

My Story Katashi Aoki, 1986

First Encounters With Plastic

by the late Katashi Aoki
Founder of Aoki Technical Laboratory, Inc.

It was while I was sitting in the sun, one warm Indian summer day towards the end of the year, that a friend of my cousin came by, playing with what looked like a sheet of glass. "Do you know what this is?" he said.

The clear, colorless piece of scrap measured about 10 cm x 30 cm and about 5 mm thick.

It was light, see-through and smooth but was not cool to the touch, yet it sent a wonderful chill down my spine as I remembered experiencing the same sensation many years earlier. That time was in my third year at elementary school when I visited my teacher in his boarding house and saw a painting by Michelangelo in a collection of Western paintings.

This was certainly an encounter with my fate.

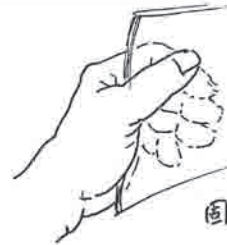
I had spent more than 12 years outside Japan and had never seen nor heard of this material, so my cousin's friend explained that the piece of scrap was from an airplane windshield and it did not break like glass when hit by flying bullets. He said that the material becomes soft when heated to about 100 degrees but then becomes hard again when it cools. He also said it was available on the black market in Tokyo and that various shops were already manufacturing broaches, kimono sash fasteners and similar things from the material.

Soon after that, I found out that the material was a type of plastic called acrylic resin, and that plastics could be divided into two basic types: thermosetting resins that harden when heated and do not return to their original state, and thermoplastic resins like acrylic resin that soften when heated and return to their original state when cooled.

My cousin's factory where I was staying had about 30m² of workspace, so I set about cutting the scrap piece of plastic into three pieces. I heated up one of those pieces over a flame and watched as it softened like a piece of rice cake when cooked. I then clamped the cutoff in a vise, waited for it to cool down, and then found that the zigzag shape of the vise teeth remained in the plastic like engravings in a beautifully sparkling piece of cut glass. That was when I realized I had come across something wonderful, and it was like love at first sight with a beautiful woman.

I went looking for more airplane windshield pieces and became friends with a number of people, including brokers and manufacturers using the acrylic sheet to produce various finished goods. Looking back now, I can see how crude my products were - simple products like shoehorns and letter openers made by cutting, bending, polishing and drilling holes into that plastic. I spent over a year like that, living on the edge of starvation while selling my products.

Anyway, I couldn't go on living like that so I decided to move back to Sakaki, rent part of an old thatched roofed farmhouse, and bring my wife and children home from Tsubame so we could take care of an aunt who was confined to bed with palsy. I cleaned out part of an old chicken coop close by that had once



been home to a thousand chickens when poultry farming was popular after the 1928-29 Great Depression affected silkworm breeders, and that was where I built my meager little factory where I started manufacturing with plastic.

By that time, my daughter was in school so she transferred to the elementary school in Minamijo. I have sad memories of everyone calling her the "chicken coop kid," but the business was so small that all the locals called my factory the "chicken coop factory" instead of Nissei.

There were a dozen or so plastic molding factories in the prefecture back then, and most of them were located along the Chikuma River - in Komoro, Ueda, Sakaki, Yashiro and Nagano. All those factories were the result of Tokyo companies evacuating the capital during the war, and they were all in the business of pressing-forming thermosetting resins; a business that had started growing from before the war.

There was no literature or technologies yet developed for the business that I had begun, and there was no domestic production of the raw materials for orders I had taken, so there was very little work that could deliver an income for me and I ended up just spending my time on research. All I could manage was ongoing losses.

I visited all my connections to borrow money for my research and for living, and I ended up borrowing from everywhere.

Nissei Plastic Industrial's current executive managing director, Chiaki Muroga, was actually my junior at Ueda Junior High School. He was from one of the local wealthy families but would sometimes drop by my factory and, seeing the predicament I was in, would get his friends to lend me more money. As many people already know, he later joined Nissei and worked mostly in administration and accounts, and over the years he made a lot of important contributions to my company.



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Special Feature

K-2010 Aoki Synergies

Something extra created by man and machine

K 2010, the largest plastics exhibition in the world, was held in Düsseldorf Germany from Wednesday October 27 through Wednesday November 3, 2010. Exhibiting at both Messe Düsseldorf (Stand 14B67) and at the newly relocated Aoki Europe office (Sales Support Center), Aoki used two exhibition spaces this year to communicate the two themes of Molding containers for less than the cost of a cold preform and One Hour Performance & Long Term Performance. Aoki's people used the opportunity to exhibit, demonstrate and fully explain three of Aoki's latest machines, built on Aoki's unchanging concept of craftsmanship, and developed through ongoing improvements and enhancements.

Keywords for Aoki at K 2010 were "man" and "machines," with "man" being the right hand and "machines" being the left hand in a comparison to a person clapping. Both hands have to work in harmony to make a sound when clapping. Regardless of how good either hand is, no sound is made if you move only one hand by itself. So did Aoki's clapping make any sound at K 2010? Was it a good sound? Key sales and engineering people at Aoki talk about K 2010 to answer these questions.



Beauty of Aoki Facilitates Virtuous Cycle

Reaching new heights with products created by man and machine

Sales & Marketing Department **Mariko Nishizawa**



Aoki's stand at this year's K 2010 exhibition was a great success, with many visitors learning about our decade-long theme of Molding containers for less than the cost of a cold preform, in addition to our new theme of One Hour Performance & Long Term Performance.

K 2010 marked Aoki's return after a six-year break to full exhibition and demonstration molding of molds and machines, including a new model, with visitors able to



learn about initiatives we are implementing, and experience the special performance achieved by machines and molds carrying the Made by Aoki label.

During the exhibition, I noticed one visitor staring at one of our machines and mumbling "beautiful..." At first, I thought I had misheard because here was a man calling an industrial machine beautiful, but

I soon realized that there is certainly a majestic beauty to be found in a molding machine that has eliminated all the wasteful processes, with stability that hides the true speed of the molding cycle, and all enabled by Aoki's own Value Engineering design method.

Actually, I realized there was another "beauty" at the exhibition. That beauty came in the form of our Aoki staff and agents - people who had been with us at the previous K show, the largest in the world, where even as machine manufacturers, we did not exhibit any machines. K 2007 was when we did not exhibit any machines, but our people worked together in cross-regional teams to communicate the true value of Aoki to visitors - true value that cannot be properly communicated by relying solely on machine and mold demonstrations. Our staff and agents succeeded that time because they were committed to creating a people-based exhibition. The confidence they displayed this time was certainly beautiful.

This year, we used our newly relocated Aoki Europe office (from August 2010) as a second exhibition space in addition to Messe Düsseldorf, with more than 100 people visiting the office during K to view the 10,000-plus containers we have on permanent display there. I am sure they all felt the beauty in each and every one of

those sample bottles, and saw the high quality built up over the years by Aoki. K 2010 was a perfect example of the synergies between man, machine and the molded products that are created from that union.

Aoki machines are currently in use in 77 countries around the world - all with different people, cultures, customs, lifestyles and economies. Everyone involved with Aoki in these countries shares the same passion for our work, so our people at Aoki will continue the virtuous cycle of improvements and enhancements to help our partners grow their businesses.



K 2010 Leads to Further Success

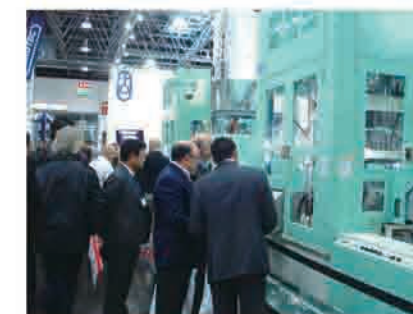
Aoki is Aoki's greatest competition

Engineering Department **Yoshiaki Yamaguchi**



At K 2010 this year, I could really feel the class of our products and the professional growth of our staff. I was very impressed with the synergies there, and the way our staff promoted our products. Visitors to the Aoki stand were also impressed with the class of our products, commenting on machine operation during demonstrations and on the quality of our molds and molded products. Our products are the result of ongoing improvements and enhancements building on the base of Value Engineering and other engineering methods. The reason our machines, molds and molded products are such a successful match is that Aoki follows a quality-focused manufacturing policy that has created a unique production system developed by people with integrity and a shared passion for their work.

As for professional growth, I believe that



is the result of individual growth through in-house training begun several years ago plus interdepartmental connections and a system of cooperation that has grown the strength of our organization. I was deeply impressed at K 2010 by the confidence and passion our sales staff displayed when talking to visitors, and by the teamwork they exhibited when working together, and this only increased my confidence in them. Activities like this have a strong flow-on effect on relations between our various departments and on increasing friendly competition between them, so I am very confident that this will lead to further growth across the company.

Going forward, the direction we have to take to achieve our mission of contributing to the advancement of international culture and to the protection of our natural environment, is to work hard and with integrity to solve issues with Aoki products



Special Feature - K 2010: Aoki Synergies **Something extra created by man and machine**

One of Aoki's goals has been to achieve synergies between man and machine, but visitors to the Aoki stand at K 2010 experienced more than that. They felt something extra. So what was the true nature of that something extra? Four Aoki staff members speak passionately about their experience at K 2010.

Sales Promotion Group, Sales & Marketing Department

Masanori Miyao

Strength of Personal Message on Aoki's Preparedness

The last time I attended this exhibition was for K 2001, where my daily routine included following up on instructions from our regional salespeople and putting on a bit of a performance with bells and placards trying to attract visitors to our daily seminars.

This time, many existing and potential customers visited us from Japan as well so we made full use of all the tools we had prepared, including touring our sample showroom at the Aoki Europe office and explaining our machines and exhibition themes to them.

Japanese sample bottles we had on display included unique Aoki high value-added containers and non-PET containers for such applications as

medicine, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. As a result, our sample exhibition attracted a lot of interest and many sales inquiries, and I found myself in great demand as I attended various meetings with customers from around the world. With translation help from other Aoki staff members, I was able to communicate my experience and successes in the Japanese market and provide related information.

The best thing about participating in K 2010 was that it reinforced my feelings as a member of the Aoki Team, my feelings of solidarity with Aoki people from around the world who came together for a single purpose, and my confidence in the improved power of the Aoki brand.



Sales Promotion Group, Sales & Marketing Department

Emiko Nishizawa

Aoki, Now in Hot Demand

After a six-year break, we decided to exhibit our machines - new and improved models - at K 2010, so once preparations had been completed, it was quite exciting working with our agents on our sales activities. A new member of the Aoki Team in France, CAPS took the opportunity presented by K 2010 to purchase two of our three exhibition machines - one special-purpose machine for wide mouth containers and one special purpose machine for narrow neck containers. The company originally planned to use the special-purpose wide mouth container machine to mold both wide mouth and narrow neck bottles because a two-machine investment from the start was unthinkable for them. Nevertheless straight after the exhibition,

they decided to buy the second machine as well. Before the exhibition, I met with the company and our agent to discuss the advantages of the special purpose machine for narrow neck containers, and I believe the proposal focusing on long-term usability and the demonstration of the exhibition machine itself helped them understand our product, which led to their quick decision. What Aoki has been speaking about over the past ten years is now in hot demand in the market. K 2010 has enabled us all to work together to show how well prepared we are, how beneficial the Aoki Team is on a global level, and how trustworthy the Aoki name is.



Mold Design Section, Engineering Department

Yutaka Nakamura

Integration of Sales, Production and Engineering

The last time I attended this exhibition was nine years ago, but my first one was K89. I am always acutely aware of how Aoki is leading the blow molding world. For instance, we used an electronic billboard at K89 to show molding cycle times, but three years later the other companies were doing the same. Since then as well, we have carried out mold change demonstrations, recycle molding, cost calculations and HDPE molding, and the others also later follow our lead and produce many exhibits that reflect what we are already doing. The biggest change I found after nine years was that previously I had to be constantly moving between tables to talk with customers, but this time I only had to join in a few discussions, so the improved skills of our sales

team impressed me. I remember that twenty years ago our engineering team would bring mountains of spare parts and joke that we could build a whole machine with them. Every morning of the exhibition we would change all the insulating papers on the hot runner and then molding would go ahead normally, in a tight integration of our sales and engineering people. I had a look this time at what other companies were exhibiting, and I realized there was a lot to be impressed about with a company still committed to the same initiatives after many years. Going forward I hope to be able to fix small issues on our machines one by one, and work as a team member to produce engineering results that the others cannot copy.



Production Engineering Department

Daichi Hirai

Next Step is to Lead Others

This year's K 2010 was my first time at this exhibition as a machine operator. With three machines being exhibited though, I was a little concerned that the job would be too big for me. However we worked as a team to thoroughly plan and prepare for the show, which allowed me to concentrate on doing my job and following the instructions of my senior colleagues. I carried out molding adjustments and was producing top quality molded products by opening day, so I was really happy when the bottles were approved in-house.

When we held a machine preview last August for our manufacturing partners, agents and customers,

I carried out a trial molding demonstration. I thought it went perfectly, but a number of areas for improvement were discovered that I spoke to people about and that were fixed immediately. After that, I prepared the machines for shipping and start-up at the exhibition venue.

The machines performed stably during the show, and everyone joined together to solve a couple of small issues that arose, so I had a real sense of achievement in my work.

I hope to continue building on my abilities so that in the future I will be able to lead my juniors as well.



Aoki Shines K 2010 Edition

Several Aoki departments joined forces this year to help at K 2010, raising everyone's spirits in true Aoki style. But will this experience benefit operations at Aoki going forward? Three Aoki staff members give their thoughts.



Hospitality Served by the Cupful

General Administration Department

Akiko Yoshimura

The three of us were so excited leading up to the exhibition because we were looking forward to showing off our skills. We felt the exhibition venue and the Aoki party would be great opportunities to show our hospitality and offer everyone a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enjoy a cup of Japanese tea along with our wish for a long and lasting relationship going forward, and I really felt we succeeded in showing this other unique side of Aoki at K 2010.

Synergies of comfort and being comforted

Sales Planning Group, Sales & Marketing Department

Yoko Kanai

The size of Messe Düsseldorf was overwhelming for us, but our tables were full from morning to evening every day. All of us at Aoki were working towards the same goal, so the three of us were happy to help by providing a "comforting" reception for our visitors. I was so impressed with the solidarity among our Aoki Team from around the world, and that was what became my personal "comfort."

Aspirations of the Aoki Team

Sales Planning Group, Sales & Marketing Department

Naomi Miyashita

Working on reception at the Aoki stand, the three of us decided to put our whole heart into the job. Instead of just a three-member team though, I was really happy when I realized that all the Aoki staff members there, and even agents who I was meeting for the first time, were working together for the same purpose. K 2010 taught me the importance of teamwork.



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Aoki Technical Laboratory, Europe GmbH was relocated in August 2010 and was reopened as a Sales Support Center. Home to a display of over 10,000 sample bottles, the new office is in a good location 5 minutes' walk from the central railway station Düsseldorf Hbf.

Aoki Europe was used as a second exhibition space during K 2010, with about 100 people coming to visit during the exhibition. Visitors were able to discuss projects while inspecting the samples, and take home some ideas for new products. We will continue to purchase new samples periodically to add to the display in the hope that these Aoki bottles will be useful for them in their businesses.

Feature Interview: Shinmyung Platech Co., Ltd.

Continuing to showcase the best of Aoki now

South Korea agent talks about Aoki wisdom

This edition, our Feature Interview is with Kwang Soo Jeon, President of Shinmyung Platech Co., Ltd. and Aoki's agent in South Korea. With new customers coming on board even after the start of the Global Financial Crisis, Aoki Hot News asked Mr. Jeon what his secret was, how he approaches his customers, and how he convinces them to use Aoki machines.

K. S. Jeon, President Shinmyung Platech Co., Ltd.

Rather than new products, we offer essential solutions

Aoki Hot News: You succeeded in getting new customers in South Korea even after the Global Financial Crisis struck. Is developing your customer base a difficult part of your sales activities? And how did you approach customers with a proposal?

Mr. Jeon: Naturally, there is a barrier when acquiring new machine users. They are just not interested in listening if all you can say to them is that you have a great product. We gather all the information about their factory that we can, from newspapers, magazines and through our contacts, to learn about the customer and their circumstances. There are four of us working at Shinmyung Platech, including our accounts person, but our information gathering team consists of me, our director Mr. Kyung and our engineer Mr. Kim. What is really important for us is finding out what our customers need. We maximize our understanding of our customers and then offer them essential solutions rather than just products. Once we do that, they start listening carefully to our proposals because our proposals are actually beneficial to them.

Q: So it is important to know what your customers need before offering them anything? Does that also apply to existing customers?

A: Of course. Existing customers almost never come straight out and say they need a new molding machine. We learn about the circumstances of all our customers. For example if we know that one customer has received new bottle orders recently and their workers are working more overtime, we are able to offer that customer something that they need. Information from the factory floor is particularly important, and that is why relationships of trust are so important. Say for example a customer's machine breaks down. If that happens, straight away we find out what is wrong with it. We analyze the situation and advise the customer whether we can fix the problem ourselves, whether spare parts are required, whether there are parts in stock, and even how they can go about continuing production over the three hours or so that will be required to repair the machine. Customers can see our worth, and relationships of trust can be built, if we can get them what they need or provide them with essential solutions. I suppose this is just doing my job as part of sales.

Q: Continuing organic growth of the South Korea Aoki Club is a result of that trust, isn't it?

A: Not just that though. You see, South Korea Aoki Club members are all in competition with each other. Rather than competing blindly, there are mutual advantages to knowing your competitor when competing on contracts. Members know that the club is an effective means of sharing information, about such

things as recent news in the PET industry or engineer management, and it helps them lift themselves to ever-higher levels.

Tough times can offer opportunities

Q: The world was in a panic after the Global Financial Crisis struck, so how were things in South Korea?

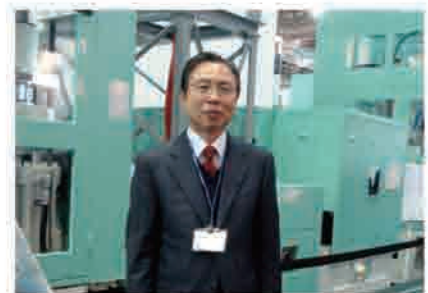
A: It was terrible. At times, we were not even receiving a single machine inquiry, I wanted to know Mr. Aoki's ideas about the panic spreading around the world, so I went straight to him and asked. What he said to me was, "Everyone is thinking the worst right now, but there are opportunities in adversity. For example, currency exchange rates mean that your 10,000 yen for operating costs is now worth 20,000 yen. Other companies might be holding back their investments at this time, but if Shinmyung Platech spends that money on sales, it will come back to you many times over." I quickly responded: "That's just what I wanted to hear. That's why I came. OK, I believe you." I truly, I wanted to hear those words from him. I came back and put even more effort than before into developing new customers. Whenever I had trouble knowing how to meet the needs of a new customer, I went straight to Aoki head office and asked them, repeating the process as often as was necessary. Thankfully, it has paid off and 2010 was an excellent year for us.

Q: So rather than only seeing the crisis, people should assess the whole situation and push themselves as much as they can.

A: Exactly. Companies fail even in good times, and companies grow even in bad. It all depends on how much effort they put in. For example containers for sterilizing alcohol were selling strongly when the influenza was going around. In any situation, there are things you can do. It is pointless to waste time fearing the economic climate. What is important is finding out if a given situation offers the opportunity of work.

We create our own fate

Q: What did you think of the Aoki stand at K 2010 last October in Düsseldorf, Germany?



Mr. Jeon at K 2010 held last October in Düsseldorf, Germany



Sometimes talking passionately, sometimes talking theoretically, Mr. Jeon talks animatedly as he easily conveys his thoughts and feelings.

A: I was impressed with the passion of the Aoki staff. It was good to see them putting their hearts into their jobs. Work is not something that we do alone, but something that everyone needs to be committed to if the job is to be done well. Aoki machines are the same - profits will come only when the maker, the seller and the user all do their best.

I am sometimes asked by our customers what the future holds for the PET industry. This is what I tell them: "I do not know what the future holds for the PET industry, but containers are an indispensable part of our daily lives. Right now, we are manufacturing containers that were never even imagined 100 years ago. As someone closely involved with containers, I'm really excited about my future."

I believe my own fate is to spread Aoki's philosophy of craftsmanship around South Korea. But fate is not something forced on us from the outside. I believe we pick our own fate, and that we create our own future.



Mr. Jeon as a member of the Aoki staff at K 2010

Mr. Jeon commented, "The secret is in the factory. I visit a dozen or more times a year, and each time there are new discoveries, new samples, new ideas. Of course, some people visit once every two or three years, but they don't notice any change at all." Huge differences occur depending on whether the person notices a change between visits, and whether they use their mind and body to actually look for and feel that change is the question.

Mr. Jeon has been "just doing his job" for over 20 years now, but he puts his whole heart into "just doing his job," into working together as part of the team and into his totally sincerity. This interview reminded us that he is a major factor in the acceptance of Aoki in South Korea, and that our success there is not related to our close geographical location, but to the strength of his will and passion in conveying Aoki's message.

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Core Beliefs

Core Beliefs is a series of articles through which we will be introducing Aoki staff, partner companies involved in the development and manufacture of Aoki molding machines, and our machine users.

Stable production of high quality containers over the long term builds trusting relationships

Iwao Fujita, President Kyowa Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

Kyowa Manufacturing Co., Ltd. operates an integrated manufacturing system from parts manufacture through machine assembly, carrying out the majority of Aoki machine assembly and trucking them to Aoki Technical Laboratory after operating tests. Naturally, Kyowa Manufacturing holds a critical position as Aoki's manufacturing department tasked with producing the finished product. This edition, Core Beliefs features Iwao Fujita, President of Kyowa Manufacturing, and asks him how his company is able to assemble machines that deliver stable planned production of high quality containers, with the same high initial performance over the long term.

Most important thing is absolutely quality

Kyowa Manufacturing was founded in 1971 by its current chairman Tsutomu Fujita, and it has manufactured parts for Aoki machines and assembled the finished products since Aoki Technical Laboratory itself was founded. The company has continued its growth over these 40 years, and now consists of a Plant 1, Plant 2, Plant 3, and Ohtsuki Plant that have all the necessary equipment for machining everything from parts for small and large machines to machining and grinding large machine beds.

After graduating from university in the Kansai region of Japan, Iwao Fujita joined a tool and machine trading company on the advice of the current chairman, who told him to study sales because the manufacturing side of the business was fine. He joined Kyowa Manufacturing at the age of 26, worked in production management, and took over as president five years later. Fujita-san commented that quality, price and delivery are important for the manufacturing industry, but then added enthusiastically, "but the most important factor is absolutely quality." He said, "From the time that I joined the company, the idea was already well established that we could not be happy with single-decimal accuracy at our manufacturing plants, but that we could only ship products that were accurate on the level of hundredths of a millimeter. We knew that was the level of accuracy we had to maintain even in changing times. To maintain high quality over time, we can never compromise and never accept an inferior product, or our whole level of quality will come crashing down."

Fujita-san added: "Things like Aoki Technical Laboratory's senior management seminars and other meetings between departments are very useful for improving quality. In our business, we tend to receive a lot of instructions between manufacturer and subcontractor, but as partners of Aoki, they consider us to be their Manufacturing Department, which helps us realize our philosophy of working as a team to produce high quality products. Naturally, Kyowa Manufacturing does not adhere to the belief that our responsibility ends when we have delivered our products according to



Placing a whiteboard in each division and enabling all staff to understand work details and objectives has realized improvements to both quality and delivery date management.



Fujita-san at K 2010, the world's largest exhibition of plastics and rubber held last October in Düsseldorf, Germany, seen here with other members of the Aoki-Kai group of Aoki-affiliated companies, or what we call Aoki's Manufacturing Department.

instructions. No matter what means everything to us that our assembled products function well at the final customer's factory."

Communication can achieve 15% reduction target

As part of a campaign of self-improvement, Kyowa Manufacturing set itself a target to reduce costs by 30%. Fujita-san said, "I believe that if our communication channels are working perfectly, then that will reduce costs by 15%. It is important to reduce as much as possible any loss or other trouble caused by poor communication." He added, "At one stage, we were experiencing a lot of problems during machine operating tests because the hydraulic oil was not clean. That was happening at Aoki as well as at our plants. We were carefully cleaning the oil tanks and machining parts but it was not a complete solution. I spoke to a person in the Legal & Process Control Department at Aoki at the time, and they gave me this advice: 'It might be a lot of trouble, but you really need to pull apart everything - tanks and cylinders - and filter the oil properly.' Well, the advice was perfect. After carrying out the work, we had no more problems. True, it took half a day to do the cleaning, but solving our problem and preventing the problems were of utmost importance. I think this is another example of good communication between partners."

When he became president, Fujita-san placed a whiteboard in each of his plants and started a system whereby all staff can understand the full work picture. He said, "Quality cannot improve if it is only the group leaders who understand the details of the work. It is important that all workers can share the job details, such as what specifications for what country, and what areas need special attention. Each division can now also understand the full picture in regard to the production schedule. Since each plant could see the full picture and manage the actual schedules, it took the pressure off our production capabilities." These changes apparently had the effect of increasing capacity from 10 Aoki machines to 12 Aoki machines per month.



Iwao Fujita's face lights up in conversation as soon as we meet, winning us over with his cheerful expression.

Stable production of high quality containers over the long term builds trusting relationships

Kyowa Manufacturing has many large machines, including a large surface-grinding machine capable of handling machine beds up to 2,000x7,000mm and large machining centers. But there is a considerable burden on them if one of those machines breaks down or otherwise stops working. "And as Mr. Aoki always rightly says, 'Customers want machines that do not break down and that can achieve long term stable production.' For example if one machining center were to break down at this factory, then a machine that is expected to earn tens of thousands of yen per day ends up producing nothing, so this becomes a huge loss, doesn't it? It is a serious concern for management that the machines they have invested in can achieve stable production over the long term without breaking down. Customers only trust us and our business becomes successful when the machine achieves this stable production of high quality products over the long term," he said.

Asked about his impression of the Aoki stand at K 2010 last October in Düsseldorf, Germany, Fujita-san said, "What impressed me at both the exhibition and at the Aoki party was the great relationship that Aoki has with its machine users. It was obvious that the customers trusted Aoki and that they enjoyed a friendly relationship. I believe that is the result of being able to use Aoki machines that deliver long term, planned, stable production for the users. Kyowa Manufacturing and Aoki Technical Laboratory have been doing business together for 24 years, but it is very sobering for me to realize that we are supporting these relationships of trust between Aoki and its customers through the quality of our products." This is true, and it is thanks to Kyowa Manufacturing sharing Aoki's belief in craftsmanship that Fujita-san is so aware of it.



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