



Two years have passed since I was appointed as a Member of the Board (outside) at Lawson. During this time, while speaking with Officers and Executives, I have truly felt that Lawson is an ambitious organization that excels at communication.

The Board of Directors has a good balance between the ratios of each gender, with members that have specialist knowledge in a variety of fields, so that check functions operate from multiple perspectives. President Takemasu, who is the Chairman of the Board, takes a single direction after listening closely to everyone's opinions, which is why Lawson's governance works so well.

From the perspective of a Member of the Board (outside), I sometimes have to make critical observations, such as where Lawson is falling short and where it needs improvement. For example, I think that executives need to improve their capacity to think strategically about goals in the short term and in the mid-to-long term. Also, with regard to branding and marketing communications, which is my specialist field, I feel that we must make further enhancements toward marketing with a view to the post-COVID era.

For the sustainable growth of Lawson in the future, I believe there are three issues that must be tackled. The first is to quickly establish mainstay business founded on areas other than convenience stores. The second is to construct distinctive stores and services in a business area that is known for market saturation and homogeneity. The third is to embed systems and an organizational culture that is both independent and unified.

With regard to the third point, in particular, while enhancing community-based store management, it is necessary for local employees to work independently and to construct an organization that raises personnel of that kind. I expect a lot from this area because Lawson has many employees that are well-tuned to regional customers and partner businesses, and the warm corporate culture is geared toward community-based initiatives.

I was recently appointed as a Member of the Board, and I have been deriving the challenges for the Board of Directors and proposing improvements based on what I have been told when conducting one-on-one interviews with the Members of the Board. I believe that the Lawson Board of Directors has become more effective through the free and open exchange of opinions from individual perspectives based on the opinions and experiences of each member.

As listed companies, Mitsubishi Corporation and Lawson both esteem independence and autonomy. As a member of the parent company, and as a Member of the Board at Lawson, I have a strong awareness of the commission I have received from the shareholders. In discussions at the Board of Directors, we always have in mind the diverse perspectives of stakeholders and that the policies should provide job satisfaction to the owners of franchise stores and employees.

Lawson has stated the strategic concept of "community-based x individual customer and individual store-focused" An important point is how the owners of franchise stores and store managers can offer services suited to individual customers and how they can construct positive relationships. That is why Lawson is working on advanced product development and manufacturing functions that are suited to changing consumer needs and the enhancement of consumer-oriented functions that comprehensively combine real stores with digital features such as apps. I hope that Lawson will get even closer to regional needs in the future and take the lead in next-generation retail business.

Having expounded the integrated promotion of EX¹ and DX² in its medium-term management plan, Mitsubishi Corporation is creating a next-generation community that will contribute to regional stimulation founded on renewable energy. Lawson, which is rooted in the community and has close contact with customers, is part of the important social infrastructure, and the mutual connection between Lawson and Mitsubishi Corporation will be strengthened even more from now on.

*1 Energy transformation

*2 Digital transformation