

About the Special Issue on User Case Studies



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The Business Environment and a New Business Infrastructure

As the business environment has rapidly become more globalized, open, and deregulated, various paradigm shifts have arisen for companies. This in turn has repeatedly spurred the formation of new markets and the decline of some existing markets. These trends have become more pronounced as we have entered this new century. Given this turbulent business environment, today's companies are finding it increasingly difficult to chart a steady course toward future growth.

Meanwhile, progress continues in IT technologies, such as network technologies, exemplified by the Internet, computer technologies, etc. (see Figure 1). In fact, for today's companies, this progress will result in a newer, more powerful business infrastructure, and how well companies build and use this new infrastructure will be a major deciding factor in capturing market leadership.

This new business infrastructure is creating opportunities for companies to provide more efficient methods and new value at each stage of their essential business processes and value chains. These stages run the gamut—from the strategic planning stage where businesses are under pressure to predict the direction of the rapidly changing business environment and respond quickly to those changes, to the marketing stage where companies must accurately identify the increasingly diverse and individualistic trends in customer needs. The new business infrastructure may also provide opportunities for automation of the analyses and responses that must be performed at these various business stages.

Faced with a tough business environment, companies must boost their own competence levels if they hope to grow their core businesses. At the same time, companies must recognize that their key to survival lies in making good use of the new business infrastructure so that they provide new business value to customers in all business sectors.

However, it will be very difficult for companies to strengthen their core businesses while also preserving the resources and technologies needed to take advantage of the business infrastructure. If too many resources—including human resources—are invested in the business infrastructure, it will place an excessive burden on core businesses. On the other hand, in cases where a sophisticated mix of business infrastructures can be a

boon to the company's core businesses, adopting business infrastructure technologies internally is an indispensable task, even though striving to adopt all the fast-evolving, cutting-edge technologies of the new business infrastructure would indeed be a huge burden for a company to bear.

Network Solutions Offered by Oki Electric

As a company at the forefront in providing solutions for communications and information systems, Oki Electric has built upon its long-held foundation of core technologies by adding new solution-related technologies, ranging from universal design technology to customer contact technology and customer relation management technology, and in this way provides a variety of new business service solutions. The Oki approach solves the difficult problem which our customers face: "how to adopt more advanced business infrastructures while still paying due attention to core businesses."

Since the balance that is to be struck in devoting attention to both core businesses and business infrastructure will depend on the particular characteristics of corporate customers' own core businesses, the content of the business infrastructure-based solutions to be provided to these customers may vary greatly.

Recognizing that our corporate customers must keep concentrating on their core businesses, Oki Electric must provide solutions that make business infrastructure compatible with the characteristics of these core businesses. To provide such solutions, Oki Electric must understand the issues that arise in these customers' core businesses and must select and propose appropriate ways to solve those problems.

At times, Oki Electric's corporate customers may decide to seek ways to effectively use new business infrastructures themselves, to help ensure the success of their own core businesses. As a provider of leading-edge "solution technologies" and information / communication network technologies, Oki Electric can support these customers by combining our expertise with the customer's core businesses know-how to solve problems. Close collaboration with customers is a crucial component in providing this type of support.

In any case, Oki's approach of continually evaluating the results of solutions and, based on that, proposing new value and new solutions is the true foundation that enables Oki businesses to enjoy a high level of customer satisfaction.

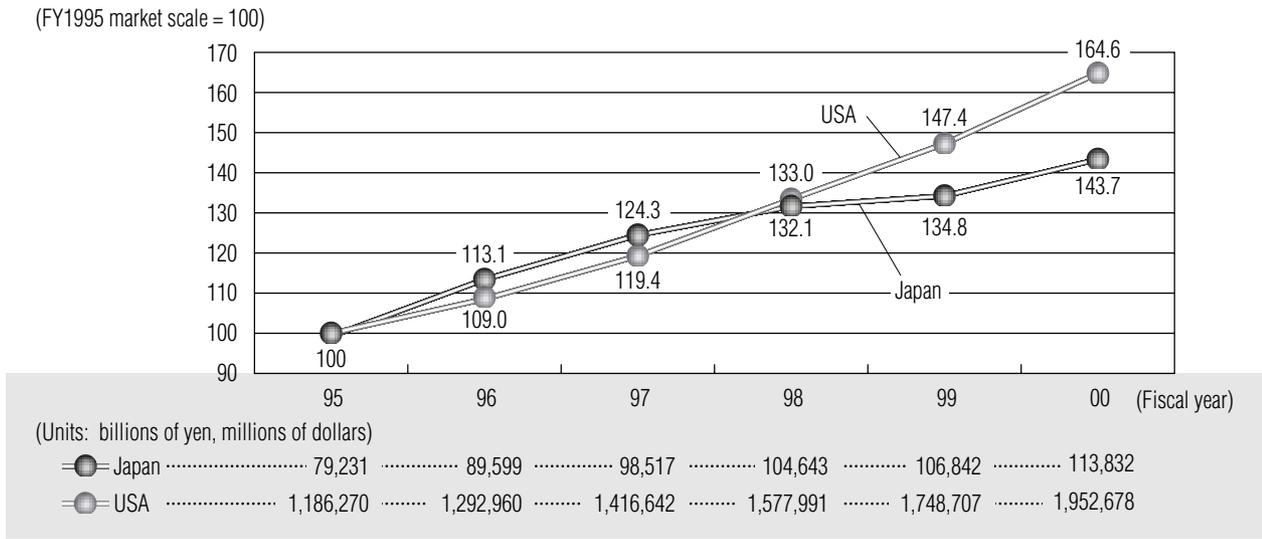


Fig. 1 Changes in Japan's IT Market Scale
 (Source: 2002 White Paper on Information and Communications in Japan,
 by Japanese Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications)

Special Issue on User Case Studies

The user case studies in this issue describe how a variety of Oki Electric's network-technology and computer-technology solutions are actually being used by customers.

These customers, while resolute in wanting to continue concentrating their resources on their core businesses building a solid structure, also recognize how vital it is to further develop and improve the many aspects of their business infrastructure in order to adapt to the drastically-changing business environment. At Oki Electric, we work with customers in promptly developing and delivering the business infrastructure solutions they need to respond to the changing business environment. We recognize that close collaboration with customers must come first to make this possible. Accordingly, the case studies in this issue are centered on this theme of collaboration with customers.

For the future, we at Oki Electric look forward to helping our customers deal promptly and effectively with a difficult and fluid business environment by providing just these types of solutions.