

Top Gun Project Employee Roundtable Discussion

Taking on challenges with no set answers, together

The Top Gun project: facing social issues across organizational boundaries

Keigo Tomiguchi

In his 18th year with Mitsubishi HC Business Lease Corporation, a Group company. In charge of sales to vendor partners.

Hiroataka Mitsui

IT Department
In his third year with the Company. Since joining the Company as a mid-career hire, he has worked in the Cybersecurity Group of the IT Department.

Ayaka Iwata

Chubu Business Department No. 1
In her fifth year with the Company. Since joining, she has been engaged in sales for large companies. She is currently in charge of sales in the Chubu region, working on proposals that help customers overcome their challenges.

Masato Shibasaki

Project Acceleration Department
In his 11th year with the Company. He has been involved in corporate sales, the real estate business, and robot-related businesses, and is currently in charge of new business development.

How will the experience gained through the Top Gun project connect to Mitsubishi HC Capital's Our FY2031 Vision, "Together we innovate, challenge and explore the frontiers of the future"? We asked members of a team that tackled a major social issue, the shortage of transportation capacity in the logistics industry, about what motivated them to participate, the changes they experienced through the activities, the significance of working across organizations, and the challenges they wish to take on going forward.

A project led directly by the CEO to transform the Company by examining ideas for improving our ability to provide added value to customers from broad perspectives that transcend organizational boundaries.

Knowing internal resources and incorporating different perspectives

First, please tell us what motivated you to participate in the Top Gun project.

Iwata I interact with customers in my daily work in sales, and I have sensed that overcoming challenges is difficult if I only rely on my own ideas and values. I often have opportunities to work with departments that support sales and other frontline operations, but there are many people with whom I have fewer points of contact, such as those in Corporate Center divisions and Group companies. I wanted to expand my internal network and absorb the views of people who think differently from me, so I applied to participate. In fact, by listening to members of

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different generations and with different experiences, I was able to gain perspectives that I would not have come up with on my own.

Tomiguchi Because I belong to a Group company, I wanted to learn what Mitsubishi HC Capital's employees do in their daily work and what kinds of relationships they have built with business partners and customers. The theme this time was the shortage of transportation capacity in the logistics industry, but we started by learning about the industry itself. We directly spoke with customers, received advice on the team's concepts and proposals, and then reconsidered our ideas based on their responses. Repeatedly going through this process of *trial and error, learn and try* was a significant experience for me.

Mitsui I joined the Company mid-career, and when I applied to participate, I had only been with the Company for about a year. People who have worked here for a long time can naturally picture the relationships with other departments and the roles those departments play, but I was not yet able to do that. I decided to participate because I wanted to know more about other departments, which I felt would also help me in my current work. Also, because my previous experience was mainly in IT, I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the businesses and ways of working of a leasing company.

Shibasaki I am also involved in new business development as part of my work in the Project Acceleration Department, but I felt that only thinking among ourselves often leads to fixed ideas. In Top Gun, you work together on



overcoming challenges with members whose experiences and roles are completely different from your own. I thought there was great significance in having others supplement the knowledge that I lacked. As a team leader, I participated because I wanted to examine my own ideas from a variety of angles.

Returning to the question when things did not work out

Were there any difficulties or turning points during the activities?

Mitsui The concept we had initially developed reached a point where we began to think that it might be difficult to move forward if we continued as we were. Through customer interviews, we began to understand why many companies had attempted to address the same challenge but had been unable to succeed. We faced a sizeable obstacle when considering how we could approach the challenge as a single company. At that time, however, having the four of us discuss it from every angle made a significant difference. After we met with another company and saw a different approach, the team was able to come together and work toward making a proposal.

Shibasaki The four of us were almost always aligned on the direction we thought we should take, but the most difficult moment was when we realized that the solution we had been considering was different from what customers actually wanted. We even discussed whether to give up midway. However, at that point, we once again went back to the question of what we were trying to address. We interviewed customers again, clarified how our thinking differed from what was being sought, and changed the direction of our idea.

Tomiguchi We had to continue our Top Gun activities while carrying out our regular duties. There was a schedule to follow, and there was also a presentation at the end. We needed to balance our regular duties as individuals with what we had to do as a Top Gun team, and managing that was not easy. However, through teamwork, we were able to steadily move our project forward. All members worked with a positive attitude, so I don't think the atmosphere ever became negative.

Iwata As a salesperson, I work every day with my own targets, but Top Gun's activities were not something directly reflected in my performance evaluation. Even so, by asking my client contacts to introduce me to people involved in logistics for interviews, I was able to develop new points of contact, and in some cases, referrals to other potential business partners led to business meetings. Although indirectly, I was glad that I could help expand business.



Engaging people in different positions and creating meaning in work

Through your Top Gun activities, did you notice any changes in your own actions or perspectives?

Shibasaki I was once again reminded that the ability to engage others is essential when launching new businesses or business initiatives. It is easy to engage people whose thinking

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is close to your own, but to gain the cooperation of people in completely different fields, participating must also have meaning for them. Otherwise, you cannot gain true cooperation. That's why I was conscious of making the activities meaningful for each team member.

Mitsui Because I belong to the IT Department, in my daily work as a member of a Corporate Center division, I mainly play a supporting role. Through my Top Gun activities, however, I began to think about how I can contribute to the Company's profits and value creation. The project also gave me a valuable opportunity to think about the difficulty of building a new business and what kind of impact such a business could have on the Company's future.



Tomiguchi I felt that I needed to think differently from how I do during my regular work. We listened to customers' challenges, tested the team's ideas, and revised them again. Rather than keeping that experience to myself, I wanted to

share it with everyone in the Company. I feel that having this kind of mindset is important so as to accept and create change.

Iwata I feel that I learned the attitude of taking on challenges and the determination to face difficult-to-overcome challenges. It was also extremely valuable to embrace a trial-and-error approach through interviews with customers, listening not only to positive feedback but also to negative opinions.

Making the first step across organizations easier

What changes do you feel have emerged in your workplace or organization as a result of Top Gun?

Mitsui From the standpoint of the IT Department, we are not directly connected to customers, so rather than saying that my work changed significantly because I participated in Top Gun, I would say the biggest

change was that my connections with other departments expanded. I was able to learn the purpose behind the work of the Business Promotion & Strategic Planning Department and the Project Acceleration Department. I have also shared the activities within my department. This has led to an awareness within the IT Department that we should work closely with frontline operations and provide hands-on support to maximize the effects of IT investment.

Shibasaki Top Gun has been held twice so far, and at first, I think some people may have viewed it as an internal event. However, when you seriously try to produce results, you end up asking a variety of departments for cooperation. Through that process, people inside the Company came to understand the point of Top Gun. If I were to describe one organizational change, it would be that the first step toward starting something new has clearly become easier. Even for large themes that one individual or one department cannot handle, I feel that Top Gun has made it easier to start by reaching out not only to one's



own department but also to various other departments and Group companies.

Tomiguchi I think the significance of Top Gun lies in sharing the strengths of each department and organization across the entire Company and creating a culture of collaboration. There is a difference in speed between people who can take action and those who cannot yet do so, but I feel it has become easier to reach out to other departments and address challenges together. If this begins to show itself in numbers and other tangible results, I think we will be able to engage even more people.

Iwata From my perspective as someone who joined the Company after the business integration in 2021, I feel there are still areas where awareness of the former Mitsubishi UFJ Lease and the former Hitachi Capital remain. However, each has its own strengths, and I also think the Company has the potential to create something better through the combination. I feel that making full use of these resources through activities like Top Gun will become a source of growth for the Company.

Finding answers to social issues as the Mitsubishi HC Capital Group

What kind of value do you want to deliver toward realizing the vision "Together we innovate, challenge and explore the frontiers of the future"?

Shibasaki In this Top Gun project, we tackled a major social issue: the shortage of transportation capacity in the logistics industry. Up until now, as a leasing company, in some respects we have been expected to provide answers that are typical of a leasing company. This time, however, we had a chance to think about how to solve a question that rises to the level of a social

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issue by combining the Company's own resources with the capabilities of partners. Going forward, I want to continue taking on the challenge of finding optimal answers to major challenges, without being confined by the framework of a leasing company.

Mitsui Because I work in a Corporate Center division, my role is basically centered on providing support. However, I have developed a desire to do more than just protect the Company; I also want to support operational improvements and make proposals that help rethink conventional ways of doing things. We are expected to maximize the effectiveness of limited investments, such as by strengthening cybersecurity and improving the usability of the IT environment. I want to steadily bring such improvements to fruition.

Tomiguchi To take on the challenge of exploring the "frontiers of the future," I think we need to keep thinking at all times. Unexpected things happen in the world, and risks and challenges emerge for customers as well. These cannot be solved by one person alone. I believe corporate value can be enhanced as more people gain the ability to engage others and take action. I will continue to approach my work with this awareness, and I would also like to spread it throughout the Company.

Iwata I see the word "together" in Our FY2031 Vision as an important keyword. I believe challenges can be overcome by developing a broad understanding of the Company's resources, deeply understanding customers, and then bringing together the strengths of different businesses. Until now, through my experience centered on sales, I feel I have developed only the limited perspective of an individual contributor. Going forward, I want to gain new perspectives by placing myself in a variety of positions, including Corporate Center divisions and business divisions. I also want to become a professional who is strong in both offense and defense.

The enjoyment of tackling questions with no clear answers

Finally, looking back on Top Gun's activities, please tell us what left the strongest impression on you.

Shibasaki What left the strongest impression on me was that we have worked on something with no clear answer. We conducted interviews with customers, laid out the facts, considered solutions, and then proposed them to customers once again. It was extremely rewarding to search for an answer when there wasn't a predetermined one. Although we almost experienced a setback at one point, finding an answer that truly fit what customers wanted was a new discovery for me.

Mitsui What left an impression on me was that when we spoke with customers about their challenges, they resonated with what we had to say. It was a good experience to interact with customers and become part of their discussions. Rather than heading toward an obvious answer, we had to consider how to provide an answer where none existed. It also felt somewhat like an experiment.

Iwata Working on something with no predetermined answer is difficult and challenging. At the same time, I wanted to be able to enjoy that process. I hope to experience more of the enjoyment that comes from gradually understanding what I didn't know.

Tomiguchi The activities themselves were enjoyable, but that was not all. In our day-to-day work, I do not think there are many occasions where your emotions are strongly moved. Looking back at such moments in our team activities, I feel it was an experience that made me glad I took part.



The Top Gun project is not merely a forum for competing with ideas for new businesses.

As employees from different departments and with different experiences come together and face social issues with no set answers, participants learn about the Company's resources and recognize the importance of engaging people and taking action. The changes that emerge in each participant through this process will turn into Mitsubishi HC Capital Group's power to pursue its vision, "Together we innovate, challenge and explore the frontiers of the future."

