

Part 3
The second stage of my life

(5)

The story of an awful blunder I made

In the long span of 32 years as a trucking industry top businessperson, the second stage of my life, I have made quite a lot of accomplishments in success as written earlier. However, I have only one thing that I could call the biggest mistake I ever made in the life of the top management, and that I have no hesitation at all to tell it even with good and dear memory.

It was soon after the time what we called “the first oil shock” in 1973, when I met a new business opportunity to tackle with. The international price of the crude oil made a steep rise, so that the light oil for the diesel truck fuel skyrocketed in parallel.

This brought about among the truckers the fuel shortage, which invited the freight charge to go up. It was not a matter of whether the freight fee was good enough or not for the higher fuel cost. It was a matter of whether we could run the trucks or not. The imbalance of demand and supply for the transportation occurred. It seemed as if the trucking companies became strong to the customers with the limited capacity of hauling.

As one of the directors of the trucking associations, I used to give a warning to the members not to be too strong to the customers simply because of the fuel problem. Later years, by the way, my advice was appreciated after the oil shock passed to be normal. I showed that the supply & demand never changes the situation of power balance drastically long.

It happened that one day, the newspapers including the national ones, a big article was reported about a newly invented “fuel additive” named “Magma”. The banner headline was “30% or more deduction of fuel possible!” Very small amount of the special liquid additive in the fuel tank makes, they said, the vehicle runs 30% or longer.

It was the time when we had no labor union yet, so that I could do whatever I wanted to. I was almighty top management like most of the private company tops are.

I paid ten million yen for the commercial right. However, the right for the area in Hiroshima prefecture had already been occupied by a big shipping company, which made me oblige to have a contract for the area of the neighboring Yamaguchi prefecture. My intention was to establish another eighth company in Yamaguchi for the Magma business, where our biggest customer was located.

The good reason for taking the risk of this new business

opportunity came from the fact that we had serious problem of the fuel shortage and cost up factors, and plus the business opportunity to the best customer for their own fuel cost reduction.

Our main bank lent us the necessary investment money of ten million yen with my single word of “I need the new investment money for the solution of the oil shock and for our best customer.” The head of the bank once showed disapproval, to whom I said, “Have I ever indulged myself in something too luxury as a top manager in my personal life? Let me have a dream. My motivation is right and fair. Even if I ever fail, I would never regret because what I am trying to do is something for the good of energy saving spirit!” I hurled defiance at him.

Needless to say, the bank lent us the money. The branch manager said to me, “Mr. president, only ten million yen no more no less, and please don’t go too deep into the business.” I realized that he had a good insight when I started the business. The fuel additive showed not enough effect as they first proclaimed.

This was and is the only story of my an awful blunder I made, although I tried several risk taking challenges for building the eight subsidiary group companies in my 32-year top manager life.