

We talked to Yoshihiro Hashimoto, special counselor to Fanuc Limited, about social responsibility in business.



Together assuming social responsibilities that support world *monotsukuri*

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Fanuc commands the largest share by far of the global market for computerized numerical control (CNC) systems, which form the heart of the so-called mother machines, or machine tools, that process components for industrial products, and for servo motors, which provide the muscle. On the company's spacious grounds, located in Oshino-mura, Yamanashi Prefecture, at the foot of Mt. Fuji near Lake Yamanaka, company policy dictates that "not so much as one tree is felled." The grounds are home to an abundance of wild birds, small animals, and wild grasses, all in their natural state.

Tell us about Fanuc's social responsibilities.

Our company provides CNC systems and servo motors to machine tool manufacturers in Japan and around the world. Machine tools, so-called mother machines, mass-produce all kinds of machine components with consistent quality 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If a stoppage occurs, the user incurs considerable losses, and it can also have a serious impact on industries waiting for parts. For this reason, to keep our clients' machines from stopping, we've put a lot of effort into *monotsukuri*, with product quality and reliability as the primary considerations. It's difficult to quickly replace malfunctioning machine tools, so we consider our

most important social responsibility to be preventing them from stopping. To do this, it's essential that our products be of the highest quality and reliability, so we have to ensure that our production system and methods are thoroughly sound. And to ensure that our production system is sound, product design and development are extremely important. From the very beginning our company has been committed to maintaining consistent quality at all times and striving for high reliability, to enable our products to withstand severe usage conditions for prolonged periods.

What's your opinion of THK?

I've known about THK from the days when Mr. Teramachi, the founder, would come to visit our company's president, Mr. Inaba (Honorary Chairman Seiemon Inaba). While our CNC systems play the role of the brain in machine tools, THK's products are the basic parts that relay the electronic commands to the sliding parts with micron-level accuracy. Machine tool manufacturers give their business to both of us, and we bear a serious social responsibility. If a THK product were to cause a machine to stop, the client would incur serious losses, just as it would if one of our products caused a stoppage. I understand that THK has a 70% share of the LM Guide market in Japan and a 50% share of the overseas market, and the corporate responsibility is proportional to these shares. Over 60% of all our products are sold overseas. If you add in the CNC systems sold to customers in Japan and exported machines that incorporate our servo motors, then even more of our products are used overseas. The commitment to never, ever causing

problems for the customer, which includes maintenance and service systems, on the theory that machines could stop operating overseas, is the ultimate social responsibility for both our companies.

Using the CNC systems and servo motors that constitute our basic technology, Fanuc deals with machines such as the Roboshot electric injection molding machine; the Robocut high-speed, high-precision wire-cut electric discharge machine; and the Robodrill, a high-speed versatile CNC drill; and we use large numbers of THK LM Guides and Ball Screws in the sliding parts of these machines. THK is a pioneer in linear systems. At the same time, THK is very reliable with regard to quality and the ability to respond when needed, because they know the first priority is social responsibility. We'll continue to support THK and hope THK continues to meet the expectations of its many customers.