

POWER PROFILE

SHARPENING THE FOCUS

Shunichi Morinaga, president and CEO of Canon Hongkong, has innovation as a top priority, writes **John Cremer**

HIGH-FLYERS

As a young graduate with a degree in civil law from Tokyo's prestigious Gakushuin University, Shunichi Morinaga already had his sights set on a career which could take him around the world.

The idea of following his father into the insurance sector didn't appeal, so Morinaga looked to the big brand names and trading houses before accepting an offer from Canon in 1984.

It was a logical choice, with around 70 per cent of the company's turnover at that time coming from international markets. And, after starting as a door-to-door sales rep for the business machines division, he was well on his way within a year, marked out for rapid advancement with a transfer to Hong Kong as an overseas trainee.

"The office was in a warehouse in Tsuen Wan," says Morinaga, who returned for a second stint in the territory in April last year, this time as president and CEO of Canon Hongkong. "I was handling camera and camcorder sales with a local partner and distributors in Taiwan and other Asian countries. I enjoyed it very much."

Learning the ropes meant a recall to head office in Tokyo 12 months later to join the fast-growing video-marketing business group. But his talent and potential had clearly been spotted, and further international assignments soon followed, a development which tied in neatly with his long-held personal ambition.

"As a young boy, I was interested in the Beatles and American football rather than sumo wrestling," Morinaga says. "Also, because of my father's occupation, we moved many times, mainly in the west of Japan. Leaving friends every two years was difficult, but there was no choice; I just had to deal with it and get used to the changes."

Such a background made it easy to adapt to life in Toronto during a four-year stay handling the firm's photography and video business. And the cumulative experience proved a similar boon when heading to the Netherlands for a European sales and marketing role in 1994.

"I wanted the moves, but found the company culture was very different in North America and Europe," he says. "I just had to go there and learn. I needed time to adjust, but once you get to know the people, it's not that difficult."

Besides wider management responsibilities, each stop also saw the launch of new products incorporating the very latest technologies. In particular, Morinaga is credited with playing a big part in the successful production planning and marketing of IXUS, the company's first range of compact digital cameras.

Subsequent spells in London – for four years from 2009 – and then mainland China, to oversee the firm's camera business for the whole of Asia, provided the chances and challenges that inevitably come with hi-tech advances, evolving consumer requirements, and selling new products and features.

He explains that the Hong Kong office is essentially a sales and marketing function. While particular attention is currently focused on upgraded models like the EOS M5 and the EOS 5D Mark IV, whose digital features and compact size are aimed at high-end amateurs and professionals, the portfolio also includes printers, business machines and production printing.

With a local team of around 640, Morinaga has, not surprisingly, set out some clear priorities. These look to shape staff attitudes, explore ways to differentiate, and offer customers something extra.

"I'm urging the sales and service sections to work more closely, break the 'silo' thinking, and find more synergies in the

team," he says. "I also talk to them about being a game-changer – not waiting to react, but trying to inspire the market and our partners."

One instance of that is arranging seminars, training sessions and workshops led by top professionals. The aim is to inspire people to take better-quality pictures, to understand and master the true art of photography, and not just to take snaps and "selfies" with a smartphone.

"We call them 'fast photos', like fast food," Morinaga says. "But I want people to really enjoy cameras and photography, learn how to use the technology in a course, and be more creative."

To this end, the company also organises exhibitions and competitions for amateurs, in which 4,500 enrolled last year.

Overall sales may be stable at present, but the development of camera systems for security and enhanced marketing functions offers exciting possibilities. Cameras can also be put to work via video-analytic functions and to this end Canon is working on a system which can distinguish male from female, estimate ages and "remember" faces.

"In the retail business, [the system] can follow the eyelines of customers to see what displays they are looking at, which is a good basis for marketing," Morinaga says. "We are new in this business, but hundreds of people from big companies are attending our seminars and events."

For the full story visit www.cpjobs.com/hk/highflyers

Photo: Lau Wai



NEWS BITS



HSBC and UBS to shift 1,000 jobs each from UK in Brexit blow to London

DAVOS – Two of Europe's biggest banks warned on Wednesday that they could each move about 1,000 jobs out of London as they prepare for expected disruption caused by Britain's exit from the EU.

UBS chairman Axel Weber said that about 1,000 of the bank's 5,000 staff in London could be affected by Brexit, while HSBC chief executive Stuart Gulliver (pictured) said his bank will relocate staff responsible for generating around a fifth of its UK-based trading revenue to Paris.

"We will move in about two years time when Brexit becomes effective," Gulliver said. *Reuters*



Finland's basic income trial aims to spur jobless into action

HELSINKI – As of January 1, a two-year experiment will see 2,000 unemployed Finns receive a monthly unconditional payment of €560 (HK\$4,640). If the test is successful, the plan will be rolled out nationwide, though the exact amount and conditions remain vague at this stage.

Finland's pro-austerity, centre-right government wants to test whether the guaranteed income, perhaps somewhat counter-intuitively, spurs the jobless to get off the couch and find work. Those who find jobs are free to earn as much as they can without affecting their universal basic income. *AFP*



Deutsche Bank scraps most bonuses for investment bankers

LONDON – Bonuses are to become an ever-more-endangered species at Deutsche Bank after its management board said a quarter of all staff – the majority of them in the investment bank – would not receive an individual award for 2016.

Those hit will only qualify for a general group award on top of their basic pay. Management board members will receive no bonus at all for the second year in a row.

A new long-term incentive plan will be granted to a fifth of those receiving zero bonus, but it is payable over six years, rather than the current four, and will be partly in shares. *Reuters*

Photos: SCMP, Tim Pile, Reuters

FEATURE

Seeking less stressful jobs to be better dads

More than half of millennial fathers in the UK want to be demoted into a less stressful job in order to be better fathers, according to a report released this week.

As experts warn of a "fatherhood penalty" for men who want to be more involved in the upbringing of their children, 53 per cent of UK millennial fathers told researchers they wanted to move to a less stressful job, while 48 per cent would take a pay cut to achieve a better work-life balance.

One-fifth of fathers said their employer was unsympathetic about childcare, expecting no disruption to work, while 44 per cent had lied to their employer about

family-related responsibilities that "get in the way" of work.

The 2017 Modern Families Index, published on Monday, found that while nearly half of working fathers (47 per cent) want to downshift to a less stressful job because they cannot balance the demands of work and family life, and just over a third would be willing to take a pay cut to achieve a better work-life balance, those figures increase for younger fathers – indicating a seismic change in workforce mentality.

Among the 2,750 parents across the UK who contributed to the Modern Families Index, men were twice as likely as women to think that flexible working would have a negative impact on their career.

Experts warn that if companies do not change working practices to suit both men and women, they risk losing out on the best talent of future generations.

The UK parliament's women and equalities select committee has launched an inquiry into the treatment of fathers in the workplace, amid fears that they are more likely to face discrimination if they ask for part-time or flexible working than mothers.

"The Modern Families Index shines a much-needed light on the experiences of British fathers in the workplace," said Maria Miller, chair of the select committee. "Many fathers want to take a more active role in caring for their children and our

committee's inquiry into the gender pay gap last year found that sharing caring responsibilities equally between mothers and fathers is the key to reducing the gender pay gap."

The UK government's flagship policy of shared parental leave was likely to have little impact, with the government predicting it would be taken up by only 2-8 per cent of fathers, Miller added.

Sarah Jackson, chief executive of the charity Working Families, said employers had to make sure employees could find a work-life balance to prevent a fatherhood penalty and tackle the motherhood penalty.

"Making roles flexible by default, and a healthy dose of realism when it comes to

what can be done in the hours available, are absolutely vital," Jackson said. "A game-changing first step would be government creating a new, properly paid, extended period of paternity leave – sending a clear signal that government recognises the aspirations of modern fathers and is serious about tackling the motherhood penalty that blights the working lives of so many women."

According to flexible working jobsite Timewise, more than half of the UK's working population now works flexibly, but only one in 10 jobs advertised match the flexibility they need.

"With more men and women than ever before choosing not to conform to the Monday to Friday, nine to five way of working, it's time for more employers to change how they recruit and open up quality roles to flexible working from day one," said Emma Stewart, joint chief executive of Timewise. "If not they risk losing out on the best talent of future generations, and that's not good for business or families."

According to the Fairness in Families Index 2016 from the Fatherhood Institute, men in the UK make up only 25.8 per cent of the part-time workforce, and spend 24 minutes caring for children for every hour done by women.

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Illustration: Thinkstoc



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