

### **Naoto Yanagihara**

**Corporate Vice President, General  
Manager of Research & Development  
Management Headquarters  
FUJIFILM Corporation**



My R&D principles are rooted in my college laboratory. Our professor declared, “In the world of research, one that achieves a result earlier than others wins. An experiment is a war to fight fair. It is a life-or-death battle.” He trained us to generate data faster than rivals and to be fair always. He insisted on the importance of curiosity about the world around. I graduated, though I did not reach the professor’s expected level; but those laboratory days created my current thought processes and behavior patterns.

After joining FUJIFILM, I worked in product development using functional dyes, photopolymers, and microcapsules that respond to heat, pressure, light, and other stimuli. While our business fields and research targets diversified when shifting from analog to digital, I was always working on one subject: functional materials controlling “light and color.”

My horizons have expanded since I was transferred in June 2014 to a department that has a comprehensive overview of the company’s technological strategy. This transfer helped me realize that FUJIFILM has diversified assets. For instance, the silver halide photography business has many technological assets, along with materials developed for services based “shooting, recording, outputting, and storing.” These assets and their combinations can potentially solve many social problems. We should panoramically explore utilizing our assets, including recent technologies.

Obtaining the latest industrial information is important in an excessively diversified competitive environment, where, at any time, an innovative technology/service can displace the existing. We are establishing contact with domestic and foreign startups looking for information. The Innovation & Strategy Planning Division, formed in August 2015, aims to conduct technological strategies closely linked to corporate and business strategies. The division will formulate and implement strategies unique to FUJIFILM by encouraging cross-functional teamwork in different businesses and research subjects and fully utilizing assets within and outside the company.

What gives R&D strength? —Fundamental and core technologies, I believe. Core technology is a necessary weapon for success in business. It works quickly, but we need stamina to maintain a winning streak. This is fundamental technology—the stamina to repeat the design-execution-verification cycle smoothly. If the R&D budget or personnel training hamper this cycle, teams supporting the research department suffer and cannot function. For innovative R&D, every department has to produce results. Like a paradox of haiku or tanka in traditional Japanese poetry, limiting the number of letters inspires creativity. Some believe innovation means breaking or changing rules—removing such limitations—but I believe honing fundamental technology facilitates innovation, especially with our long history and many assets.

History shows that long-established businesses fail by clinging stubbornly to their assets. Our material technology traces to R&D of sensitive materials—emulsion, silver halide, gelatin, sensitizer, coupler—in the Ashigara Factory just after the company’s establishment in 1934. To survive in the 21st century, we need a broad perspective for providing technologies facilitating the society’s future.

Similarly, in R&D, we must hone fundamental technology for continuous improvement. We will rebuild fundamental and core technologies, creating a new future while fully utilizing—but not clinging rigidly to—our assets.