



## New Spirit, Mitsubishi Motors

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The start of the new millennium has been accompanied by widespread interest in how technologies should be developed and attempts to predict how technologies will evolve in the future. What course the development of automobile technologies should take is also the subject of considerable debate, for while the automobile brings with it improved quality of life, it also gives rise to other concerns, such as environmental and safety issues. Mitsubishi Motors is working wholeheartedly toward finding solutions to these issues in order to build a prosperous future and give customers the vehicles that they really want. Covering a number of topics, **TECHNICAL REVIEW** describes the various technical challenges faced in solving these issues.

Tackling a multiplicity of tough problems requires teamwork, such as engineers working together on research and development. Ideally, though, larger scale teamwork in the form of cooperation between companies also has an important part to play. It is the benefits of such teamwork that Mitsubishi Motors aims to achieve through its alliance with DaimlerChrysler. As a member of the Mitsubishi group with a long and well-established reputation in the automobile industry, Mitsubishi Motors has made a valuable contribution to the development of Japanese manufacturing. DaimlerChrysler, meanwhile, has been making automobiles ever since it gave the world the first motorcar at its inception over a century ago. By working together and combining the best of both companies, we are confident of delivering the products that customers want and need. And following the spin-off of the truck and bus division in January to form Mitsubishi Fuso, we are even better placed to create just such high-quality products in collaboration with our partners DaimlerChrysler and the newly formed Mitsubishi Fuso. Doing so naturally requires that numerous reforms be made so as to create the conditions for collaboration with other companies and efficient R&D within the company. That is what the Turnaround Plan now underway is designed to achieve, and indeed considerable progress toward this goal has already been made.

The Turnaround Plan is gradually making its impact felt on the company's automobile design. The eK-WAGON launched in October two years ago, for example, has been widely acclaimed for its utility and innovative design, and has grown to become one of our most popular models, while the new CANTER small truck launched last June has won plaudits for its spacious, comfortable interior. November saw the launch of the new COLT model, the first product to come out of our alliance with DaimlerChrysler. While the original COLT marked a major milestone for Mitsubishi Motors when it first appeared on the market 40

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years ago, the new COLT has proved an even greater hit. The appeal of products depends not only on the incorporation of new technologies, but also on close attention to quality and detail in everything from fulfilling customers' needs to quality of service at the sales end of the supply chain. The criticisms leveled at us in the past regarding the quality and specifications of some of our products have imprinted on us all the more firmly the crucial importance of these factors. Enormous strides have been made in quality control thanks to the introduction of the "quality gate" system. Advances have also been made with regard to specifications, as shown by the popularity of our products with customers – and we intend to continue listening to their needs.

At last year's soccer World Cup, the Japanese team made a major impression. This was only a start, however, upon which Japan needs to build at future World Cups. Sustainable progress is the name of the game for Mitsubishi Motors as much as the Japanese soccer team. Under the banner of our brand statement – "Spirited Products for Spirited People" – we intend to bring to market a constant stream of outstanding new products to meet customer needs. Outstanding products require outstanding technologies in every sphere of automobile manufacturing, and these you will find in this and future editions of **TECHNICAL REVIEW**.