



Innovation as a driver for foundry companies

Interview with...

Kazutoshi Kimura

President
KIMURA FOUNDRY Co., LTD.
Japan

Kimura Foundry Group is well known worldwide for its leadership in innovation and commitment to research and development in materials, processes and technology. Which are the keys for your Group's continuous generation of high added value to the product and development of new business models?

The key has been the effort to improve and innovate the technology of Full Mold Casting (FMC) Process which is the most important mission to Kimura Foundry.

Focusing this, we have overcome and will continuously try to overcome many challenges to apply the technology to the other fields. Sharing value and virtue with all the employees to tackle with every challenge and obstacle is what I engage myself every day.

Setting FMC as our business domain is also the key to enhance our activities.

3D Printing for molds and cores is a big and successful reality in the Kimura Group's activity. Which do you think are the next challenges for 3D Printing in foundry industry?

Kimura Foundry has developed Direct Molding Process (DMP) where we utilize sand 3D printers which normally are used for aluminum castings but we successfully apply for cast and steel iron.

The challenge we will face is how we apply this technology to larger castings instead of current small ones. Even apart from FMC or conventional wooden pattern process, developing a casting technology without molding is getting more critical.

In words of the International Federation of Robotics, the post-Covid19 economy will impulse the automation. Being also Japan the world biggest producer of robots, do you think that investment in Robotics and Automation will be increased as a driver in Asian foundries in the near future?

Kimura has already installed and utilizing robots in finishing process. This movement will become a rocket boost to casting industry not only in Asian region but worldwide.

As foundry business being categorized as so called "3D industry (Dangerous, Dirty, and Demeaning)", Kimura will continue to focus on



introducing FA and AI to improve working environment and productivity.

One of the reactions of your company to the decline in production caused by 2008 crisis was an increase towards sectors such as machine tools, which supposed a successful strategy. Do you believe this new crisis can make Asian foundries look for diversification in new products or client markets?

Kimura Foundry has explored new industries such as machine tool sector and industrial component business around the time of the crisis in 2008. We have also developed DMP and reverse engineering technology applying from the existing casting related technology.

From now on, “market in” concept is getting more crucial as there is more concerns about social environment. EV or Pb-less idea is an example of them. How we reply to those demand with high quality at lower price is the key.

Kimura Foundry America was successfully established in Indiana, United States, in 2018, with the objective of becoming the ‘world’s number one clean foundry’ and being this the first time for your company to offer a business outside Japan. How do you evaluate the present evolution and the future of this part of your business?

Kimura Foundry Co., Ltd. launched its first oversea subsidiary in 2018, Kimura Foundry America Inc (KFA). KFA utilize DMP and focus on producing rapid proto castings.

The new foundry is slower than expected due to the COVID issue, but I am sure that the demand in US for those speedy castings are existing more than in Japan.

Especially, as foundry related companies get specialized in US, such as pattern manufacturers,

molding companies, foundries or machining shops, our KFA which has all the capability as one stop service will be well acknowledged and accepted.

Kazutoshi Kimura was born in 1969, Shizuoka, Japan. Graduated from Nihon University and worked for several years in one of the major trading company in Japan, joined Kimura Foundry Co., Ltd. Since February 2011, acting as President of Kimura, and currently also as Director of Japan Foundry Society, Inc.