From the Editor

Has there ever been a time when the business environment was subject to such severe change? Advances in information and other technologies lead to the creation of new businesses, and these businesses in their turn give rise to new requirements for technology. The accelerated change brought about by this spiral is a feature of the current business environment.

If companies are to survive in such an environment, they need to adapt their businesses to its requirements. Adapting their businesses does not mean changing the products they sell or changing who they sell to. Rather it means rebuilding their fields of business and their alliances, while also dealing with ever-changing business value and new technology.

Hitachi's goal is to be the best partner for businesses that want to evolve. Hitachi intends to work with customers to open up new areas of business through a suitable combination of its new technologies. Through this partnership with customers, Hitachi's vision is to create a safe and secure society with advanced IT. We call this our Social Innovation Business.

In April 2015, Hitachi reorganized its Research & Development Group, which had been focusing on technology up until then, in order to accelerate the pace of Social Innovation. This reorganization included establishing a new division (the Global Center for Social Innovation) within our research laboratories to take responsibility for utilizing advanced technology to develop service businesses through collaborative creation with customers.

This issue of *Hitachi Review* presents articles about service collaborative creation at Hitachi, focusing on the activities of this new organization. What is distinctive about the organization is that it brings designers and research engineers together in the same division, an initiative with few parallels anywhere else in the world.

Designers are traditionally good at coming up with ideas that are inspired by users rather than by technology. They are also skilled at presenting intangible value and services in visual form. These capabilities come to the fore in reaching consensus with customers. Research engineers then find ways to implement these based on their knowledge of advanced technology.

The first part of this issue presents tools and methods for service collaborative creation that are based on design thinking. In these articles, I hope you will find a new Hitachi that differs from the traditional ways of doing things.

The latter part of this issue presents examples of collaborative creation with customers from both Japan and overseas. The Japanese examples deal with urban development, telecommunications, and logistics, while those from overseas describe work in China and North America.

I hope that this issue will be a chance to learn more about how Hitachi goes about collaborative creation in its role as the best partner for our customers.

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"Expansion of Service Business through Collaborative Creation with Customers"

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