

Our business becomes successful only when we find a reliable partner on the other side. I want to build this country's future together with our colleagues.

Hirofumi Masunaga (front center)
Managing Director
Mitsubishi Shoji Kaisha (Nigeria) Ltd.
(hereinafter called "LGS")

Managing director's role of bridging the gap between Nigeria and Tokyo

In April 2017, Hirofumi Masunaga became Managing Director of LGS, one of MC's subsidiaries in Africa. Masunaga says, "I learned that my new post would be in Africa, somewhere completely unfamiliar to me, and even more surprisingly, as managing director of a subsidiary there. The news came like a bolt out of the blue. But I put myself into a mode of embracing this new challenge with an open mind." He also says, "When I arrived in Nigeria and attended my first meeting with the local employees, I realized that they did not have a full grasp of MC Group's strategies and policies, including the background." He continues, "All the local employees were experts who are knowledgeable about Nigeria more than anyone else. My

role was clear. As managing director of this company, I would have to seamlessly bridge the gap between these local employees and MC Head Office in Tokyo. In order to improve the company's operations through close communication, I made it a rule to meet face-to-face with individual employees on a monthly basis." In response to Masunaga who wanted his employees to talk about anything, even topics other than work, they became to talk more about their families, local customs and practices, and so on. He says, "There was an employee who passionately talked about a dream of doing business that will contribute to the improvement of the country's future healthcare and education systems."

Conveying in my own words about what the company expects of these employees

Each time after returning from a business trip to Tokyo, Masunaga explained what was discussed in Tokyo (including hidden messages) to his employees, using the meeting handouts he translated into English. Masunaga explained not only MC business group strategies and policies but also the corporate vision the whole MC is striving for. By comparing it with the current situation of LGS, Masunaga tried to tell his employees in his own words, "What the company expects of you." "As a result, they gradually became to act on their own initiatives and ask more questions. In this way, I began to see mutual trust deepening gradually and the employees talking and smiling in the office more than before. All my employees are now working as one, and I feel momentum is growing toward the "Creation of New Business," in which MC and our partners around us are most interested.

Mitsubishi Shoji Kaisha (Nigeria) Ltd.

Established in 1969, the company engages mainly in trade and market development of chemicals. The company also provides support to industrial companies and partners, including global agribusiness company Olam and Calik Group in Turkey.

Always have a sense of appreciation and respect

Masunaga says, what stands out in his memory is a question recently asked by a government official, "What is needed to improve the quality of life for Nigerian citizens?" "I was caught off guard by the question, and I could make only a stereotyped response. But it was a good opportunity for me to think about my own position and responsibilities. Later, during my meetings with local company executives, I often felt as if I heard them say, "We are looking forward to wonderful things the MC Group would do for our country," which made me feel first-hand the magnitude of their expectations of the MC Group. In order to live up to their expectations and build win-win relationships with them, it is important for us to do business by always having a sense of respect as we do with daily human relationships. It is my belief that nothing is more important than aligning our business with local needs with the sense of appreciation that we are allowed to do business here, instead of saying what we want to accomplish in an obvious manner," Masunaga says.

Nigeria is expected to become the world's third most populous country in the 2040s, and the country's growth potential is immeasurable. "While continuing to grow together with my employees, I want to chase the big dream of contributing to the creation of a brighter future for all Nigerians," he says.



The company is headquartered in Lagos, the largest city in Nigeria.