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In my early days with the company, I was put in charge of projects at the Overseas Engineering Division, taking my first overseas business trip to work on production startup preparation. That factory was already manufacturing a competitor's products, and the project involved manufacturing Yamaha Motor products under the same roof. I took with me the specifications and quotations for the equipment, jigs, and tools etc. necessary for production startup, and when I made my explanations based on those materials, factory engineers complained that they were so expensive. I thought I had prepared well and my presentation would be received positively, but their response was a shock for me. They asked for an explanation of why everything was so expensive, pressed me to clarify the necessary functionality, and demanded that we choose items which could be manufactured and procured locally. I remember being very stressed by it all. I was made painfully aware of my weakness in not fully understanding the necessary functionality. In addition, I was embarrassed that I had not stood in the customer's shoes and understood what was real value and what was unnecessary. My proposal was lacking from the customer's perspective.

Even now, I can clearly remember the factory engineers' words. "If that's what you want, then Yamaha Motor products will lose competitiveness."

At the end of last year, we announced the Medium-term Management Plan, in which we clarified our management direction in the medium to long term, which is to aim to become "a unique company that continues to achieve dynamic milestones."

Among the four growth strategies across three business fields, what we must be specific about above all else is strengthening foundational technology. Given the limitations of corporate resources, it is necessary to advance product development in existing business more efficiently and apply the surplus generated to growth businesses to create momentum towards the efficient provision of popular products and services. The critical aspect is how to connect strengthened foundational technology to attractive products and services, and how quickly the value we create - which customers had not experienced - can be provided to customers before it is noticed. Therefore, it is important that we have the creativity and intellectual curiosity to create unknown value, which is not just to Yamaha but also to the industry. To that end, the continued proactive development of contact points with the market and opportunities for interaction with customers is essential. Even in technological development, while continuing to hone our marketing sense, it is important to understand the needs of the market, share our objectives first across the three departments of manufacturing, sales, and technology, and work together into the future.

I believe that we can create better products by promoting technological development in which our engineers themselves also experience excitement (revs) by imagining the moment of the expressions of surprise and happy smiles on our customers' faces. In this sense as well, I believe that in the future it will be important to look at our technological development from the perspective of how much we did or can innovatively increase the value provided to customers.

"The company growing" means "continually creating further demand". In other words, providing services for existing customers to keep choosing Yamaha products, as well as constantly working to help new customers also come and choose Yamaha. Supporting and continually contributing to this demand creation through technical capabilities is our role. Surpassing customer expectations at purchase even after purchase is at the core of the Yamaha brand, and we very much want to deliver products and services which surpass the expectations of all customers. Through the value we create with our technical capabilities, the feeling of Kando* will be experienced by individual customers and then shared with even more customers. This will further contribute to not only the growth of the company, but also the development of the industry.

Ultimately, I want Yamaha Motor products and services to play an indispensable role in society.

*Kando is a Japanese word for the simultaneous feelings of deep satisfaction and intense excitement that we experience when we encounter something of exceptional value.

入社早々の駆け出しの頃、海外技術部のプロジェクト担当になり、生産立ち上げ準備の仕事で初めて海外出張をした。その工場ではすでに競合他社の生産も行っており、同じ建屋内でヤマハ製品の生産を行うというプロジェクトであった。生産立ち上げに必要な設備、治具、工具等の仕様書・見積もりを携え、その資料をベースに説明をしてみたが、それらの値段が高いと先方の技術者から散々クレームがついた。一通りの準備をして、納得して頂けるものと考えていた自分にとっては大変ショックだった。なぜそんなに高額なのか説明を求められ、さらには必要機能を明確にして、現地で製造・調達できるものを判断してくれと迫られ困ったことを覚えている。必要機能をしっかりと理解していない弱さを痛感した。加えてお客様側に立ち、何が本当の価値で何が不要なものなのか理解していないことを恥ずかしく感じた。お客様目線での提案が足りなかったのだ。

先方の技術者の言葉を今でも覚えている。「そういうことではヤマハ製品の競争力は無くなるよ。」

昨年末に中期経営計画を発表し、「ひとまわり・ふたまわり大きな『個性的な会社』」を目指すべく中長期の経営方向感が明確になった。3つの事業領域を踏まえた4つの成長戦略の中で、とりわけ我々がしっかりと具体化しなければならないのが、「基盤技術の強化」である。限られた経営資源の中では、既存事業はより効率的に開発を進め、生み出した余力を成長事業に振り分け、売れる製品・サービスに効率良くつながる流れを創り出していく必要がある。重要なのは強化した基盤技術を魅力ある製品・サービスにどう繋げるかであり、お客様が経験したことがない価値をお客様が気づく前にどれだけ早く提供できるかである。そのためには我々自身にとってはもちろんのこと、業界にとっても未知の価値を創り出していく探究心・発想力が重要であり、市場との接点や顧客との交流の機会をもっと積極的に、継続的に作らなければならない。技術開発においてもマーケティングセンスを磨きながら市場ニーズを理解し、製・販・技が目標を共有して一緒に走っていくことが肝要である。

開発者自身も、お客様が驚く顔、喜ぶ笑顔を思い浮かべながら、その瞬間のためにワクワク(Rev)感を持って技術開発を進めることで、より良いものが出来ると信じる。そういった意味でも、今後は、我々の技術開発の指標として、お客様への提供価値をどのくらい革新的に向上できるか、できたかという視点で見ていくことも重要だと考える。

「会社が成長する」ということは、「需要を創り出し続けていく」ということと捉えている。つまり、すでにヤマハ製品を愛用いただいているお客様には引き続き選んでいただき、新しいお客様にもヤマハを選んでいただくということである。そうした需要創造を技術力で支え、継続的に貢献していくのが我々の役割である。是非とも、ヤマハブランドの根幹である、お客様が購入いただいた後にも、購入時の期待を超える価値を100%実感していただけるような製品・サービスの提供を実現していきたい。技術力で創り出す価値によって、我々の企業目的でもある「感動」が、多くのお客様の共感となって拡がり、その先には会社の成長だけでなく、業界の発展にも寄与できるものと考えている。

そして、ヤマハ発動機の製品・サービスが社会的にもなくてはならない存在になることを実現したい。

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