

EVIS X1 Dialogue

EVIS X1 to Meet the Needs of Healthcare Professionals

In 2020, Olympus launched the EVIS X1 endoscopy system to Europe, Japan, and some parts of Asia. To discuss how the EVIS X1 was developed, we held a dialogue between a senior manager from marketing and a manager from R&D.



The EVIS X1 marked the first model change in about eight years since the previous EVIS EXERA III (mainly for the European and U.S. markets) and the EVIS LUCERA ELITE (mainly for Japan and the U.K.). When the development of the EVIS X1 began, what were the challenges at the time?

Tadakoshi: Even regarding the previous models, each element of their basic performance, such as image quality, operability, and insertability, was highly regarded. Based on our consideration of what kind of value Olympus should provide next, the

theme of contributing to improving the “quality” of endoscopy as a whole was decided, from lesion detection to diagnosis and treatment. This is the concept behind the EVIS X1.

Honda: Since endoscopy largely depends on the skills of doctors, the challenges are to prevent lesions from being overlooked and to improve both the accuracy and usefulness of diagnoses and treatments. The development of the EVIS X1 system began with the aim of covering this difference in skill—in terms of functionality—while always providing patients with high-quality endoscopy.

How does marketing and development work together when developing a product?

Tadakoshi: I think Olympus’ greatest strength is the relationships with healthcare professionals that are being built over the years. Not only sales representatives and marketers, but also product developers actually visit the clinical sites and communicate with healthcare professionals in order to be aware of the needs and develop products to solve problems. There exists our ongoing culture that has been continuously passed down. We are truly grateful that healthcare professionals, who are very busy, are willing to cooperate with us in the shared purpose of improving endoscopy.

Honda: We have developed endoscopic technology by working together with healthcare professionals. We believe that the most important thing to ensure that the needs of healthcare professionals are incorporated into our products is to actively communicate with them. Since doctors from all over the world, not only in Japan, will kindly give feedback about our products, as product developers we can confidently bring new products to market.

What were the difficulties when developing the EVIS X1?

Honda: Since efficient verification activities based on the characteristics of endoscopes are required due to laws

and regulations becoming increasingly stricter year by year, a major issue for Olympus was how to have doctors in each country check the performance. In particular, it was necessary to establish the evaluation technology itself by making full use of specific verification models, etc., and how to check the points in a non-clinical environment that should be confirmed in a clinical environment such as image quality and ease of use. In addition, to support high-quality endoscopy with less pain for patients, we needed to install our original imaging technologies such as extended depth of field technology (EDOF) without changing the size of the scope’s outer diameter from the previous models. Prior to product commercialization, we also had to build a mass production system for products equipped with such advanced technologies. I believe that the EVIS X1 could be brought to fruition not only by the endoscopic developers, but also by the collective efforts of many other people, including manufacturing equipment experts, skilled workers, and manufacturing members.

Tadakoshi: The EVIS X1 is an epoch-making system with which we have achieved global integration. Previously, we have developed a lineup of two endoscopy systems to meet the needs of doctors in each country, so integrating them into one product was extremely challenging. The global marketing and R&D team matched the needs of the doctors in each country and repeatedly considered what key technologies to incorporate. We then received opinions of doctors all over the world and finally fixed its specifications. The existence of two systems presented a high hurdle for doctors who have been creating universal procedures and diagnostics, but by deploying the EVIS X1 in the years to come, I think we will be able to support the provision of high-quality medical care to patients around the world. Also, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, the first problem we faced was how to conduct in-house training to help sales representatives become familiar with the product. In



Ryuhei Tadakoshi

Senior Manager, Marketing of Gastrointestinal Endoscope

The culture at Olympus, continuously passed down through generations, is one of developing products through communication with healthcare professionals.

response, we launched a hybrid, online and on-site training program for EVIS X1 and rapidly undertook its global deployment. This initiative has also been of great help in the subsequent training of healthcare professionals.

Please elaborate on the feedback Olympus has received from healthcare professionals in each country.

Tadakoshi: In the areas where the EVIS X1 has already been introduced, and according to the aims of its development concept, we have received feedback that each function contributes to improving the quality of lesion detection, diagnosis, and treatment. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been opportunities for doctors around the world to communicate with each other online even in areas where the EVIS X1 has yet to be launched. Looking ahead, I would like to conduct sales and marketing activities to launch the EVIS X1 to such markets as soon as possible.

Honda: Olympus has also received valuable opinions such as requests for improvements. There are many aspects that can only be understood when a product is launched to the market and is being used in various clinical environments, so we take such opinions seriously and immediately improve any aspects we can.

In the years ahead, what types of activities should Olympus focus on, and what kind of value should be provided to patients?

Honda: The EVIS X1 is equipped with a variety of technologies aimed at improving the quality and efficiency of endoscopy. I think, however, there are still many aspects, including techniques for endoscopy and diagnoses as well as the operation of endotherapy devices for treatment, which depend on a doctor’s skills. I think there is room for improvement and we would like to continue working on product development that bridges the gap in doctor’s skills so that patients can receive safer, more secure, and more accurate endoscopy and treatments.

Tadakoshi: Due to differences in, for example, endoscopic market penetration, the degree of technological development, and culture, there are various issues and demands that countries and regions are facing. Nevertheless, I believe that the value of early diagnoses and minimally invasive treatment that Olympus provides will not change in the years ahead. I would like to continue embodying the needs of healthcare professionals in Olympus products and solutions, while providing high-quality medical care to as many patients as possible.



Kazuki Honda

Manager, R&D of Gastrointestinal Endoscope

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