

FOREWORD



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The management environment surrounding the steel industry has changed with dizzying speed since the collapse of the “bubble economy” in Japan in the early 1990s. Further strengthening of business fundamentals, improved customer satisfaction, and the ability to contribute widely to society are becoming essential conditions for corporate survival in an era of life or death competition.

Specifically, the challenges that companies such as Kawasaki Steel face in this new business environment include corporate globalization, consolidated accounting covering all group companies, management with priority on cash flow, supplier selection on the customer side, and further improvement in global environmental protection. Under such conditions, equipment engineers, whose function is to ensure full use of production equipment and raise total equipment efficiency to its ultimate

limit, now play a crucial role.

The steel industry is an equipment-intensive manufacturing industry in which composite technologies of various types are combined at a high level. Through Kawasaki Steel’s experience in the development of iron and steel production processes, plant construction, and maintenance up to the present day, the company has steadily accumulated know-how related to equipment technology. This know-how in connection with equipment technology can be considered an important primary technology which forms the basis for a variety of activities in iron and steel manufacturing technology,

"Maintenance Revolution." This program places emphasis on basic mechanical parts that account for
large percentage of equipment trouble and maintenance cost.

hoses, wire rope, rolls, and lubricants, and is gradually bearing fruit. This special issue of Kawasaki
Steel Technical Report introduces some of these new technologies.