



HB205 Hybrid Hydraulic Excavator

Enhancing Quality of Life

–Providing products required by society–

Key Activities

- ◆ Providing products and services that contribute to infrastructure development and improve quality of life
- ◆ Improving productivity, safety, and efficiency and enhancing energy conservation through the use of ICT
- ◆ Improving environmental efficiency at operation sites and facilities, such as plants
- ◆ Reducing our effect on the environment throughout the product life cycle
- ◆ Enhancing safety among society, customers, employees, and business partners

Enhancing Quality of Lives Placing Safety as Top Priority

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— What do you mean by “enhancing quality of life”?

Ohashi: When viewed on a global scale, there are still many countries and regions that lack the infrastructure needed to secure people’s livelihood. Urbanization, in the form of housing, roads, hospitals and stores, can bring prosperity to such areas. A necessary component for implementing this development is construction equipment which Komatsu manufactures. I have always felt very strongly about the need to enhancing the lives of people living in this kind of challenging environment.

Indonesia, for example, is benefiting from the fruits of industries such as mining and forestry. Construction and mining equipment can play an important role, as a tool in the effort to bring prosperity to the local community.

— When one thinks of construction equipment, usually something big and heavy comes to mind, which is very different from the high-tech ICT.

Ohashi: Take KOMTRAX, for example (see pages 9 and 10). It started out as a system for managing vehicle location and maintenance information, and has evolved step by step. Rather than expecting perfection from the start, it is typical of Komatsu ICT to make steady progress forward, providing real-world answers and solutions.

I think of ICT as being firmly based in reality, not a pipe dream. For example, rather than immediately making everything unmanned, I prefer an ICT that can work with people, where machines assist with part of the job, the kind of down-to-earth ICT that can be optimized as it evolves a step at a time. I believe that in taking this course, Komatsu will advance, and this in turn will help our customers advance. Regulations will be revised, and the level of society as a whole will rise.

— How does Komatsu respond to the global environmental challenge?

Ohashi: We focus on two aspects.

The first aspect is our environmental response at the work site, in other words, the development of environmentally friendly products. A clear example of this is when Komatsu developed the world's first hybrid hydraulic excavator in 2008. This product, which features an average fuel efficiency improvement of 25%, helps resolve the concerns of customers who are sensitive about the environment. Moreover, our non-hybrid equipment meets emission standards for Japan, the U.S.A. and Europe, and we are focusing on developing engines that have reduced nitrogen oxide (NOx) and particulate matter (PM) emissions.

These environmentally-friendly products do not simply advocate a concept, they strive to increase economic efficiency and provide customers with realistic solutions. We, as manufacturers, must keep our feet firmly on the ground and give shape to concepts and ideas. "Giving shape to something" - I think that this is one of Komatsu's strengths.

The second aspect is our work on environmental initiatives directed at Komatsu's own business activities. Our efforts center on observing environmental regulations worldwide at all our manufacturing units, including those of our business partners.

While our targets so far have been energy conservation, zero emissions, improving recycling rate, and green procurement, we now want to work toward reducing CO₂ emissions globally and to give due consideration to biodiversity, by stepping up activities to increase the ratio of green space on our plant premises. Regarding ISO14001 certification, our goal is to have all manufacturing facilities that have not yet obtained certification do so, worldwide.

— What is meant by reducing the environmental impact of products over their lifecycle?

Ohashi: First of all, an effort is made to create products that are designed from the development stage to have the least possible environmental impact. We also make the manufacturing process at the manufacturing site as environmentally-friendly as possible, starting with green procurement. In the logistic process to transport products, as well, we take measures to reduce CO₂ emissions, such as building plants adjacent to ports to implement modal shifts in shipping. We also recommend environmentally-friendly products and use of remanufactured components to our customers in our sales and service activities and at the operating site. Finally, we channel obsolete products for reuse, or for disposal in an environmentally-friendly manner.

In this way, we can ensure that business activities for every aspect of a product's lifecycle are earth-conscious.

— It seems that enhancement of safety needs to be approached from a variety of aspects.

Ohashi: For a manufacturer, safety must be the foremost concern. While customers may say that fuel efficiency is the most important aspect, for us, as a manufacturer, "Dantotsu" (Unique and Unrivalled features) in safety performance will be most important.

The next most important is "Dantotsu" in environmentally friendliness, followed by high efficiency.

When I was a plant manager, I felt that safety must always be given top priority. This should be followed by compliance, product quality, delivery date, and finally cost. That was my order of precedence then, and it is the same even now.

The purpose of a company is to serve all its stakeholders. With that in mind, you must ask yourself is there any meaning to continue production while ignoring safety. This is, in fact, what CSR is all about. You should never attempt to make a product in a workplace where safety is not assured.

Safety is a commitment to yourself, to your family and to your work colleagues. Compliance is a commitment to the local community, and quality is a commitment to the customer. Without these three commitments, a company cannot exist. This is what CSR stands for.



Unmanned dump trucks featuring "Dantotsu" safety performance

— Finally, please describe the situation in Japan after the recent earthquake and tsunami disaster.

Ohashi: First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt sympathy to everyone in the disaster-hit areas.

Komatsu's plants and sales branches and some of our business partners were hit by the disaster and we are making a concerted effort to restore operations with the utmost speed and precision, while also extending assistance to our business partners.

Other tasks requiring quick handling include a review of risk management, drawing on the lessons learned from the earthquake and tsunami disaster, and verification of our production capabilities under the electrical power restrictions that are a consequence of power shortages in the region.

Efforts are underway in the disaster-affected areas to achieve reconstruction at the earliest possible time, with numerous construction machines already in operation. At the same time, Komatsu has introduced radio-operated construction equipment to protect operators from the dangers of nuclear radiation when working in the vicinity of the nuclear power plant accident sites.

While we are proud that our products can play an important role in restoring normal life to the disaster-affected areas, our goal is to continue to supply products that meet society's needs, and conduct business activities that ensure safety and protect the environment.