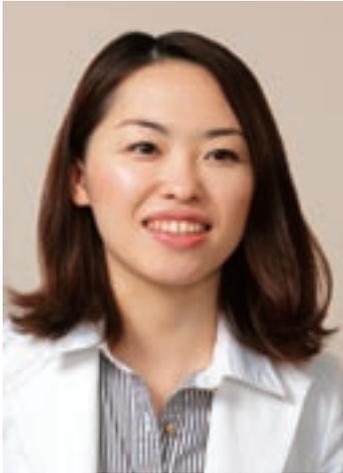


Giving Feedback to Konica Minolta

People that have a relationship with Konica Minolta have offered their perceptions and opinions of the Group.



Asuka Yoshikawa

Staff Writer
Toyo Keizai Inc.

Konica Minolta's Distinctive Approach

From April 2005 to March 2007, I served as the writer in charge of covering Konica Minolta. As I gathered material for our *Kaisha Shikiho* (Quarterly Japan Company Handbook) and *Weekly Toyo Keizai* publications, it was evident that Konica Minolta is a company with a strong sense of responsibility for conveying information to the public. The Group is not only supportive of the media and provides detailed materials but is also active in the area of information disclosure. In an era when the importance of corporate information disclosure is on the rise, Konica Minolta is even willing to release information that is unfavorable and avoids concealing the truth.

Every year, Toyo Keizai sponsors a Green Reporting Award and Sustainability Reporting Award. I have had many opportunities to read such reports, and I feel that the reports, which are thoughtfully prepared by each company, reflect the spirit of each company very well. In the case of Konica Minolta, the Group has taken readability into consideration and provides the information in a concise digest form. The Group also publishes English, French, Chinese, and German versions, in addition to the Japanese report, and distributes copies to employees worldwide and individual shareholders. This is an effort that is highly distinctive to Konica Minolta.

When it comes to information disclosure, I feel that shareholders often have too few opportunities to learn about the companies in which they have invested. Even when it appears that information is readily available, the shareholders are, in fact, often unable to find the exact information they want. Although other companies issue huge CSR reports of close to 100 pages, in an attempt to convey as much information as possible, I applaud Konica Minolta for taking its own individual and unique approach. I think the Group's idea of condensing the content of its CSR report, distributing more copies, and having more people read it is a good method for enhanced communication.

More Effective Publication of Internal Changes Wanted

At the same time, however, I feel that there is something lacking in the condensed content. For example, since Konica Minolta is currently undergoing a major shift in its core business, the company should be more thorough in explaining to consumers and shareholders the reasons for this shift and its thoughts on future prospects. At a time when the Group is shifting from the business-to-consumer to the business-to-business market, creating a tendency to lose general consumers, it will become necessary for the Group to have people understand the importance of these changes.

It would also be a good idea to showcase the company's competitive technologies and products, such as organic light-emitting diode, triacetyl cellulose film for liquid crystal polarizing plate protection, and mammography. The same goes for the Group's mobile planetariums. Across Japan, many planetariums have closed down, and Konica Minolta is now the only listed company that continues to operate planetariums. This is a contribution to which no other company can lay claim.

Although Toyo Keizai provides company information for investors, I think it is important that companies are not overly swayed by investor opinion. Companies must not only make a profit, they must prove their role in society. In the future, I hope that Konica Minolta will continue to be faithful to its hardworking and unified corporate spirit, and maintain its emphasis on communication with a wide range of stakeholders.



Shigeharu Nakachi
Chairman
Toxic Watch Network Japan

A Company that Prioritizes Risk Disclosure

The non-profit organization I work with is engaged in activities to promote the reduction of environmental risk posed by chemical substances. We operate a website on the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR) system¹, which allows citizens to access environmental data reported by business establishments and thus make effective use of the system. Konica Minolta was the grand prize winner at the first annual PRTR Awards in 2004, where I served as a member of the judging committee. Konica Minolta's activities were particularly groundbreaking; the Group had set up a computer system to gather and manage information on chemical substances used internally. The Group had also voluntarily held public briefings with local communities, while many other companies were doing that only upon requests from local governments. My impression of Konica Minolta is that it is a company that prioritizes risk disclosure.

I participated in the Community Environmental Briefing held at Konica Minolta's Itami site in the autumn of last year. At the meeting I saw that the local participants appreciated Konica Minolta's sincere spirit, high level of technological expertise, and strict quality control. I hope that these briefings will continue in the future, involving even more participants and helping the company to strengthen its relationships of trust with the local community.

I believe that risk disclosure is an extremely important element of a company's social responsibility. In recent years, reports of soil contamination near factories have gained public attention. This kind of pollution may be unavoidable for plants that have been operating long before current environmental regulations were put into place. It is important for companies to properly disclose the facts, and take measures to try and meet the current standards.

It is also a good idea to report substances that have not yet been regulated to the community, explaining both the risks and the measures that would be taken in the event of a disaster such as an earthquake. These kinds of efforts are the basis for earning the trust of local residents. The same applies to sites outside of Japan.

The Why and How: Improved Disclosure

Although focusing on readability may be the latest trend in CSR reports, I regret that companies generally reduce numerical and other data. If this kind of data cannot be included in the printed report, then it should be available on the company website for anyone to access. It is also preferable to release data for each site and make the entire company's achievements easy to understand. Information disclosure is more than just releasing information; it is important to consider how best to convey each type of information. Rather than merely indicating that CO₂ emissions and toxic substances have been reduced, it is imperative to explain why and how these materials were minimized.

Konica Minolta uses dichloromethane in its manufacturing processes. For any toxic substance for which an alternative has not yet been found, stakeholders should be informed about how it is properly collected and disposed of.

Thirty years ago, companies only needed to consider whether or not they were complying with regulations. Today however, they must undertake efforts that go a step beyond what is legally required. I would like to see Konica Minolta continue to focus on risk disclosure, and earn greater trust from people in the community.

¹ A system which requires business establishments to assess and disclose the total amounts of harmful chemical substances that they emit into the environment or that are contained in wastes that they transfer off their premises.