

Satellite communications and I

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It was six years ago that I joined the different world where the words like “satellite”, “rocket”, “antenna”, “orbit”, and “eclipse operation” fly back and forth, from the world not related to space at all.

First, I belonged to the Engineering Department. There, I was in charge of the secretariat job in the satellite procurement project for four years. Afterwards, I moved to the corporate public relations group two years ago, and have been continuing same job until now.

Four satellites (named "SUPERBIRD" owned by SCC are active now on orbit. These satellites cannot be seen of course with the unassisted eye. Since they cannot be repaired on orbit like automobiles, they are delivered to space, 36,000km apart from the Earth, after they undergo perfect manufacturing and test process on the ground.



In front of launch vehicle model

I was able to participate in this exciting program from the beginning, fortunately. In the satellite procurement program, professional people in various fields such as satellite, launch vehicle, ground facilities, communication, and frequency coordination get together and work together to build, launch and use satellite. Since it takes several years (not several months !) to complete the procurement, it should be the task which needs much patience.

My role was to support such professional people so that their work goes without stagnation. I would like to introduce some of my work at that time.

The difficulty that I had to overcome first was the communication with the overseas manufacturer. Since my only experience in overseas countries was the college graduation travel to Guam, the daily work using English conversation with foreign people could not be done without the effort to newly study English conversation at language school.

I made an effort to recite the common English expression many times so that I could respond even only the daily telephone calls from U.S.

However, there were still a lot of telephones which were outside assumption. I became panicky, and it was not possible to correspond well.

Every morning, I was a little scared to answer the phone spoken in English which comes very early in the morning because of the time difference.

When the people from overseas manufacturer visit our company, I was strained to meet and speak

with them. They were not at all fierce but friendly and smiley, I only could artificially smile and could not communicate with them well. It was really frustrating for me.

However, when the procurement project ended, I, who had been spending the days of such a tension, became so intimate with overseas manufacturer s people, and dropped tears at the time of farewell with them upon the completion of the program.

I do not think that my English speaking skill has grown up so much, compared to the time of program start. However, it had been gradually understood that good communications can be taken even if the word doesn't run well, so long as the intension to communicate is strong and good experiences are accumulated. That confidence helped me to get out of the sensation of fear and to become the good friends with foreign people, I believe.

Some of my work were the arrangements of the business trip and the support for overseas resident staff. They were informative and interesting jobs for me.

As for the arrangement for overseas business trip, it was mostly 2 or 3 people at a time for around two weeks, sometimes. Since it was a situation that another trip followed right after one trip, I was always prepared even for the urgent arrangements, and knew the airlines international timetable by heart.

Trip arrangement covered the rent-a-car and hotel reservation as well as the airline ticket. Since the schedule often changed depending on the advancement of the satellite production schedule, the timing of ticket issuance was important. I tried to correspond to the schedule change as flexible as possible, bearing in mind the various possibilities.

Since I often checked and planned the route from the airport to the hotel, I became very familiar with the geography of the city, and I guess I will not be lost in the city , even when I make the first trip there.

As for the support task for overseas resident representative, through the daily telephone conversation and E-mail exchange, I prepared and sent out the necessary documents, transferred house-rent, fuel and light expenses, and paid the charges forward every month. Materials for income tax payment was also prepared every year.

Bills for the gas and electricity which cannot be seen during the usual overseas sightseeing trip were very unusual for me and interesting. I felt as if I were living in that country. It was a valuable experience for me.

If there was only one dissatisfaction in this work, it was that I was left alone many times in my office. The situations of all people absence because of foreign trip in my organization except me sometimes continued for one month.

During that term, I usually came to the company 30 minutes earlier than the work commencement time, so that I could talk to my colleagues abroad at the timing of their finishing a day s work in U.S. and my starting in Japan. Through that phone call, I received the instruction of urgent task to be completed by tomorrow, and worked hard to complete them during the day. That was the days I worked helplessly, encouraging myself to make good jobs even when I was alone.

Whenever I said "Good night" to them before I hung up the phone since they went to bed in the

afternoon in Japan time, I was envious of them, although they had been working of course while I was sleeping.



Huge antennas at the Superbird network control center

There was a task of in-house reporting of the progress of procurement. This was done by providing the homepage which can be seen only in in-house LAN.

In this homepage, not only the pure business topics like the profile of project members, report of satellite procurement status, and weekly progress report, but also sightseeing information from a local resident representative and sometimes my diary (embarrassing !) were contained.

My strong hope was that the satellite procurement status was to be well understood and utilized by business development people for providing better service to the customers, and by operation people for operating satellites safely. Based upon that hope, together with the instruction by the project manager, I started the homepage task. After all, the homepage was recognized and utilized in the company to some good extent, and could be helpful for the related people, I guess. If this task was successful, I owe most of it to the project people who willingly helped me who did not have technical knowledge on satellite, in spite of their busy schedule at that time.

Throughout the procurement task, I always respected the patience by the project people. And that patience influenced me. The important lesson I learned from them was that it is most important to be engaged in the task closely without giving up easily.

Two years ago, I “graduated” from the Engineering Department where I could obtain a lot of important experiences and I am now in charge of corporate public relations activities.

My present primary jobs are releasing of various corporate news to the media, editing the corporate information magazine called “SUPERBIRD NEWS”, and maintenance of corporate homepage.

Our company is providing various satellite communication services such as the emergency earthquake information delivery “SafetyBIRD” service, disaster resistant “Esbird” service, seminar transmission “V-DRIVE110” service between urban and suburban areas, “SUPERBIRD IP-VSAT” service covering digital-divide areas, and video transmission “HitPops” service.

Through the present public relations job, I can further recognize that satellite can be utilized in such a various way. Although it is rather



“SUPERBIRD NEWS” magazine

difficult to study satellite communications system technically, I would like to study further in order to transmit the attractive points of satellite communications to the as much customers as possible.

I look forward to traveling to the space some day to see SUPERBIRD built by the efforts of many people. Until that day, I would sometimes look up the sky and pray that SUPERBIRD will work safely and excellently.