

「There Is No Limit to Your Potential. For Those Who Embrace Growth.」

徐 炯

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1999: Graduated from Shanghai International Studies University (SISU) with bachelor degrees in Japanese Language and International Trade

1999: Joined Mitsui & Co. (Shanghai) Ltd., Chemical Department

2017: Transferred to Nutrition and Agriculture Department

2025: Transferred to the Human Resources and General Affairs Department



Q: What has impressed you most since joining Mitsui & Co.?

A:

What impressed me most was that, from the very beginning, the company gave younger employees genuine opportunities to express their ideas. When I joined, I could speak openly and candidly with the General Manager, department heads, and senior colleagues, and the opinions of new employees were taken seriously.

In my second year, I was selected as a core member of an unprecedented project to procure several hundred types of raw materials for a Japanese manufacturer. Although I had limited experience, I participated in the entire process from planning to execution, including the feasibility study,

classification and analysis of raw materials, negotiations with partners, research into import regulations and tax-exemption policies, and the establishment of a logistics system. Ultimately, we succeeded in winning the order.

The business continued for the next 15 years, contributing to the customer's stable production and ongoing supply-chain improvement. This experience, gained in a culture that trusts young employees with responsibility and supports their growth, remains the foundation of how I approach every new challenge today.

Q: At what point in your career did you feel that you had grown the most?

A:

With every transfer, I had to start learning again from zero. Looking back, I believe that was precisely the rhythm of my growth.

In electronic materials, my work required globally standardized technical specifications and data. After moving into nutrition, I needed a deep understanding of local culture and consumer preferences. In Human Resources and General Affairs, I must understand each person's perspective and career aspirations, as well as the management of the organization as a whole, and find the right balance among them. Each change in subject matter has broadened the way I see the world.

I see a transfer not as losing past experience, but as combining that experience with new knowledge and perspectives to create strengths that are uniquely my own.

Q: How did you change your approach to work when you moved from electronic materials to nutrition?

A:

At first, I thought I could apply my experience in electronic materials directly by identifying excellent overseas ingredients and introducing them to the Chinese market. In practice, however, I realized that customers in the two fields valued completely different things.

Customers in electronic materials emphasize globally consistent specifications and numerical performance. In nutrition and health, it is essential to understand local culture and consumer preferences, including taste, aroma, product concepts, and lifestyle habits. I therefore stopped importing overseas success stories unchanged and shifted to starting with what the Chinese market needs now, such as sugar reduction and localized flavors. By combining Mitsui's global resources with the expertise of local partners, I adopted an approach that begins with local needs and develops solutions suited to the market.

Through this experience, I learned that a global perspective does not mean imposing overseas methods. It means understanding the culture, needs, and strengths of each region, and connecting them across countries and organizations.

Q: How has working at Mitsui & Co., with its diverse business domains, shaped your perspective on innovation?

A:

Because Mitsui's global network spans different industries and regions, we can connect distinct bodies of knowledge and identify opportunities that others may not notice.

In the Nutrition and Agriculture Department, for example, our nutrition business covered areas such as functional food ingredients, health foods, personal care, and animal health. We combined investment, OEM, and import-export trading, while expanding our geographic scope from China and Asia to Africa. In agriculture, we worked across fertilizers, agrochemicals, and seeds. For me, the greatest appeal of this work is creating new value by combining Mitsui's global expertise, an understanding of each regional market, and the strengths of local partners.

Q: How do you personally view the workplace environment and well-being at Mitsui & Co.?

A:

I feel that the company is making steady progress not only in business strategy and talent development, but also in how employees work and in their well-being. Flexible start times, remote work, and hourly leave have genuinely helped me balance family life and work. With a better balance in my life, I can focus more fully on my work and continue learning and growing over the long term.

I do not think well-being is only about enhancing employee benefits. Its essence is creating a foundation where employees can work with peace of mind and perform at their best as themselves. New value can emerge in a global organization only when employees from diverse backgrounds respect one another and have an environment where each person can use their strengths.

In short, the culture here embraces differences and allows each person to be themselves.

Q: Having worked across very different industries and functions, what has remained constant for you?

A:

No matter how much the nature of my work changed, one thing remained constant: listening carefully, identifying the essence of the issue, and bringing together people with different expertise to solve it. That is the foundation of work, and it has been the same in every department.

The practical perspective I developed in sales and my experience turning new business ideas into reality are also valuable in my current Human Resource and General Affairs role. Even in sales, I placed importance on creating an environment where team members could use their strengths and grow. Today, that focus has expanded from my team to all employees and the organization as a whole.

Although the work itself has changed, my willingness to take on new challenges, the atmosphere of open dialogue, and the commitment to valuing each person's individuality have remained unchanged.

Q: How does your current work in Human Resources and General Affairs contribute to employee growth?

A:

Since transferring to Human Resources and General Affairs in 2025, I have been involved in a wide range of work supporting employees and the organization, including HR systems, talent development, organizational development, well-being, and general affairs.

I see the role of Human Resources and General Affairs as connecting business strategy with talent strategy, while supporting the development, deployment, and success of the people the organization needs. Mitsui values its people. In developing and deploying talent, we place particular importance on understanding each employee's strengths, experience, expertise, and career aspirations, and connecting that person with growth opportunities and learning experiences that are genuinely right for them.

My goal is to expand opportunities for development and contribution so that talented local employees can demonstrate their capabilities not only within their own companies and regions, but also across East Asia and on the global stage. I believe employees' success brings energy to the company and drives organizational growth.

Q: Why have you continued working at the same company for more than 26 years since joining as a new graduate?

A:

For me, Mitsui's greatest attraction is the ability to enter new worlds again and again while remaining within the same company.

Each time my area of expertise or geographic scope expanded, I learned new knowledge and worked with people who had different experiences and values. This continually broadened my own perspective and possibilities.

From the autumn of 2023, as part of the company's Executive Education Program for developing next-generation leaders, I attended the China Executive Program at Peking University's Guanghua School of Management. Over one year, I systematically studied business administration and management in China. I still remember my classmates' surprise during introductions when they asked, "Have you really worked at the same company for more than 20 years since graduating?" Yet I have never felt that I was doing the same job for more than 20 years, because I have continually taken on new themes across different businesses, regions, and roles.

Because the company has given me so many opportunities to learn and grow, I want to pass those opportunities on to the next generation.

To Those About to Shape Their Future:

It is natural to feel uncertain when stepping into a new environment. The professional skills and knowledge you have gained at school and at work are valuable assets. But they do not define the limits of your potential. Believe in your ability to enter unfamiliar fields and connect with people whose perspectives differ from your own.

A career is not necessarily a straight line. Through encounters with new work, experiences that once seemed unrelated may suddenly connect and become strengths that are uniquely yours. You do not need to aim for perfection from the start. Stay curious, find the courage, and take that first step.

At Mitsui & Co., colleagues and an environment are in place to provide learning and career opportunities to people who want to move forward, including locally hired employees, and to support their growth globally.

