

Kiyomatsu Steel Structure Co., Ltd.

representative director **Yoshio Kiyomatsu**



Acceptance improves a company and its people. Real power shapes the future.

The forces that drive each individual to work hard may differ, but some should be common among us all. One of those things may be acceptance. With acceptance, Kiyomatsu Steel Structure Co., Ltd. increased its sales by 180% in three years. What factors lie behind the sales increase?

Name : Kiyomatsu Steel Structure Co., Ltd.
Headquarters : 475, Onagai, Utsa City, Oita Prefecture
Founded : 1967
Type of business : Steel Structure Fabricator
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Kiyomatsu Steel Structure is well known for its morning assembly. The morning assembly is open to the public once a month and draws a large audience which often outnumbers the company's staff members. The morning assembly includes three routines. The first routine is referred to as "ei jassai ka (it's okay)." A staff member presents a mistake he/she made the day before and the rest of the attendees respond by saying "thank you." This expresses gratitude for sharing the mistake, based on the idea that making a mistake saves another staff member from making the same mistake.

Yoshio Kiyomatsu, representative director, explains, "You cannot change if you are reproached. If you will be reproached, you try to come up with an excuse and convince yourself of that excuse. This keeps you from improving. In a sense, allowing such an excuse to be made indicates the manager's lack of ability. The only way to prevent excuses is to be accepting. You want to live up to the expectations of someone who accepts you. The second routine is to say "ii ne (good)." Every day, a staff member is appointed to find the good points of a specific coworker. The staff member shares this "ii ne" the following day. In response, coworkers respond together with "ii ne." This makes both the person being praised and those doing the praising feel very good. When you are appointed to identify a coworker's "ii ne," you try to find the good points of that specific coworker, so you naturally try to learn more about the individual.

What's more, you have no choice but to like the individual because it is hard to find the good points of a person you do not like. This routine has improved relationships among staff members. The third routine is high fiving. Ten minutes before the start of a morning assembly, Kiyomatsu stands at the venue with a smile on his face and welcomes staff members and guests with high fives. The high five is the easiest way to make physical contact. So you don't hesitate to do it. For this reason, the high five is very effective in bringing people closer together. The three routines have one thing in common. That is acceptance.

The company's morning assembly took its current form three years ago. "Before that, the morning assembly was as tedious as those of many other companies." Kiyomatsu's awareness was changed when the company's building was rebuilt and its production system was reorganized. He became motivated to make the company deserve the great building. Kiyomatsu read a large number of books in search for clues and realized one thing that every successful person emphasized, the wonderfulness of acceptance. The realization prompted him to make a company that can be supported by acceptance alone. At the same time, he realized that his company's performance was stagnant because he had blindly assumed that the company couldn't do better.



"Before that, I reproached my subordinates for poorly fulfilling their duties. I tried to lead the company by tyrannically acting like a boss. But this discourages staff from being proud of their work and from developing an attachment to the company. Naturally, neither the staff nor the company improved. So, we switched to servant leadership based on the idea that supporting and accepting what the staff members want to do would be a more effective way to improve the company," Kiyomatsu recalls.

He began to change the company's practices, starting from its morning assembly. The staff's awareness changed drastically. Before that, the staff were not willing to do more than what they were told by Kiyomatsu and other superiors. The change of practices prompted them to spontaneously think and take action. Furthermore, they spontaneously began to help others whenever they could. As a result, sales of the company increased 180% in three years. "Increase our sales to 3.5 billion yen and have a company trip to Hawaii." Now, people in the company can talk about dreams like this.



From here onward, the company will increasingly need real power, Kiyomatsu says. We asked him why, and his answer was, "the AI revolution." For example, the pinnacle of professions in science is a physician. A physician's job involves diagnosing symptoms, and AI is also good at that. In the days ahead, AI physicians may be produced on a mass scale. The same holds true for attorneys, the pinnacle of liberal arts professions. The severity of a crime may depend on the skills of an attorney. Considering this, leaving decisions on severity of a crime to AI should better ensure impartiality since AI would be capable of, better than human beings, make correct judgments based on applicable laws and past cases.

All judicial judgments may be left to AI at some point not far in the future. Is it a wasteful effort to study hard in pursuit of future success? "No," Kiyomatsu states strongly.



"Trying hard is not wasteful. Having said that, not every effort will pay off. This is because "pay" in this context has a lot to do with being highly regarded by others. From here on, you must be capable of independently adding value to your efforts. This requires "real power." Dedicate all your strengths toward what you want to do and try hard. Stay true to your beliefs no matter what other people, your parents or family say. Identify what you really need and fulfill it. As a consequence, you will acquire real power." All jobs that can be done with information or knowledge may be left to AI. Instead, human beings will very shortly become capable of taking on more creative challenges by leveraging real power. Accept each other's real power, and we will have a better future.



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