

In their own words

—Together with our customers—

Furuno Electric Co., Ltd.



Furuno Electric was founded in 1938. In 1948 the company successfully developed the world's first fish finder for practical use, and it is now the world's foremost maker of electronic devices for marine vessels. Relying on its three core technologies—sensing, processing, and communication—Furuno Electric provides its customers with devices that reveal things that are otherwise invisible and equipment that provides highly accurate information.



(From left) Kazuki Inobe (Engineer, Mechanical Engineering Section, Research & Development Department, Marine Electronic Products Division), Hisataka Yamagami (Assistant Chief, Planning Section 1, Engineering & Procurement Planning Center), and Hiroshi Nobayashi (Planning Section 1, Engineering & Procurement Planning Department).

THK's strength: A deep product lineup and the ability to meet high standards.

Why did Furuno Electric start using THK products?

Our relationship with THK began about 10 years ago when we were still using sliding mechanisms on drive shafts for our products. For the electronic devices on marine vessels, sensors have to be lowered into the water from the bottom of the vessel for the sonar, which probes the area in every direction, and we decided to use THK products in the drive shaft that raises and lowers the sensors. For research and development purposes, it was important to be able to speed up the raising and lowering of sonar devices. By using a THK rolling mechanism in a new sonar product, we were able to achieve unprecedented acceleration, enabling a major reduction of the time required to raise and lower sonar devices, compared to previous products.



Rolling mechanism used in internal vertical-motion component. The red portions are the sensors.

What convinced you to go with THK?

The development target was faster up-and-down motion for our new product, even if only slightly faster. To get there we realized that we needed a mechanism that uses rolling motion, not sliding motion, and it was THK who had the best selection of that type of product. With other manufacturers, for large-diameter specifications the product would have to be specially ordered, but THK had standard products readily available, so we went with THK.

In the past it took time for the sonar equipment to be lowered and raised, and the fishermen who are our customers would be forced to stop and wait. Our new product goes up and down very quickly, so now when they locate a school of fish they can use the sonar immediately and beat the other ships to the fishing ground, which is greatly appreciated.

What are you hoping for from THK in the future?

To ensure that we're making products we can confidently recommend to our customers, we're very strict about product quality, and we raise our standards every year. We look to THK to continue to help us meet our high standards for quality.