

Olympus' Digital Cameras Also Rank High in Environmental Performance.

Olympus is one of the leading manufacturers of digital cameras. In FY2004, the world digital camera market became huge, with 72 million cameras sold. Masaharu Okubo, who became president of Olympus Imaging Corp. in April 2005, has been playing a vigorous part in a wide range of areas—not only in fields ranging from microscopes through analyzers and industrial endoscopes to printers but also as the director of the Corporate Center. We have heard from President Okubo on Olympus' social contributions through their digital imaging business.

Q.

What kind of products does Olympus Imaging Corp. produce?

A. In FY2004, we produced 8.9 million digital cameras, 3.09 million film cameras, and 1.58 million digital audio systems on a shipment basis. These products were produced mainly in our Shenzhen and Panyu Plants in China.



Shenzhen Plant, China



E-1 (FY2003 Olympus Eco-product) and Zuiko Lens Series using Lead-free Lenses

Q.

With increasing concern about the environment, market requires more strongly environmentally conscious products, doesn't it?

A. Olympus has long exhibited originality in the development of compact and lightweight products, such as its OM system SLR camera in the old days, and more recently the μ series digital camera and DS series IC recorder. We have been seeking high added value with the use of fewer resources. The compact and lightweight products is related to minimizing the environmental load during production.



DS series IC Recorder DS-20 (RoHS-compatible Product)



OM system SLR Camera
*This camera is no longer produced or sold.

Q.

What kind of program has been started to develop the sort of environmentally conscious products that customers are looking for?

A. We have stipulated voluntary standards known as Olympus Eco-product Standards and have clarified environmentally conscious items and the level required for our products. An Olympus Eco-product mark is given to each product that meets these standards. In production, we aim to make Olympus Eco-products that also exhibit high quality in environmental performance. Concretely, we promote life cycle assessment (LCA) to understand quantitative environmental load, from the raw material stage through actual products to the waste disposal stage, and are carrying out product assessments to confirm that items are environmentally conscious in the product planning & development process. We provide products that are manufactured to meet not only our voluntary standards but also standards enacted by public organizations. Our E-1 digital SLR received ECOLEAF certification in December 2003, the first of its kind, and its product environmental information have been published by the LCA information dissemination system of the Japan Environmental Management Association For Industry (JEMAI).

Q.

In Europe, it is mandatory to eliminate hazardous substances contained in products in order to prevent discarded electronic equipment from polluting the environment. What kinds of measures are Olympus taking?

A. We have control measures for hazardous substances, such as heavy metals contained in products, that meet the regulations in each country in the world, and we can control the amount of impact that those hazardous substances have on the environment.

We will abolish all use of specified hazardous substances by sometime around the summer of 2005, one year before the July 2006 enforcement deadline in the EU's RoHS Directive (restrictions on the use of certain hazardous substances, such as lead and cadmium, in electrical and electronic equipment).



m:robe
motion music player

MR-100 (RoHS-compatible Product)

Q.

In these days, product packaging has changed radically, hasn't it?

A. Since around 1992, we have been promoting on environmental management as well. For example, we have discontinued the use of vinyl chloride in product packaging, and have adopted cardboard that can easily be recycled, thus promoting environmental consciousness concerning our packaging materials. The individual packaging box for the E-1 is an environmentally conscious design, a one-piece box. We have developed this using a single material, which saves resources. This was awarded the Good Packaging Prize in the Japan Packaging Contest in 2003.



One-piece Product Packaging Box for the Body and Lens of the E-1

Q.

The enclosure of environmental information to customers has become increasingly important. What are you going to do about this?

A. We understand the importance of public disclosure of environmental information through our Web site and via our responses to inquiries from customers. Our Web site introduces our environmental activities and provides information about the environmentally conscious features of our products. Our Customer Support Center supplies environmental information by telephone and e-mail. At Olympus Imaging Corp., we will develop advanced technology and create and provide products that consider the environment while remaining in close contact with our customers.



Masaharu Okubo
President of
Olympus Imaging Corp.