Roundtable Discussion

Heading towards a further growth phase

Change of activities in terms of production from VITALIZATION to integration, to be ‘One ULVAC’

Moderator: Noriaki Suzuki
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Since fiscal 2012, ULVAC Group has been pursuing the ‘structural business reform project’ with the keyword of VITALIZATION. This has led to strengthened global cooperation with our development, sales and production sections, and increased product competitiveness and profitability, etc. In addition, in order to achieve further solid growth, we have changed our course towards management that embodies the keyword of ‘One ULVAC’. With that in mind, the managers of manufacturing department met and held a round-table talk to discuss how we have been attempting to enhance our collective capabilities, based on our development capability and human resources that are the origin of the ULVAC Group’s value creation.

Moderator: It certainly seems that through the structural business reform project, the role of the Advanced Manufacturing Division has changed considerably.

Odagi: The role of the Advanced Manufacturing Division has been mainly to support other divisions such as improvement of operational efficiency (e.g. accounting, email systems) through the introduction of IT, administrative office of the quality and environmental management systems, conducting quality inspections, purchasing parts and support for ensuring safety and protecting the environment before. However, at present we are also responsible for certainly implementing front loading and making systems to create stable profit under the structural business reform project made three years ago. Specifically, it is our main mission now that we actively participate in MONODZUKURI site of divisions and cooperative working group companies, instruct and advise them for improvement depending on the situation, and control the whole Group’s MONODZUKURI. So to speak, our role has been changed from supporting divisions to leading them. It confused us a little at first, but now all of us feel a firm sense of mission toward further growth of ULVAC Group.

Moderator: One year has now passed since you assumed the management role of manufacturing. How do you rate the current status of the implementation of front loading and MONODZUKURI systems?

Odagi: Over the last three years, our keyword has been VITALIZATION and I think that by thoroughly implementing front loading, we have certainly established MONODZUKURI systems that will create profit according to our plan. Although we faced various issues during the course of our activities, but we re-examining our way of conducting business from scratch, and to the entire Group coming together to strive for improvement, rather than being bound by conventional practices. Since the time we introduced front loading, the number of troubles and production budget overruns have actually decreased. Also, as we have started to see improvements come to fruition, our motivation and drive have increased, and exchanges of ideas between departments have become livelier. Furthermore, the efforts of each business division have exhibited synergetic effects so that the entire Group’s MONODZUKURI systems and attitude have been vitalized and have been improving exponentially.

Morimoto: At the moment, changes in business conditions are extreme and I think that the amount that can be achieved by making improvements in a single organization or a single division is limited. However, through the whole Group has a common way of thinking and share ideas to conduct initiatives in this manner, we have been developing many new ideas and have been able to raise results and efficiency by several levels. Our mission at the Advanced Manufacturing Division is to constantly promote vitalization while ensuring that we monitor these kinds of initiatives. At present, the results of our front-loading initiatives are gradually improving however, I would like to see us to promote further vitalization with the aim of ensuring establishment and effective operation at each department and Group-wide implementation.

Moderator: On the point of VITALIZATION, three ULVAC Group Vitalization Programs have been rolled out since fiscal 2014. Please tell us about the background of these initiatives and the activities that they entail.

Hirose: Expanding initiatives that have previously been conducted in individual countries to the entire Group has generated a sense of friendly rivalry, which has served as an impetus, and increasing opportunities for communication has resulted in all employees engaging passionately with these initiatives. Actually, the other day we participated in the preliminary in China, which provided an opportunity to showcase the success to the whole group, and I felt that this greatly increased motivation. Also, I heard that the number of employees who wished to engage in further study of engineering in Japan is increasing. I think it is fair to say that one of the results of the current programs is that they have increased the enthusiasm of all employees.

Moderator: Speaking of enhancing engineering capabilities, in fiscal 2015 the Advanced Manufacturing Division established a new Production Training Planning Center, who is now engaged in engineering training.
the future outlook for initiatives aimed at ‘One ULVAC’ at the Advanced Management with the keyword of ‘One ULVAC’. Please tell us about President Obinata has stated that from fiscal 2015, ULVAC will promote

Finally, I would like to ask about future initiatives.

Morimoto: In the future, I expect that these training programs will lead to further growth of employees and career enhancement. For example, employees who have gained experiences in manufacturing might aim to become manufacturing leaders or managers. Another option would be to leverage the experiences gained through manufacturing and aim for a job in design or engineering. Having a personnel mobility that is not always fixed on the same task vitalizes both organizations and employees; that not only engages in a broad range of industries, but also one that is needed by society.

Moderator: Finally, I would like to ask about future initiatives. President Obinata has stated that from fiscal 2015, ULVAC will promote management with the keyword of ‘One ULVAC’. Please tell us about the future outlook for initiatives aimed at ‘One ULVAC’ at the Advanced Manufacturing Division.

**Global Production**

Diversity (having human resources with different ways of thinking and from different cultures) stimulates and vitalizes organizations. We continue developing ULVAC Group Vitalization program and enhancing its value chain as integrated group in order to ascertain what our strength in MONODZUKURI is, to enhance it more and to make up for deficiencies.

**ULVAC Group Vitalization Program**

Employees, who work for ULVAC in departments such as engineering, manufacturing, administrative, sales and head-office, compete by their skills and their results that they usually cultivate through their work. These activities allow us to utilize their proposals and ideas in our management, to appreciate, and to widely share and making use of the original ideas and the fruits of their efforts, by continuing these programs globally.

**Global Manufacturing Technology Competition**

ULVAC Group hold a 2 step competition, which is a preliminary competition with regard to specified theme related to manufacturing technology in each region and its qualifiers’ finals. We aim at quality improvement, and sharing and using their results in the entire Group.

** Global Business Improvement Competition**

Presentations with the theme of “KAZEN for the future” were given by Group companies, who have been implementing improvement activities and skill activities in each department, including administrative, sales, common and head office departments. And the achievements were shared and utilized with ULVAC Group.

**Skill Challenge**

As we realized again the importance of on-site skills in our MONODZUKURI, we not only aim for further improvement of the individual skill, but also transmit and share skills throughout the Group by competing in all ULVAC for the skills cultivated through daily work.

**Development of a Web-Based Questionnaire Using a Database Application to Connect Indirect Departments with Employees**

As an employee who has been working hard every day in a back-office department, I have been thinking it would be nice if I was able to have this kind of opportunity, so I jumped at the chance to participate in this plan, and I was very happy to get the good evaluation. Also, through this competition, I found that many people work hard in the head-office and back-office departments, and it gave me a real sense of the future growth that can be expected from the company. I would like to continue working wholeheartedly and supporting the business behind the scenes.

**Pump Overhaul of Service and Maintenance Category**

Through this Skill Challenge, I experienced the feeling of tension that I was not usually able to experience in my work and an even greater sense of achievement. Furthermore, this competition made me aware that I have company who are involved in pump maintenance all over the world. I am very proud that my name is associated with the momentous first-ever Skill Challenge. I hope that Skill Challenges will be held in a variety of fields in the future, and that these Skill Challenges will vitalize the whole ULVAC Group.

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*1: On this occasion, 14 companies from 6 countries participated in 18 themes.

*2: On this occasion, 6 people from 5 companies in 5 countries participated.