

Toward Toray Group's Transformation and Sustainable Growth



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Inc. (TMUS)

—Please tell us your reasons for joining Toray subsidiary TMUS in the United States and your impressions of Toray Group after having joined the Company.

After graduating from university, I worked for eight or nine years at a water treatment company, mainly as an engineer, but that company was later acquired by a major company. I joined Toray Membrane USA (TMUS) in 2008, shortly after the company was established, and the CEO at the time, who knew of me, had approached me. Even before joining the company, I had the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of Toray products and knew what kind of functions they had, and thus I rated Toray's technological capabilities very highly. At the same time, I felt that Toray had the potential to become an industry leader in the near future, so decided to join the company as a senior engineer. After joining the company and the team members, I was convinced that this startup was precisely the best place for me to demonstrate my skills. Furthermore, after joining the company, I realized that Toray Group has a vision of wanting to be successful over the long-term, not just the short-term.

—Did you have a career path to management in mind when you joined the company?

To be involved in corporate management was not what I was aiming for from the beginning. As I had majored in chemical engineering at university, I wanted to first improve my abilities as an engineer. However, as people

advance in their careers, their own areas of expertise and areas in which they have an interest broaden. At TMUS, career paths opened up for me not only in engineering but also in sales, and I became interested in that kind of work. I believe that building a career not only as an engineer but also in sales activities has led me to the position I am in today.

—Please tell us how you felt when you were appointed CEO and what your future aspirations are.

After becoming involved in sales activities and management, I worked hard to become a CEO someday, so when I heard that I had actually been selected as CEO, I was very happy and honored to have achieved my long-held goal. On the other hand, I was a little surprised that I was selected as the CEO of a Japanese company, as I imagine at the management level, I fall into the younger category.

However, this is my 15th year at TMUS. As I have been working my way up since the early stages of the startup, I have been able to see how this company has grown up to now and therefore believe that I have a good understanding of Toray's corporate culture as well as the current situation. Although we have grown in a short period of time from a startup to a company that can generate profits, my feeling is that we still have a lot of potential. Therefore, my goal from now on is to lead TMUS to the next chapter in its growth to make the company even bigger. This starts with a change in mindset of employees. I would like to create a company that can grow sustainably by building a foundation of thinking that looks at long-term growth, rather than simply focusing on earning immediate profit. I find this a challenging task, and am honored to have been given this opportunity.

—What do you think are the challenges that Toray Group is facing in the United States?

As a group, Toray possesses diverse, chemistry-based technologies. From there, in addition to water treatment,

we are expanding our various businesses globally, including textiles, carbon fiber composite materials, and functional chemicals, and are working to contribute to people's lives and society. I feel proud to be a member of the Group.

With regard to our business in the United States, I think it is good that a diverse group of local human resources is responsible for the management of the group companies. This is because we local human resources have a good understanding of the culture and people of each region and exert an important presence in the success of our business.

On the other hand, although a major company with world-class technology at its disposal, Toray is not well known in the United States. Additionally, there is little communication or collaboration between the local group companies, giving the impression that each company is developing its business independently. This often places them at a distinct disadvantage when competing against huge corporate groups. If the group companies in each region were closely connected and pooled their resources, we could expect various synergies between our businesses and be able to increase our competitiveness as a group. I also think that Toray's name recognition would improve by becoming more active as a group. Therefore, I think what is needed is more collaboration and cooperation among the local companies.

—What strengths does TMUS possess in the United States?

I mentioned that there is room for improvement in increasing Toray's name recognition in the United States. When it comes to the water treatment industry, Toray's products such as hollow fiber ultrafiltration (UF) membranes and reverse osmosis (RO) membranes have extremely high performance, and the technological capabilities backed by these achievements are undoubtedly recognized as a brand. This is where TMUS's greatest strength lies. In the water treatment industry, however, companies are

undergoing consolidation, and there are cases in which small companies have pooled a variety of technologies and grown into major companies. In an increasing number of cases, such companies are proposing a variety of packaged solutions. For TMUS to adapt to these changes in the competitive environment and exhibit further growth, I believe it is important to strengthen partnerships not only of course within the Group but also outside the Group and with our customers, while aiming to create more value than we could do alone.

—Lastly, could you please give a message to those who will join Toray Group in the years to come.

Looking back on my journey, the first thing I would like to say to everyone who joins Toray Group is to view working at Toray as a long-term commitment rather than a short-term. I do not recommend Toray to people who think that once they find the job they want, they can just move on to the next one. However, it is a great place for people who want to build their career over the long term.

Conversely, for those people who want to grow and improve themselves at Toray, a long-term commitment is essential. In other words, it will be necessary to find opportunities to contribute to the challenges Toray is facing and increase their own value while gaining knowledge, skills, and experience. I believe that this is the meaning of long-term commitment and that will also lead to an attachment and loyalty to the Company. This has also provided a driving force in my own career.

Having begun its life as a startup, TMUS is now entering a period of generational shift. In addition to the active participation of mid-level employees, nurturing the younger generation has become an issue. In the meantime, the business environment is constantly changing, and if we stand still, we will soon be left behind. Under these circumstances, I would like to give back to Toray and will do my utmost to make the necessary changes and bring about evolution to grow TMUS in a sustainable manner.

Please watch the short film STRAIGHT PATH, which is based on President Huynh's true story.

