

Toyota begins worldwide quality drive

Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC) held the first meeting of the Special Committee for Global Quality in Tokyo on Tuesday 30 March 2010. The committee members include newly appointed chief quality officers for North America, Europe, China, Asia and Oceania, and the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America, who will represent concerns of customers. In addition, representative from TMC's business operations and others attended.

Chaired by TMC president, Akio Toyoda, the committee will spearhead further reforms to instil the company's operations throughout the world with a customer perspective. It will investigate the causes of quality problems, including those that necessitate recalls, and re-examine the factors that affect quality in every phase of design work, manufacturing, marketing and service.

By approaching the task of quality assurance from the standpoint of customers in each region, and by keeping in mind the need for strengthened global communication and for ensuring transparency, the committee decided on various improvement measures aimed at resolving current issues.

Summary of measures adopted

Recalls and other safety decisions

- On behalf of the chief quality officers (CQOs), safety executives will participate in recall and other safety decision-making on a global basis. This is aimed at establishing a system in which representatives from each region will voice customer concerns from their regions and participate in determining if and how to undertake recalls and other safety measures.
- The CQO teams and the other representatives who participate in recall decision-making will promptly share information on customer complaints, defects and recalls with the global team members. By achieving the above, the company aims to structure an optimal and prompt recall decision-making process both globally and locally.

Strengthening information gathering

- The group (as a whole) will strengthen its onsite information-gathering capabilities concerning suspected quality problems. For instance, in the US, the Swift Market Analysis Response Team (SMART), a team of specially trained technicians, will conduct onsite inspections as promptly as possible. Toyota plans also to increase the number of technology offices in North America from one to seven and establish seven offices in Europe, six offices in China and other offices in other regions.
- To support analysis of the causes of accidents, in North America, in cooperation with the authorities, it will expand the use of event data recorders (EDRs), which can record data regarding vehicle condition and driver operation. It will also cooperate with the authorities in other regions regarding the use of EDRs. In addition, it will expand the use of remote communications functions, such as G-Book telematics to convey vehicular self-diagnostic information to drivers and will consider a framework for storing that information as a resource for making product improvements.

Timely and accurate disclosure

- The group will have third-party experts from each region evaluate quality-improvement measures on a regional basis. It will also enlist four third-party experts to review the quality-improvement measures adopted.

by its Special Committee for Global Quality. Plans call for the initial review results to be released in June 2010

- It will work closely with its dealers to promote safer driving. They will provide customers with useful information about safety technology and safe-driving practices.

Product safety and assurance

- The group will establish a specialised organization on safety within technical divisions to reflect customer feedback promptly and accurately to strengthen vehicle development.
- For additional customer confidence, it will incorporate-globally-a brake override system (BOS) into new production models, starting in 2010. The BOS will automatically reduce engine power when the brake and accelerator pedals are applied simultaneously.

Human resources

- It will establish CF (customer first) training centres by July 2010 in Japan, North America, Europe, Southeast Asia and China to cultivate quality assurance professionals in each region.

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