



Dialogue

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## The Power to Create the Future

From left: President Inoue, Ms. Takahashi, Ms. Ichikawa, Mr. Tsutsui, Mr. Hagiwara, Mr. Hokoyama

Moderator


**Hideaki Noguchi**
Human Resources Planning Division,  
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**The theme of this roundtable discussion was “The Power to Create the Future.” At the Meiden Group, human resources are the source of value creation and the key to sustainable growth. In this discussion, we unravel the thoughts and feelings of Group employees and how they have built their careers.**

## Looking back on their careers so far

**Tsutsui** Currently, I work as the EV unit leader at our Nagoya plant. I started working for an automotive parts manufacturer in 1998 and was involved in production engineering for most of my career until I changed jobs in 2020, and have had a broad career in production engineering operations from upstream to downstream. There is no single right answer in production engineering, and there is a great deal of creativity involved. Although it is possible to make a product by copying those who came before, to be competitive requires a daring spirit to take on challenges different from others. As a young man, I was in charge of designing large lines, and since things did not tend to go as expected on the manufacturing floors, I learned quite a lot. The experiences I had, struggling in a situation where saying “I can’t do it” would be utterly unacceptable, form the basis of who I am today. I was asked to join Meidensha when the Company was planning to mass-produce an integrated motor and inverter for electric vehicle drives at its Nagoya plant in 2020, and became a mid-career hire. Today, we are able to produce more than 600 units a day, but when I first joined Meidensha, we could barely produce about 10 units a day. Coming from the automotive industry, I remember being taken aback at this situation at a time when mass production was just around the corner (laughs). In my school days, I was a member of the track and field team, and showed a few strong results in relay races. That formative experience has led me to love processes that require teams to unify in order to overcome, and that one person cannot do alone. Now that I am in a management position, I want my subordinates to have the experience of accomplishing something as a team and sharing joy together from a young age.



**A company that makes employees feel like their work will lead to a brighter future and contributions to society**

**Naoya Hokoyama**

Policy Planning Section, Policy Planning Division, Corporate Policy Planning Group, Meidensha

**Takahashi** I joined Meidensha in 2014. Because of my major in mechanical engineering in university, I was assigned to structural design, hoping to make use of my knowledge. When I first joined the Company, I was not good at languages and had no interest in going abroad, but when I visited my alma mater as a recruiter, I was shocked to see how many students wanted to work abroad. This led me to start English conversation lessons through the Company’s language training program, and when I had overcome my weakness, I decided to apply for the overseas trainee program and take on the challenge of going abroad. I was transferred to a local subsidiary in Singapore, where my supervisor suggested that “if you’re going to work for an electronics manufacturer, it would be more interesting if you could do electrical design as well,” and I learned electrical design under the tutelage of my supervisor and local staff. Thanks to the limited pool of employees in Singapore handling a wide range of duties, I myself experienced a variety of

tasks, such as procurement and production management, while working on electrical design for railroads. Every day some kind of difficulty would arise, and I enjoyed gaining knowledge and experience every time I solved a problem, and it also gave me confidence that I could do it if I tried. I also discovered an interest in electrical design and continued to work in the field after returning to Japan.

**Hokoyama** I joined the Company in 2017 and was assigned to the Corporate Policy Planning Division. In my fourth year with Meidensha, I was dispatched to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), where I worked for about three years as a national civil servant in formulating and implementing policies to support Japanese companies entering emerging countries such as India and Africa. My work is currently the formulation of medium-term management plans at Meidensha, and I can feel the importance of working from multiple perspectives, a broad viewpoint, and a high-level perspective, which I have gained

through my career as a dispatched employee outside the Company. I feel that it was a very meaningful experience for me to be involved in the work of how to use the tools of policy to move and grow the economy, and how to create major trends while involving companies in my own country.

**Hagiwara** I joined the Company in 2013 and work in the Production Engineering Division maintaining the infrastructure, buildings, etc. at our production sites. I am a graduate of an industrial high school in the city of Numazu, where Meidensha has a location, and while I knew that Meidensha existed when I was job-hunting, I honestly didn't even know what they made. My specialization at that high school was electrical work, and when I toured the Meidensha factory, I figured I would be involved in manufacturing there, but when I finally joined the Company, I was surprised to be assigned to the Production Engineering Division. Although I am on a completely different career path than I had envisioned, I am enjoying the freshness of it. In 2022, when I was finally getting used to construction and other work, my boss told me to go see a new EV factory being built in China, and I spent six months in China working on the construction of the new factory. It was a good experience for me because I never dreamed that I, who was hired in the Numazu area, would

be working overseas. I feel that building up experiences like these has helped me feel more positive in taking on new challenges, since I remember that I have overcome difficulties somehow before and that I can likely figure things out when facing new challenges. I know that my future career will not be exactly as I envisioned, but I hope to make the most of everything as a valuable experience to be utilized ahead.

**Ichikawa** I joined the Company in 2021 and work as a domestic sales representative in the Power Infrastructures Business, where I handle transformer products. I was originally enrolled in a university seminar to study CSR and SDGs, and after experiencing the water, electricity, and gas outages at my home in Sendai City due to the Great East Japan Earthquake, I narrowed my job search to infrastructure-related manufacturers that support the very foundations of society. One of the key points in selecting a company was whether or not I wanted to work with these people, and I felt that my intuition during the recruitment interview was very correct. I was assigned to a sales position because I wanted to be the link between the factory and the customer, and now, in my fourth year with the Company, I have been entrusted with a variety of projects. In my work, I occasionally feel like I am lacking experience, but I feel that I am able to work proactively



**Hoping to be involved in the development of products that will make a significant contribution to the world by building relationships of trust with customers**

#### Yoko Ichikawa

Sales Section 2, PIB National Sales Division, Power Infrastructures Business (PIB) Sales & Engineering Group, Meidensha

because I have colleagues who encourage me and work closely alongside me. In the future, I would like to challenge myself by tackling sales in areas other than electric power and gain experience at a branch or branch office that handles multiple fields.

**President Inoue** I felt a connection between your stories and my own beliefs. My first assignment was in a factory's accounting division, where I was close to day-to-day manufacturing work. Later, I experienced a variety of tasks, including project management in the planning division of a business division and medium-term management planning in the Corporate Policy Planning Division. All of the experiences I have had along this career path have provided me with the foundation to lead the Company as President. It doesn't matter what work you do; as long as you put everything into it, you can go anywhere. It has been very encouraging to see my

colleagues grow in the process of taking on new challenges and gaining experiences beyond their own imagination, while enjoying and savoring these experiences at the same time. The Meiden Group values people. This part of our corporate culture will remain cherished and unchanged for as long as we exist. At the same time, my idea is to make these companies a stage where each and every one of you can realize your dreams of what you want to accomplish. The modern world is the fruition of someone's dream in the past. In Japan just after World War II, that dream might have been strong economic growth; in today's world, it might be new urban development that harmonizes lush nature with cutting-edge technology based on the SDGs. As society is created based on the dreams envisioned in this way, it is our job as manufacturers to transform abstract visions into concrete forms. The mission of the Meiden Group is not limited to a mere equipment manufacturing function, but also includes providing value to realize the society envisioned by our customers. To achieve this, we must also talk about dreams, and unless each of us has the desire to realize them, they will not lead to the value we provide to our customers. I would like to unite the dreams of each individual with our corporate philosophy and vision, and give shape to them as the dreams of the Meiden Group, providing them to our customers.

**Providing spaces where people can work with vigor in the hope that it will lead to the provision of value to customers**

#### Makoto Hagiwara

Facility Management Planning & Administration Section, Production Engineering Division, Production Engineering and Management Group, Meidensha



## The Dreams We Each Seek to Fulfill

**Ichikawa** My dream is to make my company one where people say, "only Meidensha can get this job done." First, I would like to build relationships of trust between myself and customers, and develop the ability to elicit what the customer is potentially seeking and accurately convey it to the factory. It would make me happy if my customers were sincerely pleased with what we provide them, and felt that what they get is what they wanted. I would like to take on larger and larger projects as I gain experience. I also hope to be involved in the development of new products as a sales representative that will one day make a significant contribution to the world. Each and every task helps build relationships of trust, so I will engage with customers and factory workers without forgetting my core intentions or neglecting the basics. I have been fortunate to have a great deal of support from many people so far, and I want to do the same for my less experienced colleagues and make the workplace a facilitative place for everyone to work and create a good atmosphere. To make that happen, I will work hard each and every day to build this up.

**Hagiwara** My customers are the employees of the Meiden

Group, and my dream is to provide spaces where the people who actually work at factories can work with vigor. I believe that if I can do better for everyone in the field, the result will be better value for our end customers. Even within a single factory, there are people in diverse positions such as manufacturing, testing, production control, design, etc., and each of them will have different needs. Sometimes, something you provide that you yourself think is good may not be very usable for the actual user. For this reason, I am in constant communication with people in various departments and making trial-and-error efforts on a daily basis. Like Mr. Hokoyama said, I too would like to acquire a broad viewpoint. I would like to consistently provide work environments where people working for the Meiden Group want to work until retirement age.

**Hokoyama** My dream is to make the Meiden Group a place where all employees can share in the future that we seek, and where working for the Group itself leads to brighter futures and contributions to society. I believe that such an organization will be able to provide sustainable value to society and help bring about a world in which its technologies and products become even more indispensable to people's lives, supporting convenience and enriching lifestyles. What I experienced firsthand when I visited India, countries in Africa, and other fast-growing countries during my dispatch assignment was the intensity of change and growth, and the overwhelming enthusiasm. While these things surprised me, when I turned my eyes to Japan, I felt a sense of anxiety about the future and a vague sense of stagnation, and I strongly felt the need for change. When I thought about how we





**Creating workplaces where people can work without worry, regardless of their position, by paying attention to colleagues**

**Yuriko Takahashi**

SEF Products Electrical Design Department, System Equipment Manufacturing Unit, System Equipment Factory Complex, Meidensha

could break through this sense of stagnation, I realized that it is important for a great deal of people to believe in a shared future and to seriously think about what they should do to achieve it. I would like to make an impact on the world by transforming the Meiden Group into such an organization, where we all aim for the same direction, work independently, and overcome difficulties through dialogue.

**Takahashi** My dream is a little closer to home. The department I was assigned to after joining the Company had no other female designers besides myself. Of course, I was warmly welcomed and my coworkers said they hoped I would work there for a long time, but the start of my career was full of times when I felt it would be logistically challenging for me to balance work and family life in the future. However, my visit to Singapore completely changed my mind. There were many female engineers working hard while raising children, which gave me great hope. It is my dream to extend this feeling to the Japanese workplace. Even in my workplace, we are seeing more and more women at junior levels, and many of them seem to have the same concerns and worries as I did before. If you only look at one workplace, you may inevitably experience a kind of tunnel vision. I want to make my

company a place where people can work without these kinds of worries, no matter their department or role. Everyone is in a different position, in a different situation, and has a different way of thinking, and they should also be able to work in different ways, and the way they achieve results and the process to get there should also be different. I also want to convey the message that challenges are interesting, too, because I myself believe that a career path that I had not envisioned when I joined the Company has changed my life dramatically. I would like to improve my workplace and working style by paying attention to my colleagues and using my imagination to see if there are any problems or inconveniences in their respective positions.

**Tsutsui** The thing I have definitely wanted my customers to say now that I'm with Meidensha is that their products absolutely have to be Meidensha. I feel that this kind of praise from customers is what brings fulfillment to our work. In order to realize my dream as a leader of a manufacturing unit, there must be organic connections between not only the manufacturing field that I lead, but all divisions, including sales, product development, production engineering, and procurement. To this end, I believe that it is critical for the field to communicate

information outwardly. The EV Components business is a new challenge for Meidensha, which has a long history of build-to-order production. When I first joined the Company as a mid-career hire, I was concerned about the many issues I saw and intended to keep quiet when I had opinions. However, partly due to my personality, I was already out sharing my opinions with everyone around me just one month after coming onboard (laughs). I remember being impressed by how the Company, despite its long history, was so open-minded, because they listened to my opinions as a newcomer and acted on them. The thought to communicate without hesitation and to share a firm desire internally to realize the same dream creates great strength. I am confident that this is a company where I can make my dreams come true together

**Uniting as a team to realize manufacturing that makes customers believe their products absolutely have to be Meidensha's**

**Satoshi Tsutsui**

EV Components Manufacturing Unit, Nagoya Factory Complex, Meidensha



with everyone involved. When I first joined Meidensha, although there was a goal of producing more than 200 units per day, we were only capable of producing 10 units. The gap between our lofty goal and reality was exhausting for those of us in the field. Even so, as someone who hates the word "can't," I continued to patiently be a beacon of "breakthrough thinking," telling people that we should accept the negative elements that make us want to say we can't, and think of ways to make it possible. As we discussed and implemented what we needed to do to be able to achieve this goal someday, even if it was not possible right away, we gradually increased production units. There is true joy feeling the happiness of my team when they cheerfully tell me that we finally made it. The strength that enabled us to produce far more units than our initial goal is not mine, but the strength of all of us. As my dream continues, I would like to consistently reach out to others with my beliefs and bring them along with me.

**Conclusion**  
**The Meiden Group's Value Creation: Creating a New Society through Human Resource Development and Manufacturing**

**President Inoue** I firmly believe that the positive motivation you have shared with us, your awareness of the need to solve problems to improve society, and your ability to persuade and take action will enhance the significance of the Meiden Group's existence and lead to the return of value to society. To this end, I believe that my role in upper management is to create a stage where the dreams and aspirations of everyone can be realized through the Meiden Group. We must become a Meiden Group that many people will choose to work with to create a better society. In addition, showing how those who are active in the Meiden Group are striving to solve social issues and fulfill their dreams will help to create a centripetal force among many people who want to work

for the Meiden Group. It is the way they work, dreaming of the future, that inspires people. Because the future is not for certain, your dreams and aspirations will lead to the creation of a better society. We believe that by bundling these thoughts into our corporate philosophy and vision and pushing them forward, we can transform them into a stronger force. Through this roundtable discussion, we have heard your strong desire to improve society, and at the same time, we learned about the efforts you are making to achieve this goal and the concerns you are facing. I will continue to lead the Meiden Group toward the realization of our vision, while adjusting the systems and corporate culture so that we can meet the aspirations of all our stakeholders.

