

A Company That Earns Your Trust



What is expected of a company to gain the trust of society? We invited some key figures from outside the company to discuss the responsibilities that a business has with regard to its place in society, and to get pointers on the direction in which TDK should be going.

The question of what a company should do to fulfill the expectations of society and earn its trust is at the heart of the CSR concept. This was the main topic of the discussion. Three outside CSR experts with different backgrounds provided valuable advice and insights, based on their respective experiences and viewpoints.

Ms. One Akiyama, president of Integrex Inc., an independent research company specializing in integrity-based socially responsible investment (SRI) talked about changes in value concepts expected from the industry and which role CSR should play in the activities of a business. Mr. Toshihiko Fujii who works at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and has extensive experience in negotiations with European government

institutions and industry representatives stressed that CSR should be seen not as theoretical principle or an externally imposed obligation but as a means of risk management and a business strategy. Finally, Mr. Masaaki Kogure who previously headed the corporate secretarial office at Daiei gave his views on what a business needs to survive, based on his extensive experience.

In response, participants from TDK voiced opinions such as “CSR already seems to be one of the preconditions when dealing with customers.” “CSR should be rooted in the particular tradition and culture of a company.” and “Delivering products of high quality will be the key to CSR as implemented by TDK.”

Participants for TDK

Seiji Enami, Director and Executive Vice President
Junji Yoneyama, Corporate Officer and General Manager, Human Resources Department
Osamu Yotsui, General Manager, Management Review & Support Department
Takahiro Kokai, Manager, Planning Section, Strategic Sales Division, Electronic Components Sales & Marketing Group
Tetsushi Shimonishi, Planning Section, Strategic Sales Division, Electronic Components Sales & Marketing Group
Koji Inukai, General Manager, Quality Assurance Department
Yoshitaka Mochizuki, Manager, Quality Planning Section, Quality Planning Group, Quality Assurance Department

Kimio Watanabe, Manager, Planning Group, Procurement & Logistics Department
Akihiko Ayabe, Senior Manager, Personnel Group, Human Resources Department
Kenichiro Fujisaki, Leader, Legal Group, Legal Department
Hirofumi Inoue, Sub Leader, Legal Group, Legal Department
Toshinobu Shiokawa, General Manager, Safety & Environment Office
Hiroshi Kobayashi, Global Warming Countermeasure Section, Safety & Environment Office
Tatsuhiko Atsumi, General Manager, Corporate Communications Department
Kazuyuki Kawamoto, Manager, CSR Task Force, Corporate Communications Department



Opinions of Outside Experts



One Akiyama

President
Integrex Inc.

Since last year, there has been a significant change in the value perception of businesses worldwide. Emphasis is clearly shifting from short-term profits to creating long-term value. The main focus no longer is simply the profit margin but the process of creating value. And this process is what CSR is all about.

All members of a company, the entire staff, need to understand the company principles and what the company is aiming for. Therefore it is important to think about what CSR means for any particular company. It must be an expression of the characteristics of the company. By sharing the same values and working for the same goals, the various departments of a company no longer will operate in isolation, concerned only with what's best for them. Rather, they will be working towards what's best for the entire enterprise and what's best for society. This is what CSR activities should be all about.



Masaaki Kogure

Ph.D., Sociology
Senior Researcher,
Institute of Prosocial Research

I often point out that CSR could be taken to stand for “Rely,” “Satisfy,” and “Consistency.” Without these three elements, there will be no trust, and without trust from the public and society, a business cannot continue to exist.

In the case of a business-to-business company such as TDK, the natural tendency may be to focus on the immediate customer, but it is important to keep the fact in mind that at the end of the chain there is the end user.

Another important element for the healthy development of a company is to create a company climate where staff can speak their minds freely and where they can develop and realize their potential fully. Creating such a culture within the company is the most important CSR activity in my experience.



Toshihiko Fujii

Director, Multilateral Trade System Department,
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
Consulting Fellow,
Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry

The concept of CSR originated in demands made by society, that is to say it was externally imposed on the industry. However, there are cases worldwide where, in meeting these external demands, the technological and organizational changes made by a company led to their developing new markets and becoming more competitive. Engaging in CSR can be seen as a powerful strategic move on the part of a company. CSR is not merely a matter of attitude, rather it implies that a company actively looks forward and tries to identify and predict issues that will become important to society at large. This in itself is an important management aspect. In this sense, it must be handled in a professional manner and requires the establishment of a dedicated department.

Responses from TDK



Seiji Enami
Director and Executive Vice President,
TDK Corporation

This meeting made me realize anew the interdependence between the very existence of a business and CSR.

“When in doubt, do not look at short-term profits but consider ‘what is beautiful?’” With this advice from former leaders of our company in mind, we should not only respond to the short-term requirements of our customers but also look at the big picture. We need to clearly realize what society expects of us, both now and in future, and what we can do to further harmony and integration in our organization. These are the topics that will guide our activities from now on.



Junji Yoneyama
Corporate Officer
General Manager, Human Resources
Department, TDK Corporation

I believe that TDK so far has pursued a very down-to-earth policy with regard to CSR activities, but I came to realize that we may not have communicated this fully to our staff.

We need to spread the word internally, to make our goals clear, and then pursue these activities in such a way that they contribute to the organization as a whole.