

Third Party Opinion of Konica Minolta's CSR

Ms. Sachiko Takami, Chief Executive of The Natural Step, Japan, an international NGO, offered her perceptions and opinions of the Konica Minolta Group's CSR activities.



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Impressive Goal for the Reduction of Absolute CO₂ Emissions

I have two links to Konica Minolta. First, I am a user of Konica Minolta's products. In the 1970s, the first camera I ever used was a Minolta. Now, I regularly use my Konica Minolta digital camera. Personally, I feel the quality is very high. My second connection to Konica Minolta is the SRI rating¹ of Japanese companies that The Natural Step, Japan, of which I am the Chief Executive, conducted in 2005 at the request of a financial institution. An environmental organization launched in Sweden in 1989, the Natural Step evaluates corporate initiatives in terms of the scientific principles of a sustainable society. In 2005, Konica Minolta's SRI rating was the fourth highest of the chemical companies on the Nikkei 225 (a stock market index for the Tokyo Stock Exchange). The company was rated highly for its clear definition of the issues it faced, the direction it was going in, and the degree of success it was having in attaining its goals.

Now, after reviewing Konica Minolta's activities for the first time in three years, I am surprised to see how global its business is. I am also very pleased to see that the company is providing new value in the fields of healthcare and printing. Looking at its CSR activities up through fiscal 2007, I think that the goal of reducing "absolute" CO₂ emissions throughout the product lifecycle by 20% by fiscal 2010 is very impressive. Konica Minolta's development of the bizhub series of color MFPs, organic electroluminescent (EL) technology, and other innovations and products that are making excellent contributions to sustainability can also be highly evaluated. Further, in terms of contributions to international society, I think that from a global viewpoint the donation of digital mammography systems for breast cancer diagnosis to hospitals in China is an exceptional CSR activity.

Long-term Vision Closely Allied with the Core Business is Needed

As for Konica Minolta's future, I would like the Group to have a strategy based on a long-term vision of CSR. The European Union (EU), for example, has established the goal of reducing CO₂ emissions by 75-90% by 2050. From there it takes a backcasting² approach, feeding information back from this target to come up with the measures required for the present. By focusing a generation into the future and without getting caught up in short-term targets, we can generate new ideas and strategies like developing renewable energy.³ Contributing to a sustainable society is part and parcel of the core business of a company, and is the driver of innovation. First of all, perhaps, Konica Minolta should establish a long-term vision closely allied with its core business and action plans.

In relation to the environment, a major component of this long-term vision must be the realization of carbon-neutral operations through the reduction of CO₂ emissions. Stakeholders in the West, in particular, are paying attention to activities in China, where environmental pollution has become a particular problem. For instance, Konica Minolta purchases green power, such as wind power, for its gallery in Japan, so how about expanding this initiative to adopt renewable energy at offices and plants in China, such as through solar power generation? Furthermore, China is faced with many societal challenges, including upgrading people's work environment. I think that Konica Minolta can win worldwide trust as a company that demonstrates leadership in CSR by taking the initiative in addressing these types of issues, which are being discussed intently the world over.

¹ SRI rating: SRI stands for socially responsible investment. An SRI rating takes into consideration a company's CSR activities in terms of the environment, society, and economy.

² Backcasting: A way of thinking or tool that is often described as the opposite of forecasting. Envisioning the success first and then making a plan to reach the goal from the current situation.

³ Carbon-neutral: Of or relating to the effort of offsetting emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases produced in economic activities by investing in reforestation, clean energy (e.g. wind and solar power) projects, and other CO₂ emission reduction activities.

⁴ Renewable energy: Energy produced from natural resources, such as sunlight and wind, which may be naturally replenished. Unlike coal, oil, and other fossil fuels, renewable energy sources do not diminish however much they are used; that is, they can be used semi-permanently.