

Preface

Key to Growth: Creative Efforts Making Full Use of Technical Capabilities

The success of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) will serve as the driving force for the revival of Japanese industry. It is SMEs that hold the key to industrial development. The basis of advancement is international competitiveness, which is mainly led by the monozukuri (manufacturing) industry of SMEs. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry is currently drawing up a “new economic growth strategy” in order to get the economic recovery steadily on track. In this process, we will put the main emphasis on how to promote technological innovation in the monozukuri industry that Japan takes a pride in.

In particular, the presence of Japanese SMEs, which support the innovation in the Japanese monozukuri industry and supply extremely high quality parts and materials to large companies and Asian countries, stands out. With the aim to further develop the abilities of SMEs—which can be regarded as Japan’s national treasure—in a dramatic and secure manner, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry has submitted a “bill on advancement of SMEs’ key monozukuri technologies” to the current session of the Diet and will make the effort to pass the bill at an early stage.

SMEs, as represented by enterprises dealing in dies and molds, metal-casting, forging, and plating are working considerably hard, constantly making creative efforts by fully utilizing their wisdom and technical capabilities. This stance by SMEs is bringing vitality to the present Japanese economy and society, and Japan’s industrial world is now recovering its confidence. I highly evaluate this fact personally, and appreciate the SMEs’ efforts. I hope readers will be able to use this book to find hints on steps they can take in their own companies. I sincerely hope that young people will take up today’s business challenges with great confidence and spirit, and open up yet new paths in the future.

At present, there are three government-affiliated financial institutions serving SMEs. Of these, two will be consolidated and one will be privatized to make a fresh start as new financial institutions that are useful for SME managers.

I hope the 300 SMEs selected in this book will make further business progress in the future, and that all the other SMEs throughout Japan will be inspired and motivated by this book.

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