

Wataru Suzuki

COUNTRY MANAGER AND CEO OF
AUTOFORM JAPAN



A Trailblazing CEO Redefining Leadership through Customer-Centric Innovation

In today's dynamic business world, achieving success hinges on effective customer engagement. Yet, visionary leaders recognize that customer engagement isn't merely about reeling in customers. It's about forging meaningful relationships that delve deeper into understanding their needs and tailoring solutions that align with their unique pain points. By tuning in to customer feedback and tapping into innovative ideas, these leaders empower their teams to brainstorm, roll out, and fine-tune new offerings that genuinely resonate with customer needs and aspirations. In doing so, they not only set their businesses up for sustained success but also ensure that their customers feel valued, heard, and catered to. A true luminary exemplifying this customer-centric leadership is Wataru Suzuki, the esteemed Country Manager and CEO of AutoForm Japan.

Mr Suzuki commenced his career as an application engineer within an IT trading company, which previously served as an AutoForm representative. In this role, he not only provided user training but also skilfully managed technical support tasks. Transitioning to AutoForm Japan in 2011 marked a pivotal juncture in his career, where he engaged in diverse roles spanning technical consulting, sales, and management. Fuelled by an innate curiosity, he wholeheartedly embraced these multifaceted responsibilities and roles that came his way, amassing a wealth of invaluable experience in the process. But, what truly distinguishes the avid leader

is an unyielding inclination to delve into the underlying significance of various encounters and situations, a trait that lends depth to his analytical approach. Irrespective of the complexity of the situation, Mr. Suzuki strives to find enjoyment in the process—a quality that undoubtedly played a pivotal role in propelling him to his present stature. This unique amalgamation of skills and personal attributes paved the way for his ascension to the role of CEO at AutoForm Japan.

Upholding Quality and Reliability in Software Development

Today, with a global workforce of over 400 dedicated professionals, AutoForm stands tall as the foremost provider of groundbreaking software solutions encompassing product manufacturability, cost calculation, die face design, virtual stamping, and BiW assembly process optimization. An integral part of this suite of solutions is the forming simulation that plays a pivotal role in the product design, engineering, and manufacturing process. The primary goal of simulation employment is to streamline product quality, delivery, and cost-effectiveness. "To ensure reliability and quality, first of all, we thoroughly discuss and pursue whether the software and functions to be developed meet the customer's needs at the specification stage so that the software and functions to be developed will meet the original objectives to be achieved," asserts Mr Suzuki.

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Following development, the software undergoes rigorous testing led by application engineers. These technical experts, well-versed in global specifications, scrutinize the software from all corners of the world. They validate functionality, verify quality, and ensure seamless operation as intended. Finally, since the simulation is not intended to be used, the company ensures through its technical support that the customer is utilizing the system as intended to generate their real purpose.

Fuelling Growth through Value-Driven Innovation

While a wide range of simulation software is available on the market, AutoForm stands out from the rest by focusing keenly on the stamping domain, which now extends to assembly since 2021. The company has embraced a leadership strategy by concentrating its investments in this niche area. Also, it has built a team of highly skilled developers and dedicated significant financial resources to create competitive products.

Unlike many simulation tools fixated on functionality, AutoForm's approach prioritizes value creation. As Mr Suzuki succinctly puts it, "Simulation software tends to fall into the trap of developing features such as 'what can it do?'" However, Software's true essence lies not in its functionality, but in the value it generates. Even if the software has wonderful functions, it is meaningless if it cannot be converted into values."

This mindset propels AutoForm to tailor its software for press engineers, rather than for numerical analysis professionals, prioritizing user-friendly interfaces. AutoForm's broader product portfolio covers the entire BiW development process, aiming for holistic optimization



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and maximal value. Finally, to ensure correct utilization, the company has invested in application engineers to support and ensure customer benefits.

Customer Engagement: A Cornerstone of Success

At the heart of Mr Suzuki’s success story lies his deep-rooted engagement with clients which stems from his beginnings as a frontline engineer. Accumulating nearly two decades of experience, he has cultivated an exceptional knack for comprehending customer challenges in a language that transcends technical jargon, catering to their unique needs. This adeptness at connecting through genuine problem-solving has solidified him as a trusted figure among clients. Furthermore, Mr. Suzuki spearheads a specialized team dedicated to escalating the unique demands of the Japanese market to the developmental core of the organization. This strategic initiative ensures a consistent response to Japanese customer needs, reinforcing and expanding the company’s credibility. Such credibility, interwoven with meaningful value, is the cornerstone of AutoForm Japan’s mission: a relentless dedication to enriching customer competitiveness.

Mr Suzuki underscores, “When our customers achieve competitive advantage and improve their business, they naturally recognize AutoForm as a partner, not just an IT vendor. The crux of this digital transformation, I firmly believe, hinges not solely on the ingenuity of engineers—

our primary clientele—but also on customer management. Thus, as a CEO, I am strengthening my efforts to increase discussion opportunities with customer management so that they will recognize AutoForm as a potential ally, dedicated to amplifying their competitiveness in the market.”

Building Legacy through Transformation

According to Mr. Suzuki, achieving transformation is quite difficult for a CEO and accomplishing such a formidable feat calls for faith, enjoyment in adversity, and a commitment to gradual transformation. Also, embracing transformation is inherently challenging, as humans tend to resist change unless they realize the benefits it brings to them. Thus, he advises CEOs to consider this inclination as natural and emphasizes the pivotal role of QuickWins in fostering acceptance. As AutoForm Japan marches forward under Mr. Suzuki’s aegis, the company is poised to continue its legacy as an industry leader, embracing challenges with determination and making transformation a reality. “AutoForm Japan’s new transformation efforts are already underway, but it took a lot of hard work and many sleepless nights to get to this point in the mindset of our employees. However, we are here now with the support of my strong beliefs, a mind to enjoy difficulties and support from comrades who are all in favour of the project. I am sure we will achieve our belief. Enjoy your challenge and make it happen,” concludes Mr Suzuki. ■