Surprise and joy for customers, motivation and growth for employees

What Murata regards as important values
Let us examine an example in a business story

Success story by teamwork across the globe

Murata was out of Company A’s scope

Mr. Naka from Murata Electronics North America Inc., started making sales visits to Company A to sell FEM (front end module for high frequency applications) at the beginning of 2008. At that time, Company A was procuring FEM from another component manufacturer, and thought Murata had neither technical nor cost advantages, Mr. Naka recalls “It was miserable not to be given any opportunity at all. I resolved myself to make some achievements to turn their heads.” We finally caught their attention by visiting Company A with Mr. Ari and the Head Officer to present a case study of planning and mass producing WiMAX.*1 power amplifiers*2 matching Company A’s specification. We were told to put present a sample that meets their specification.

Mr. Naka took over Mr. Naka’s responsibility, Mr. Naka along with his American boss, Michael took over Mr. Naka’s project and submitted the sample that was prepared by the engineering team from the Head Office. Unfortunately, although the sample showed good characteristics during the testing in Japan, it did not operate normally on the circuit board prepared by Company A. They suspected the compatibility between the sample and Company A’s circuit board, and started working on finding possible causes.

Engineers from around the world worked together to solve a problem

Mr. Naka requested Company A to let him borrow the circuit board to take back to Japan. Once the board was in Murata’s lab, he had the sales engineer Mr. Sato, Mr. Iida and Mr. Tanihara from the design department conducted a series of tests. Murata engineers also flew to European research center of Company A to discuss approaches. Guy from Murata Electronics (Netherlands) B.V., supported the team from technical and communication aspects. Furthermore, Company A’s Asian design site collaborated with Murata to conduct tests. Mr. Shimomae, an SE from Taiwan Murata Electronics Co., Ltd. helped coordinate this effort.

Mr. Naka said, “We have associates from Murata all over the world promptly providing necessary resources. I felt assured and proud of the team working on this project.” We finally found a solution by collaborating with Company A. It was a big step for our FEM project.

What impressed Company A was our effort to shorten the lead time.

Thus, the challenge with the performance was cleared. However, we now had a problem with the production lead time. Initially, Murata estimated that we needed 16 weeks to produce FEMs. Company A requested it to be 10 weeks.

Company A’s representative, “We cannot accept products that take 16 weeks to manufacture,” sounded rather harsh to us. Mr. Naka participated in the production lead-time compression training hosted by Company A along with Mr. Fukushima from Products Dept. I and Mr. Tsukida from RF Semiconductor Production Dept. “Certainly Company A’s demand is strict, but the fundamentals of SCM*3 (Supply Chain Management) are the same for Company A and Murata. It was beneficial for us to confirm that in the training process,” said Mr. Naka. Once Company A and Murata developed the common concept and mechanism with regard to SCM, and with the help of our suppliers, we finally managed to shorten the lead time by four weeks. Although we missed meeting Company A’s demand, Company A finally decided to incorporate Murata products recognizing Murata’s efforts and orientation up to this point.

Mr. Naka communicated to all staff members who participated in the project, the message from Company A’s manager. “The fact that Murata survived the competition against numerous powerful suppliers and finally locked the business is quite praiseworthy.”

Key elements of success were that much less known player, Murata, showing outstanding performance beyond the customer expectation, and our international teamwork backing up such efforts. The experience gained from this project and words of Company A’s manager became a new driving force for the next challenge.

*1 WiMAX
One of the wireless communications technology standards

*2 Power amplifiers
Amplifiers enable signal power to the necessary levels

*3 SCM (Supply Chain Management)
A method to realize management efficiency and improve customer satisfaction concurrently by establishing a mechanism to share ordering information and production planning information among associated companies

Photo from the left
Murata Electronics North America Inc.,
Global Sales Manager (Sales, Western Area)
Michael Ingram
Key Account Manager / Global Coordinator
Hiroyuki Naka

Taiwan Murata Electronics Co., Ltd.,
RF Products Technical Supervisor
Tomokazu Shimomae

Communication Module Division
Production Dept. I
Masao Fukushima