

Connecting the Founder's Mind to the Future



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Ichibei Furukawa, a founder of Furukawa Electric Group, struggled with the development of copper mining business while revising the old tradition, despite of many difficulties in the process of Japan modernization. Around the same time, in the early Meiji era, the existence of “electricity” was transmitted to Japan, and an arc lamp glowed in Ginza in 1918. Looking back on the condition of that time, it was still an unstable world, but Ichibei made his best effort in the development of electric wire business with his strong desire of “Making Japan brighter.” In the current context, it can be interpreted as a kind of new business development that contributes in solving social issues and in achieving a smart city (for Japan at that time) through the social implementation of “electricity”.

Since then, 135 years have passed and Furukawa Electric Group is now trying to connect the “founder’s mind” to the future. “Furukawa Electric Group, Vision 2030” (Vision 2030) was announced last year committing Furukawa Electric Group aims to achieve the social infrastructure that integrates information/data, energy, and mobility in order to protect the global environment and achieve the safe, worry-free, and comfortable life for people. It is a signpost for the future. To do so, not only growing the existing businesses, but also creating new businesses, especially the new ones through innovations, are strongly required.

Innovation is often translated as “technological innovation” and is often considered as the invention of new technologies. However, the original meaning is to introduce new things in the various situations and to be useful

for the society. Today’s society is facing a number of challenges caused by the global scale environmental problems, for example, natural disasters (earthquakes, typhoons, wildfires, etc.) and decrease of working population due to the decline of the birth-rate and aging population, etc. Furukawa Electric Group is trying to solve these issues from a viewpoint of sustainability. We have been working on the construction of social infrastructures and we are now coping with the maintenance of existing infrastructure and rehabilitation of aging infrastructure.

Also, we are creating new businesses not only with our own technologies, but also with various methods such as “open innovation” with startups, researches of the overseas technologies and designing unique business models, etc. Furukawa Electric has established Silicon Valley Innovation Laboratories (SVIL) to actively promote the open innovation and to explore the information on cutting-edge technologies in order to play an important role of disruptive innovations.

Since Furukawa Electric Group was established, we have been taking on various challenges while valuing new technologies. Now, we are taking a new step towards realizing the Vision 2030. As we take this first step, which will be the cornerstone of supporting the next generation, we will further promote the co-creation with internal and external stakeholders.

Upon publishing the Furukawa Electric Review (No. 51), we would be grateful if we could share our “mind” and “passion” for creating new businesses with everyone. We look forward to your further guidance and encouragement.

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