



## 慶應義塾大学ビジネス・スクール

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### Citizen Heiwa Watch Co., Ltd. (C)

The Meister System was introduced in 2003 after President Unno assumed office. The Watch Department started out with just five Meisters (one A-class Meister and four B-class Meisters). Today it has a total of 13 certified Meisters, all women, including one Super Meister, four A-class Meisters, and eight B-class Meisters. Throughout Citizen Heiwa Watch, there are a total of 26 certified Meisters: 13 watch assembly Meisters, three parts processing Meisters (three B-class), five printer assembly Meisters (four A-class and one B-class), four engineering Meisters (four B-class), and one administration (section staff) Meister (B-class). In the Watch Department, the Super Meister is responsible for skills management, human resources cultivation, and the assembly of Citizen's S-class products. A-class Meisters take charge of the one-man assembly of movements as well as cases for finished products, technology and skill training, and the assembly of Citizen's S-class products. B-class Meisters carry out the one-man assembly of movements or finished products, technology and skill training, and the assembly of Citizen's A-class products. All three levels of Meisters can be appointed as watch assembly instructors in the company or for outside courses.

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Ms. Etsuko Hashiba, the only Super Meister of watch assembly currently in the company, recalls the following about the early days after the introduction of the Meister System:

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“I did not volunteer to become a Meister. Five workers were experimentally chosen and certified as Meisters. The company explained that they chose us as a result of a review of our past performance as it related to technology and skills and following discussion among the section managers and President. We were told that our mission was to foster human resources capable of the one-man assembly of watches. At the time, I felt honestly confused, wondering, ‘What is a Meister? What am I supposed to do?’ In the workplace, Meisters were distinguished from other general workers by wearing pink caps (general workers wore white ones). Because Meisters could

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This case was written by Professor Hirokazu Kono of Keio Business School (KBS) in cooperation with KBS M29 student Mr. Toji Tao, with full support of the represented company. This case was prepared solely as a basis for class discussion and has no intention to opine on the quality of corporate management or the appropriateness of management decisions made by persons concerned.

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