
Made in Japan: Akio Morita and Sony Summary PDF

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? 1. Spark Passion: Akio's fascination with electronics begins

Akio Morita was born into a wealthy family. They always had the latest imported luxuries, including an early electric music player called a phonograph. These gadgets sparked Akio's lifelong fascination with technology and he eventually went to study physics at Osaka University.

? 2. Begin Anew: End of a war and birth of a company

Akio joined the Japanese Navy, mostly to avoid being sent overseas during World War 2. He was helping to research heat-seeking weapons when he met Masaru Ibuka, a great electronics engineer. After the war, the two cofounded Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering Company (later rebranded Sony).

? 3. Notice Ideas: Sony's first major product is born accidentally

Ibuka randomly saw an American officer using an audio tape recording machine. He believed they could be the first Japanese company to make a similar machine. After a lot of experiments, their engineers were able to make their own working audio recorder and plastic tape cassettes.

? 4. Sell Quickly: If you build it, they won't come

Nobody bought their tape recorder, so Akio learned businesses must communicate the value of their product to the right target customers. In 1957, their small "pocketable" radio wouldn't fit in their salespeople's shirt pockets, so they sewed larger pockets on. In 1958, they rebranded as "Sony" to make their name short and memorable.

? 5. Manage Growth: Cultural differences between Japan and America

In 1960, Akio temporarily moved to New York with his family, where he helped Sony become the first Japanese company on the US stock markets. Along the way, he learned how Japanese culture differs from the West, with their lifetime employment, longer-term bias, indirect language and non-wastefulness.

? 6. Inspire Creativity: Lead with a well-defined vision

Sony invests 6-10% of sales into new research and development, but it is also crucial to have a well-defined vision. Betamax was invented after Ibuka challenged engineers to make a video cassette the size of a paperback book. The ultra-popular Sony Walkman was made based on Akio's intuition of what people wanted, not market research.

? 7. Compete Well: Thriving amidst constant change

Businesses should always be moving forwards and embracing new technologies, even if they threaten the existing business. Like how Sony began making CD players even though it would cut into their cassette player sales. Competition leads to constant improvement and better quality

products for consumers.

This is just a sample!

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