

Special Interview: Human Resources Strategy to Underpin the “Value Networking” Design

Fostering and producing in great numbers human resources with flexible creative power unconstrained by business type or category as well as the ability to take rapid action

For more of an insight into the human resources strategy that underpins progress with the “Value Networking” design, the person in charge of human resources development explains the main business company, Yamato Transport.

Changing Awareness from Individual Optimization to Overall Optimization

The Yamato Group has been successful in increasing the advancement of *TA-Q-BIN* that has the “last mile” network as its strength. In order to create further innovation in a business that already has finely tuned quality and competitiveness, the key is to change the way of thinking of the employees involved.

For instance, in the case of considering solutions for customers in the B2B market, unless this was carried out in a total solutions manner, the solutions will not meet customer needs. Responding to needs requires a full understanding of the peripheral logistics functions possessed by each company in the Yamato Group and the consistent provision of those functions, from upstream to downstream, to create benefits for the customer. Although *TA-Q-BIN* is the Group's greatest strength, *TA-Q-BIN* is merely part of the solution and one function of logistics. Without an awareness of these aspects by employees who are well-versed in the Delivery Business, the next innovation will not arise. Based

on the current conditions where a large number of companies from other industries are entering into the logistics industry, our human resources need to possess extensive judgment unconstrained by business type or category and be aware of the movements of other companies. These human resources also need to have flexible creative power to be able to compete against other companies with the strength of the Yamato Group as well as the ability to take rapid action.

Development of Human Resources

In order to have its human resources acquire a deep understanding of each business and an expansive outlook that assesses the diverse needs of customers, the Yamato Group is introducing personnel exchange initiatives both within the Group and with other companies.

At their seconded locations, I have witnessed employees actively engaging in such tasks as participating in front line projects and promoting sales activities. Upon returning to their



respective Group company, employees take on even more active roles by leveraging their expanded outlook. We anticipate that such employees will grow to become the next generation of management that will oversee the future of the Group.

For younger employees, mainly those in their 20s, we have introduced a job rotation system within the Group. By giving these employees a chance to view the strengths of the entire Group, not just the Group company to which they belong, we hope they can receive inspiration for future innovations. Also, Yamato Transport dispatches trainees to local subsidiaries overseas in areas where we are developing *TA-Q-BIN* services, providing them with an opportunity to study local work practices and engage in communication with local staff. In this way, Yamato Transport is also focusing its efforts on developing global human resources within Japan.

Response to Structural Issue of Decreasing Working Population

The position that is affected the most from a decrease in the working population is the position of sales driver, which serves as the core for the “*Value Networking*” design. Accordingly, securing human resources for this position is a pressing issue. Based on the forecast for the average age and age composition of sales drivers in 5 and 10 years, Yamato Transport is endeavoring to bolster its efforts to attract young adults as potential employees. One of these efforts is strengthening the connection with high schools across the country. While creating trust-based relationships through such means as visiting teaching staff at targeted high schools, the numbers of high school graduates that are being hired is steadily increasing.

Furthermore, in urban areas where competition to acquire human resources is intense, we are taking a wide variety of countermeasures such as using an in-house recruiting system to relocate employees who have the desire to take on challenges in new locations across the country as well as upgrading our dormitories and carrying our recruitment campaigns to attract new hires from other areas. Going forward, we plan to establish a system that takes into consideration a variety of factors such as employment conditions and time slots in which it is easy for a diverse group of human resources to work. In addition to female homemakers, who we have been actively hiring, this diverse group will include seniors and students.

At the same time, with regard to the personnel who carry out the sorting work at base terminals that represents the heart of the *TA-Q-BIN* network, we have been encouraging the employment of foreign nationals in connection with Japanese-language schools for a number of years. Even human resources who are not accustomed to the Japanese language or the business practices in Japan exercise their strengths by using our multilingual business operations manual.

Also, for employees who wish to enhance their abilities, we have established a path that leads to a career in a central position that oversees the future of the Company.

Making Diversity a Growth Engine

Respecting the diversification in employee lifestyles, the Group is promoting the creation of environments in which each and every employee can play an active role, irrespective of age or gender. To take Yamato Transport as an example, besides guest operators and call center operators who are in direct contact with customers, and even in the pickup and delivery work, which is often perceived as work that is done by men, Yamato Transport is increasing the means of delivery, such as trolleys and bicycles, and providing environments that proactively accommodate female employees.

Furthermore, with regard to systems for balancing work life with childcare and nursing care, we are holding discussions between labor and management based on the voices of employees, creating and distributing handbooks, and showcasing the personal experiences of those who have used these system via the Company intranet. In these ways, we are continuing to raise awareness so that employees will make use of these systems. By building mechanisms and systems so that employees can balance life events with their careers and the ways they work, we will continue to pursue a rewarding workplace where employees can work with peace of mind.

With regard to foreign employees, we commenced with the direct hire of personnel from other Asian countries seven years ago, in association with the business strategy involving the full-scale development of *TA-Q-BIN* services overseas. Not only do we recruit students who are on exchanges at Japanese universities, we engage in local hiring activities as well. When hiring foreign nationals, in addition to their language-learning ability, we focus our attention on getting to know the candidates, placing emphasis on their background, to determine whether or not candidates have gained true communication skills through overseas experiences such as studying abroad that lead to mutual understanding. There have been many cases where we have had foreign nationals play in active role in global operations after joining the Company and experience work life in Japan. However, there have also been foreign employees who have made a career for themselves as specialists in logistics services. In this way, the role foreign employees play has become more expansive. Recently, foreign employees have been advancing into the management ranks.

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