

**A Conversation with Vice President**

**Bringing the Kawasaki brand to people around the world**



**Hiroshi Takata**

Senior Executive Vice President

**What is the place of the motorcycle & engine business within the Kawasaki Group?**

Unlike our other businesses that are mainly directed at corporate customers, the motorcycle & engine business focuses on consumer products. Our business can be divided broadly into our two-wheel, four-wheel, and Jet Ski vehicle businesses that interact directly with consumers through our products, and our general-purpose engine business that provides products to OEM companies. In either case, the Kawasaki brand name is the selling point in these products.

## **Please talk to us about the Kawasaki brand**

The Kawasaki brand is known worldwide for its motorcycle business, so I expect many people actually equate Kawasaki with motorcycle manufacturing.

As the vice president in charge of marketing, my goal is to leverage the strength of our motorcycle brand to enhance the Kawasaki group brand as a whole. To do that, of course, Kawasaki motorcycles need to be products worthy of the brand. As president of the Motorcycle & Engine Company, I challenged our engineers to “put products front and center.” As senior executive vice president my role has shifted but my thinking remains unchanged. A strong brand depends on the development of strong products. A strong brand attracts customers and gives them a sense of joy and pride as owners of Kawasaki products. Which is why I believe we need to continue to strengthen our brand — to increase our non-price competitiveness.

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## **We often hear mention of a “Kawasaki style.”**

For our motorcycle business, “Fun to Ride,” “Ease of Riding,” “environment,” and “loyalty” have been the keywords that have guided our development efforts. The “Kawasaki style” means “strong models” that seek to deliver a “Fun to Ride” experience that appeals to all five senses so riders never want to stop riding with us. In the case of our general purpose engines, which are tools that our customers use for work, the focus of our development has been on “professional-use, high value-added engines.”

Through our pursuit of “Kawasaki style,” I believe we can contribute to our group mission of “Kawasaki, working as one for the good of the planet.”

## **Speaking of the Kawasaki brand, the Ninja 250/300 has been very popular, hasn't it?**

The Ninja 250/300 has become popular as an entry-level model in advanced countries, and as a premium model in emerging countries. Together with its sibling Z250, the series as a whole is predicted to exceed an annual production of 100,000 units. That will be the highest annual production in the history of our company's motorcycle business. My hope is that these new models will become a part of the legacy that was forged by their predecessors, such as the Z1/Z2 and Ninja 900R, as they continue to lead the Kawasaki brand into the future.

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## **What is the future of our group's brand strategy?**

Our goal is to further strengthen our brand in global markets. Although our group has some name recognition domestically, we feel that the brand is still weak globally, including in emerging countries. Luckily, people in many countries enjoy Kawasaki motorcycles. This means that our motorcycle business has an important role to play in strengthening recognition of the Kawasaki group.

Factors that support brand strength include quality, performance, and design. Another important factor in recent years has been environmental performance. Even in the motorcycle market, a growing number of customers are concerned with environmental performance. This is why we are actively involved in research and development to increase fuel efficiency and comply with environmental regulations.

Our group produces many products with advanced environmental technologies. I want customers around the world to know us as a brand that is committed to helping the environment.