

Respecting the diversity and individuality of our employees and cultivating abundant personnel "assets"

HighLight

We launched the MONODUKURI Center to pass on the knowledge and skills required for manufacturers.



The NGK SPARK PLUG Group is a manufacturer and the maintenance and improvement of our manufacturing capabilities are indispensable to continue producing high-quality products. However, concerns are growing about the decrease in the manufacturing capabilities of Japanese companies as a whole. Japan's demography has changed since most baby boomers have reached retirement age and the younger generation is losing interest in manufacturing as computers and game consoles prevail. Against this backdrop, we launched our MONODUKURI Center and built the MONODUKURI Education & Training Center to give education and training to our employees so that they can acquire the knowledge and skills required for manufacturing at the appropriate time. We have improved our in-house education system for manufacturing to strengthen the foundations of this renowned manufacturing company.



voice Hidemitsu Suzuki

Corporate Officer
MONODUKURI Center

Manufacturing capabilities form the foundations of our company and the skills thus acquired have to be preserved and passed on for many years. With this belief, in April 2013, the MONODUKURI Education & Training Center was built as part of the MONODUKURI Center. We clarify the knowledge and skills that our employees need to acquire and provide them

with the necessary education and training at the appropriate time, thereby solidifying "Safety, Quality and Skills" as the foundations of manufacturing. At the same time, we ensure that our employees understand NGK SPARK PLUG's rules to cultivating human resources who are disciplined and follow social norms. We also aim to nurture employees with a vibrant and flexible approach to their work.

○ Concept of the MONODUKURI Education & Training Center

With the belief that "excellent MONODUKURI is based on steady human resource development", we determine the basic knowledge and skills that are needed by employees of a manufacturer, and have implemented a system to provide employees with the necessary education and training at the appropriate time. The education and training they receive at this center allows us to cultivate human resources who follow social norms. To this end, the MONODUKURI Education & Training Center is founded on three pillars: safety, quality and skills (knowledge), as these form the foundations of all the disciplines at the center.

The education and training curricula (levels 0 through 3) are set according to the skill and knowledge of the employees. At present, mainly level-0 education programs are being carried out and will gradually be upgraded. We plan to introduce our training and education programs to our overseas group companies and hold workshops on using IT equipment.



Kazuo Mizutani
[MONODUKURI Center]

We encourage the development of people who can think and act on their own based on sound knowledge.



Mai Tamada
[Quality Assurance Dept.,
Spark Plug Division]

I was amazed at the performance of the machines and learned to be careful when using them. I also learnt the importance of accident prevention.

○ Level-0 workshop

A level-0 workshop was held for new employees who graduated from high school as the first program of MONODUKURI Education & Training Center.

The level-0 workshop is aimed at "knowing, understanding and managing." The new employees studied 15 subjects for three weeks, including seven hands-on subjects (hands-on safety training with accident simulation, environmental activities, and handling measuring instruments) and eight practice and lecture-based subjects. They learned how to use tools for a range of processes, used simulation kits and had other hands-on experience. The course was designed to maintain the interest of the new employees by incorporating plant tours, exercises and group discussions into the practice and lecture-based subjects.



○ Developing personnel "assets"

Our education and training activities consist mainly of OJT (on-the-job training) opportunities, through which employees acquire skills and knowledge in their normal working situation. We also have OFF-JT (off-the-job training) programs, providing employees with learning opportunities outside their own workplaces. We have a wide range of OFF-JT programs that include quality education, manufacturing education, training by organizational level, training by global human resources and career improvement support. During fiscal 2012, 4,581 employees participated in these OFF-JT programs.

The company also runs My Career, a tool to support employees in building a career. Employees input their job history, skills, knowledge, objectives, positions they want to get and any opinions every six months. This helps them confirm what they can do and what they want to do in building their career.



[Capacity Building Group,
Human Resources Dept.]

Acknowledging that employees are the most important management resources, we aim to cultivate personnel "assets."

Offering a secure and safe working environment

In order for individual employees to make full use of their capabilities, it is essential that we offer a secure and safe working environment. To that end, it is vital to identify and control potential risks (hazards) in the workplace.

In the risk assessments* that have traditionally be conducted in our workplace, hazards were often overlooked, leading to accidents. Against this background, we have established and launched a new risk assessment system to identify and control every potential risk under the slogan of "comprehensive risk (hazard) detection."

In fiscal 2011, a model production line was set up at the Production Department of Komaki Plant in the Spark Plug Division to investigate the comprehensive risk detection techniques and tools for the new risk assessment system. The results were shared throughout the division in fiscal 2012. Model production lines have also been built in other plants and divisions, where the new risk assessment system has been implemented.

We intend to deploy the system throughout the entire NGK group, including back-office departments and affiliates.

Reducing and controlling risks is an absolute requirement to realize a secure and safe working environment. However, it is also necessary to develop human resources who can deal with residual hazards. From this viewpoint, we evaluate employees regarding equipment and operation knowledge, risk prediction abilities and other necessary skills and train them systematically to improve their abilities and skills if necessary.



Mitsuru Kuwahata

[Production Dept., Komaki
Plant, Spark Plug Div.]

Taking an objective view of identifying hazards is important in the new risk assessment system.

Promoting employees' good health

We have a slogan -- "Bring your best physical and mental condition to your workplace and maintain it until leaving." In accordance with our Occupational Safety and Health Policy, we take an interest in the health of our employees. Self-discipline is the key to keeping in good condition. Therefore we put the emphasis on our publicity activities including in-house newsletters to raise employees' consciousness of their health and improve their attitude toward maintaining their own health.

At our periodical health checkups, employees undergo general and special examinations. Our industrial physicians*, clinic doctors and industrial health management staff follow up employees who have abnormal results in their health checkup, and send them on to specialized medical institutions when necessary. These efforts allow employees to detect any disease at an early stage and make a speedy recovery.

In the mental health field, "line care" (in which managers monitor the mental health of their staff, improve the working environment and

give advice and consultation when needed) and "self-care" (monitoring one's own stress level and coping with it) are important. We give managers line care training and provide employees with a Self-Care Handbook and encourage them to use the check sheet in the handbook to increase their awareness of the importance of "self-care." To support our employees in maintaining their mental health, we have also established an externally-operated hotline which employees who are worried about their mental state can call to consult with a specialist.



Shiko Abe (Left)

Masahiro Teramura (Right)
[Human Resources Dept.]

Recognizing the importance of direct communication in the workplace, we continue sharing what we find important for health.

○ Diversity initiative

We promote diversity in our organization as we believe that diversity and inclusion are essential for companies to attain sound growth and ensure happiness for all employees. Here, diversity means an employee-friendly workplace that accepts different personnel "assets" (one in which all people regardless of their gender, age, disability or nationality, enjoy their work) and includes diverse values and ideas that move the company forward. As Japanese society is facing issues such as a shrinking working population and the empowerment of women, we encourage highly-motivated female workers to play important roles in the workplace.

The number of female managers is increasing year by year, and the ratio of women to the total number of employees on the managerial track exceeds 10%. As of March 2013, there are 26 female workers in managerial posts (supervisor or higher position) and five female workers on overseas assignments. This demonstrates that female workers in our company are starting to play a more important role in the world.

In fiscal 2012, we launched a full-scale diversity initiative. We invited external lecturers to give talks on

diversity for women employees and their managers, and organized seminars for female leaders (female workers who are to be promoted to supervisor). We will continue to work hard to improve managers' understanding of female employees and raise our female employees' awareness of empowerment.



voice

Participants in the diversity lecture

〈Female employees〉 ● I hope these lectures will make a difference in the empowerment of women. ● An opportunity to understand the differences between male and female employees would be great. 〈Managers〉 ● It is necessary for women, men and the company itself to break free from their established notions. ● I hope women will play a new role from a female viewpoint and in their own way.

○ Work-life balance

Work-life balance is an important element in ensuring that people enjoy an active career. To this end, we have various systems to support our employees.

We have a childcare leave system, a short-time working system and others for employees who are rearing children. In fiscal 2012, 46 employees including one male employee took childcare leave. In recent years, an increasing

number of male employees take childcare leave and the number reached a cumulative total of eight at the end of fiscal 2012.

We have a volunteer leave system (for a maximum of two years and four months) for employees who want to engage in volunteer activities. As of June 2013, one employee is on leave as a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer.



voice Yo Ishihara

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer

I am on a two-year leave of absence to work as a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer in Naryn in the Kirghiz Republic. This area is trying to expand its tourism industry to establish a new source of income. I help the local government, NGOs and other groups in promoting tourism. I mainly provide support for operating the tourist information facility. I believe that interest in foreign countries will encourage local people to accept foreign tourists and provide them with hospitality. To this end, I organize festivals to introduce Japanese culture, and help with English classes in the Youth Center.

