

Comments from an Outside Director



Outside Director
Masamitsu Sakurai

I believe one of the reasons I was asked to serve as an Outside Director of Yamaha Motor is that my background is with a company that is also engaged in *Monozukuri* (engineering, manufacturing, and marketing). Since its founding, Ricoh, where I serve as Executive Advisor, has cultivated technologies in a variety of areas through product development. Utilizing such technological assets, we are constantly pursuing new technological innovation and development from the “customer’s perspective” to create new values. As an Outside Director from a *Monozukuri* company in another field, I see my function as that of an advisor who utilizes this experience to enable Yamaha Motor to achieve sustainable growth.

Given the difficult economic environment globally, what are today’s companies looking for? I believe they are looking for “responsible strength,” meaning able to compete at a global level along with the integrity to be trusted by society. Putting aside whether a company as an entity is good or bad, companies have distinct cultures that they have developed over many years. The nature of this culture is not spelled out in a manual, but nevertheless the culture becomes a de facto standard for all employees to follow, influencing their value judgments—and is particularly deeply ingrained in the senior levels of management. There is nothing of which we have less awareness, but is more difficult to change, than culture. For a culture to progress in

response to changes in the environment, it is important for managers to set an example through leadership, with timely action and a strong sense of responsibility to drive growth and development. It is also important that the management structure be sensitive to change. It is essential for managers to verify whether results are being generated as envisioned, and whether management’s actions are contributing to improved earnings or are acting as a safety measure. Given the flexibility and respect shown to the Outside Directors including myself at meetings of the Board of Directors and the Management Research Committee, I consider Yamaha Motor to be a company with very effective corporate governance.

For a *Monozukuri* enterprise to successfully compete in the future, it must determine how to provide customers with even greater added value. With a diverse range of products, Yamaha Motor is able to combine various fields and technologies, and has the potential to change the way people live. I expect the company to be even more innovative in the future.

The experience that I have is based on my own successes and failures. I hope to use this experience to help to enhance Yamaha Motor’s corporate value, as a *Kando* Creating Company that brings joy, surprise, inspiration, richness, and happiness to people around the world.

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