

Foreword

Be an Independent Thinker



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While the automobile industry is amid an ongoing global reorganization, the electronics industry is trying to find a breakthrough by developing information communications technology further.

In addition to achieving cost cutting and weight reduction by bringing in a modular system, automobile parts suppliers are required to provide products that irresistibly attract customers. A proverb says, "Every specialist has his own strong point." By putting each company's strong points together instead of working apart, we have to develop a revolutionary modular system.

Meanwhile, product cycle is getting shorter and it has become imperative that we should reduce the product development period.

In order to pick up the pace of development, it is necessary to select appropriate themes for development, concentrate your energies on development according to themes, and establish a system under which development proceeds in a joint effort.

It is essential to broaden your horizons and obtain comprehensive knowledge in order to produce better products on the basis of combined forces. Regarding the components to be manufactured under your charge, in addition to paying attention to the functions required, interface, and usage, you have to gain understanding about the components manufactured by other companies, taking into account that they will be incorporated into your products.

On the other hand, we have to bear in mind that we cannot survive without further developing strength in our own technology. We have to enhance our technological ability to the highest level in the world. In my opinion, the technological ability of a company depends on the number of case studies the company has conducted rather than that of exceptionally talented engineers.

Technological ability will be enhanced by various experiences in the markets. In other words, meteorological conditions, including frigid temperatures and tropical climate, usage that has never been expected by engineers, as well as the preferences and needs of customers in various countries will enhance our

technological ability. I hope expansion of business with automakers and parts suppliers in various countries will increase the number of case studies, leading to enhancement of our technological ability.

"Be an Independent Thinker," which I chose as a title, can be of the greatest help to each engineer in order to improve his/her own ability. We tend to perform our duties without thinking. "Satisfying customer's requirements," "observing supervisor's instructions," or "following conventional methods" tends to be a motivation for what we are doing.

Try to understand why the design was employed, whether the test evaluation conditions are appropriate or not, whether the precondition is adequate or not, etc.

Remain flexible and abandon stereotypes, or innovative new products will never be produced.

This may be an unnecessary addition, but we should also be careful about preconditions. I will show you one example based on my experience.

At the venue of the Tokyo Motor Show, which was held some time ago, there was a section attracting visitors with the catchphrase, "A computer helps you select the most appropriate vehicle." If a visitor input his/her personal information about age, gender, occupation, hobbies, annual income, favorite food, favorite foreign countries, etc. into the computer, the computer made an analysis on the most appropriate model and grade for him/her according to the input information. Most people think a computer-aided analysis is authoritative or trustworthy, but actually this is not true.

In this case, it was revealed that the computer gave analysis mostly based on the person's annual income, although it required him/her to answer various questions. In addition, the most striking precondition was the fact that all vehicle models input into the computer were manufactured by the company "N".



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