

## Better information, Better decision

### Market Intelligence



**ASAKO HOSHINO**  
Vice President

**“Why does a company conduct market research on consumers? It is not just about asking the customer if they prefer A or B, which is often what managers want to know. Accumulating knowledge on consumer behavior and emerging trends is how you come up with ideas that are truly focused on the customer. Our aim is to gain the deepest understanding of the customer possible, and use that insight to identify future trends.**

**The Market Intelligence department is relatively new, formed by combining the research functions once carried out separately by various divisions. The merger and our independent status have brought several practical benefits. We now have uniform procedures for conducting research, better research methodologies, and greater objectivity in the interpretation of the data. Today, we’re a team of experts in this field, not simply coordinators between research organizations and the decision makers. We are often benchmarked by other industries.**

When the department was first established, Mr. Ghosn made one thing very clear: Do not attack the methodology! Different business areas may complain when we release information that is negative or differs from their objectives. However, they cannot attack how we came to our conclusions, because our methodology is considered the best within the organization. We are transparent in our

selection of methodologies and how we approach conclusions. Among the various areas, we aim to be the department that most effectively utilizes the PDCA—plan, do, check and action—cycle. We are always working to get better and more accurate information to upgrade our methodology. Every year we hold a PDCA session to review our methodology with other departments. Anyone can assess Market Intelligence at this time. This is also a great opportunity to share methodologies and approaches with various functions.

We also conduct trend review meetings with all decision-makers, including non-marketing officers, to understand social, consumer and value trends so that we can identify sources of innovation for all areas. This makes us unique. Our analysts enrich the analysis, interpretation and forecast because they are aware of global social and consumer trends. The trend review meetings also remind people in all departments—even those not directly involved with sales and marketing—that customers are truly the center of our business.

We work with different research experts and companies as our partners. They offer a variety of high-tech techniques such as glasses with cameras that track eye movement, instruments that measure brainwaves or pupil dilation to detect preferences, and non-categorical measures that help us find personal evaluations of perceived quality or design. Our job is to evaluate these research companies and their output, and to develop the best methodology for our issues. We are always refining the tools we have and looking for new ones that will boost our accuracy. Our strong ties with outside experts are a source of competitive advantage for Nissan.

Again, it all goes back to being customer-oriented. Confirming that customer-oriented stance will create value for Nissan. Market Intelligence must be a dedicated evangelist for this change.”