

Market Oriented Products



Akio Nagata

◇ By pursuing continual reform in response to changes in society, our company has grown in nineteen years to attain annual sales of 100 billion yen. Having been given the opportunity to write the preface to this edition of Fujitsu TEN Technical Journal as a representative of our marketing operation, I would like to make some comment on corporate reform. I shall be pleased if my comment helps readers to gain a better understanding of what we mean by corporate reform.

The term “marketing” has long occupied me and has motivated me in various ways. I have discussed the subject of marketing with many people, but have found that I have not shared the same view with any of them.

People tend to argue the definition and essence of marketing from their own angles. For instance, there is a view that marketing is a science which corporations use to adapt themselves to the environment in response to changes in consumption and demand caused by the political, economic, and social conditions — obviously, a reasonable definition. Since people make their comments on different occasions and from different standpoints, their definitions of marketing are unlikely to be identical. However, if you do not adhere to methods or techniques, but instead focus on underlying ideas, you will find a common purpose — to find what should be reformed.

◇ I believe that marketing, as defined by a commodity manufacturer like Fujitsu TEN, should be “the creative application of skill and knowledge by the manufacturer and its competitors in order to meet the needs of potential

customers.” Speaking from a sales point-of-view, I would stress that the capability to collect market information and supply commodity information is indispensable.

◇ Where do dealers get information about new commodities? Good managers often get more information directly from manufacturers’ salespersons rather than relying on ordinary manufacturer-supplied information. In fact, they get far more information through this route than through television, newspapers, and other mass communication media or even new-commodity exhibitions or public-relation leaflets provided by the manufacturers.

When meeting dealers, manufacturers have the important aim of obtaining fresh market information. Dealers recognize this meeting as a means for getting correct information quickly. Both sides thus value this type of contact. As a result, the way a given manufacturer offers information to dealers can greatly influence competition between rival manufacturers.

Dealers who are both managers and sales persons benefit from word-of-mouth communication. They also serve as buyers and are better acquainted with what customers want than anyone else involved in distribution. In short, they are the people with the best grasp of market activities.

Our sales department is trying to achieve a sweeping reform of market-oriented activities. The emphasis on communication for sales activities must be shifted to contact with dealers. Good results cannot be obtained if salespersons continue to use the same strategies as before. We must offer dealers information and suggestions which they consider useful. For example, consider inventory information. It must cover the entire distribution area to enable location of a particular commodity and yet must be easily usable. When announcing a new product, you should offer information about not only the marketing schedule, but also other details which might be useful for store managers. Obviously further

effort is necessary in collecting and using information from customers who have bought our products by obtaining POS data and issuing questionnaires. In addition, it is also necessary to listen to those drivers who have not bought our products in order to find out how they consider us and our products.

◇ I often say, “Don’t just pay attention to competitive products; listen to the customers who are using automobiles and who come to the stores.” Paying attention to competitive products is manufacturer-oriented. The important thing is to believe that we are concerned with the good of the customer. I also say, “When you lose confidence, go to stores. If you cannot regain confidence at stores, listen to customers who have come to buy a car” audio equipment.

When analyzing customer opinions or preference patterns obtained from POS scanner data, you must be careful in the conclusions you draw because raw information may be biased by calculation or restraint on the part of the respondent. This may sound like a tough task, but I believe that if you make every effort to seek for truth, you will at last see success within your reach.



Akio Nagata,
Managing Director