DOCOMO Today

My R Philosophy

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"Research and Development" or "R&D" should be read as "Research and **THEN** Development." But, what is the difference between "research" and "development"? Rephrasing it this way I think would make the difference easier to understand: "we did research," and then "we did development." The latter connotes commercialization.

But how much of the research should be commercialized? Of course, our target should be 100% commercialization. However, research is a challenge into the unknown, and it involves competition. Moreover, it is hard to create technologies that can satisfy customers as services.

What customers want is the "best service," not necessarily the "best technology" and the best service can be born without research. Thus, the goal of research should be to create the "best technology" that will provide the "best service."

Planning is important in research. It is a future prediction and design. It has to go beyond dreaming, for designing means creating a vision, and creating a vision means believing in your instinctive intuitions, rather, "sixth sense." You cannot do research on all the technologies needed to realize your vision; you need to work on what you do best, pioneer research on a technology critical to achieve your goal, and let others fill in the gaps. As you go along, you should be willing to rewrite your design sheets to make sure that they reflect the changes in people's lifestyles and tastes and the advances in the basic technologies.

R&D Centers are composed of research labs and development departments; research labs carry out "research," while development departments do "development." Development departments handle the technology for today's business, while research labs take care of the technology for tomorrow's business. Development is needed for commercializing research achievements, so these should be properly transferred to development departments. Thus, research labs should pay full attention to the "transfer" of these achievements to development departments. First of all, research labs should be able to elicit an appreciation, from customers, business departments and development departments, of the value of technology and ensure that they follow the progress of its research. Next, research labs should carefully consider an appropriate style and timing for commercialization by watching market trends and directions closely. Furthermore, they should pursue the transfer of the technology at the right timing, taking into account the progress of ongoing work in a development department, and exercise responsibility and provide technical support beyond the transfer process, until the commercialization is complete.

I believe this process of technology transfer is not easy. When a day is over and morning breaks, it is another "today" that we must face anew. We must be vigilant to continue with what we have envisioned today for tomorrow and beyond until it becomes reality.

Research labs are expected to produce the world's number one and/or the only one technology. However, from the point of view of business and development departments, the technology produced by research labs is just one among many candidates for commercialization. But let me put it the other way around: for research labs, business and development departments are just one among many possible recipients of technology transfer. Selling technology to other companies (excluding business competitors, of course) is also a viable contribution to our company. By selling a technology to vendors or venture companies, it can be commercialized around the world. It is thus important for us to publicize our research achievements to open up more possibilities for commercialization. And this does not only mean presenting the technology in academic conferences, because recognition for a technology's advancement is not a guarantee for its successful commercialization. We need to appeal to the customers so that they will want to buy our technology. For this purpose, we need to actively showcase and promote our technologies[*1].

Let me conclude this article by giving my prediction about the future of mobile communications in one phrase: "Ether Access to Surround service Experience (EASE)." Within ten years, people will be surrounded by and enjoy mobile services through every "invisible" means possible.

*1 We have created a Facebook page called "DOCOMO Euro Research Atelier," to feature our research and technology products. You can view the products featured in the atelier by simply clicking "like."