

Third-party Opinion

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In every company, priority is given to meeting immediate goals such as sales targets and other objectives, and employees tend to lose sight of whether the work they are doing really matches the company's goals and what they are working for. At times like those, they need a light shining ahead to show them the path they should take.

That is what a corporate mission statement is for. According to page 3 of this report, the Sojitz Group has 17,524 employees and 95 operating bases throughout the world. In the case of manufacturing or other industries, people work in the same plants making the same products, making it easier for them to share the same goals and values. In an organization like a general trading company, on the other hand, employees are scattered throughout the world, working alone or in small groups toward different goals. This makes it particularly important to have a corporate statement.

The Sojitz Group Statement states that "The Sojitz Group produces new sources of wealth by connecting the world's economies, cultures and people in a spirit of integrity." This statement is the motto that gives stakeholders and employees of the Group all over the world a purpose and a role.

The adoption of the Sojitz Group CSR Policy in April 2009, which says that "We will strive to do business in harmony with society and the environment, consistently honoring the Sojitz Group Statement," is also very important. Putting an idea into practice always involves specific actions, and those actions often tend to deviate from the idea and take on a life of their own.

The CSR Policy is not simply a rallying cry. It is a code of conduct governing the actions of every one of the Group's 17,524 employees, as the president and CEO, Yutaka Kase,

says in his "Message from the President & CEO" (page 5), as follows:

"The Sojitz Group's CSR policy...is a declaration that we make CSR the foundation of our management in the various activities of the Group throughout the world. This CSR policy was adopted to clarify the direction of our management and to share and practice it through the Group."

This declaration is a vital statement. Along with participation in the United Nations Global Compact (page 6), this CSR Policy is a public declaration that the Sojitz Group will act with integrity right to the farthest reaches of the Group and its supply chains to preserve the environment, respect human rights, manage labor fairly, protect resources and prevent corruption.

As long as the Sojitz Group continues to act with integrity and fairness under the Sojitz Group Statement and CSR Policy, it will be an enterprise that will be trusted and welcomed everywhere in the world.

The crux of the matter, of course, is implementation. Will every single one of the Group's employees, spread all over the world, truly understand these policies and act according to their tenets?

Reading the "Employee Round-table Discussion" (pp. 9–11), in fact, I felt that each of them realized that their work was contributing to society and local communities and that they were proud of this. It is likely that the employees who participated in this discussion do not represent the views of everyone at Sojitz. Nevertheless, their comments indicate that Sojitz's various businesses do follow the Sojitz Group Statement, and that the statement motivates employees and is reflected in their daily work. I felt that it is the employees who are mastering CSR Policy on the front lines.

Comment on Third-party Opinion



Shinichi Taniguchi
Senior Managing Executive Officer
CSR Committee Chairman
Sojitz Corporation

I thank Mr. Kogure for his commentary on the expectations that the Sojitz Group will carry out its activities with integrity, based on the Sojitz Group Statement and CSR Policy, and how difficult it is to actually do so.

As Mr. Kogure notes, given the wide range of businesses of a general trading company, it is not easy to have every single employee incorporate the statement and CSR Policy into his or her work. However, we hope to further enhance the quality of

our activities by continuing to practice CSR, based on educating everyone in the Sojitz Group regarding why we adopted our CSR Policy and joined the United Nations Global Compact, and by communicating with our stakeholders.

Mr. Kogure also commented that he felt that Sojitz Group employees are proud of their work. We will concentrate on creating an open corporate culture and continue steadily practicing our statement so that all employees can work with pride.