



Chairman, Yazaki Corporation  
Yasuhiko Yazaki

## Defending Constant Foundations and Taking on Challenges without Fear of Change

Professor Satoshi Chikami from Nihon Fukushi University and Yasuhiko Yazaki, Chairman, Yazaki Corporation discussed what issues the Yazaki Group should value in order for the society to maintain its sustainable growth.

### Yazaki Group's Origin

**Chikami:** The Yazaki Group has expanded its business extensively throughout the world since its establishment in 1941. Could you tell me what you value in doing business as the Chairman?

**Yazaki:** The environment surrounding the Yazaki Group has continually changed, but we have valued the Yazaki Group Corporate Policy as a constant anchor in all kinds of circumstances. The inspiration for the Yazaki Group Corporate Policy, which is "A Corporation in Step with the World" and "A Corporation Needed by Society," is the desire of our founder to contribute to the society through manufacturing. The scale of management has changed dramatically since the days when the company was established, but the Yazaki Group Corporate Policy is the standard by which the Yazaki Group determines its actions and ideas, and I believe that it is my responsibility as a manager to pass it on unchanged to the future generations.

### Discussion

## Yasuhiko Yazaki X Satoshi Chikami

**Chikami:** You are saying that the Yazaki Group Corporate Policy is the constant undercurrent flowing through the Yazaki Group. I felt that the support\* you gave to employees when you withdrew from the business in Samoa is really typical of the Yazaki Group.

\*See TOPICS on page 30

**Yazaki:** The Yazaki Group currently operates business in 46 countries around the world, and we respect our partners and want to engage in dialogue in every region and every situation. I think the important things in running a global business are firstly to fully understand local needs and to think about what it is that we can do. Based on this thought, I have told our expats from Japan to have a meal with local people, to take part in cleaning with them, and to be sad together with them as well to have an awareness that we are borrowing their homes to do our business. I believe that it is important to fit well into the local community to this extent in order for a corporation to run business in a country. On the other hand, when pulling out is unavoidable as in the case of Samoa, it is important to give the maximum consideration to the business colleagues and the local community we have been working with so that in the end our business partners will tell us we are welcome back. We will continue to look into the distant future and build trusting relationships without forgetting the feeling of gratitude we owe people. I believe that building up such feelings paves the way to the realization of the Yazaki Group Corporate Policy.

**Chikami:** However, given the scale of the Yazaki Group, I should think it is no easy task to disseminate the Yazaki Group Corporate Policy to each and every employee and to keep handing it down as a thing with substance. What is important from the perspective of disseminating the Yazaki Group Corporate Policy as the Group develops its business in diverse countries and regions?

**Yazaki:** As you said, disseminating these ideas to some 300,000 employees is no easy task. However, I believe that we can produce tremendous value by persistently communicating the purpose and meaning to every single person despite national, cultural, and linguistic differences. Take cleaning, for example. There are many countries that are said to be developing among the countries that the Yazaki Group has expanded into, and in many cases an inconvenient and insanitary environment with unsatisfactory toilets is the norm. In such environments, we respectfully teach the value of cleanliness and entrench our 5S culture, which includes forming a habit of cleaning and keeping things tidy and in order.

**Chikami:** I have visited Yazaki sites. I felt that great care was taken with cleaning and keeping things tidy and in order in an effort to make work easier. I believe this is the result of efforts based on these ideas.

**Yazaki:** It takes time to get to that state. However, understanding the 5S approach also develops the concept of quality control for the first time and translates into pride as a manufacturing company and to job satisfaction. I think that this is a great strength for corporations as well. What also pleases me is the fact that employees actively participate in local community cleanups and other activities by using their experience cultivated at the Yazaki Group. I want employees to increasingly continue participating in the future.

### Being the Yazaki Group that Develops in Step with the Local Community

**Chikami:** Changing the topic of our discussion a bit, businesses such as agriculture and nursing care in Japan are activities of the Yazaki Group that I have been following for some time. Could you tell me your thoughts on such businesses?

**Yazaki:** Over the past few years, the Yazaki Group has been working on the Agriculture, Nursing Care, and Environment & Recycling businesses. The Yazaki Group Corporate Policy is also at the root of these businesses. The Yazaki Group leverages the know-how and teamwork cultivated through its business characteristics in the manufacture of wire harnesses as well as the individuality of our employees to address the issues faced by local communities in partnership with those communities. While the pace may be slower than in the wire harness business, there is a real sense of steady community-based development. Because it is an era when change is the norm, we will listen carefully to the voices of local people to consider and propose the businesses we can develop together.

**Chikami:** I have actually visited the Agriculture business, and I had a real sense that the business was brought to life from within the community and existed in partnership with the community. I hope that the Yazaki Group's approach of establishing the businesses needed to resolve community issues will continue in the future from the perspective of enhancing community value.

### For the Society to Maintain Sustainable Growth

**Chikami:** Coming to my final question, what do you think is important for the Yazaki Group so that the society maintains sustainable growth?

**Yazaki:** The Yazaki Group Corporate Policy is still our foundation, but I think it is vital that each and every employee who is responsible for realizing it has the spirit to keep changing and remaking the company themselves. The business environment surrounding the Yazaki Group has changed dramatically, and we can truly say these are turbulent times. In



Professor, Faculty of International Welfare Development,  
Nihon Fukushi University

#### Satoshi Chikami

**Areas of Specialization** Professor Chikami's areas of specialization include regional environmental planning, environmental learning, and education for sustainable development (ESD). He conducts empirical research on sustainable development while integrating the approaches of natural science and social science. In Japan, he helps promote participatory regional development and collaborative urban development among citizens, businesses, and local governments. Outside of Japan, he conducts field-oriented surveys and research on the development of a sustainable society overseas centering on the developing regions in Asia.

this turbulent period, the spirit to keep creating new rules and taking on challenges by oneself rather than being confined by the existing rules is absolutely critical. I want each and every individual, particularly the young generation of employees who will underpin the Yazaki Group in the future, to act boldly without fear of change. I have established opportunities for dialogue in the Follow-up Workshop\* for young employees. Through this dialogue, I want to get to know what perspectives these employees have and what they perceive as issues and provide concrete support to employees as a company to take on diverse challenges. I hope that this will translate into sustainable growth for the Yazaki Group, thereby paving the way for the sustainable development of society.

\*See *Yazaki-juku* on page 26

**Chikami:** You are saying that it is important to balance defending the solid foundations with taking on challenges without fear of change.

**Yazaki:** I hope we will continue to advance daily toward the realization of the Yazaki Group Corporate Policy. Having this discussion with you has been an opportunity to revisit the origins of the Yazaki Group again. Thank you very much for today.