

## Preface

The human resources development of modern companies is exposed to many unexpected environmental changes such as the technological progress, ageing workforce and internationalization. In order to investigate these problems, the In-Plant Education Research Society was established in July 1981 at the request of Research and Development Institute for Vocational Training.

Since then this research group has been enthusiastically immersed in studying these problems and the results achieved have already been gathered in three research reports. We have been fortunate to receive comments from various sources, therefore at this time our report aims at being a compilation of the special features of Japanese in-company human resources development and at the same time a guideline pointing at the direction from now on.

During the post-war period of rapid growth, and also through the more unstable years after the oil crisis the Japanese economy has performed satisfactorily if judged by aspects like employment, commodity prices and international balance of payments. The high level of flexibility of Japanese workers has been given as one basic reason for this. There should be no doubt that in-company human resources development with a heavy emphasis on OJT has greatly contributed to this flexibility.

However, as the rapid changes in our social and economical environment continue, attention should be paid to the erosion of some of the conditions that made the Japanese human resources development system functional and effective.

The fundamental course of in-company human resources development in a new era is certainly that all members of a company from top to bottom have a clear conception of their

objectives and form study groups that aim at developing occupational capabilities through their working lives. We have called this kind of situation "a learning company", and pointed out some measures to realize this. But to develop more effective and feasible working methods, still deeper and more comprehensive surveys and studies will be necessary.

The members of this study group wish to express their heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed with their comments and opinions and thus made the completion of this report possible.

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In-Plant Education Research Society

Chairman: Kenji Okuda

List of Members of the In-Plant Education Research Society

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