, there were many products that featured new technologies such as SDV, AI, and EV, created through global collaboration. It has been several years since we first advocated open innovation, but we are still in the midst of our journey, and feel that various forms of co-creation will continue to be necessary moving forward.

Komatsu’s identity is “creating value through manufacturing and technology innovation to empower a sustainable future where people, businesses, and our planet thrive together”. One of the company’s values is “collaboration”, which means “creating value comes from teamwork, inclusion, respect, diversity and a win-win approach to all relationships”. I strongly believe that this is the focal point for our development team today.