

USS emphasizes the development of next-generation human resources toward long-term growth.

Yukio Niimi

Executive Officer and Manager of Kyushu and Fukuoka Auction Sites, USS Co., Ltd.

PROFILE :

Yukio Niimi joined USS in 1989. He was first involved with digitalizing auction sheets in the Information System Department of the Operation Division at the Nagoya Auction Site before acting as the Manager of the R-Nagoya, Shizuoka, Kyushu, and Fukuoka Auction Sites. His work contributed to a larger volume of vehicle transactions at each of these auction sites through measures tailored to each region. In 2020, Yukio Niimi was appointed the Manager of both the Kyushu and Fukuoka Auction Sites, and then she was appointed executive officer in June 2023.



Q. How do you think you can use the wealth of experience you have gained thus far in your career?

A. I will share the knowledge that I have gained to better both internal and external communication with the entire company.

I learned a lot while I was working at the large auto auction site in Nagoya. I also gained a lot of operational expertise while manager of R-Nagoya, Shizuoka, Kyushu, and other smaller auction sites. One of the main things that I learned about auto auctions at these various auction sites is that the techniques to increase the number of vehicles consigned and sales must be tailored to the size and regional characteristics of each site.

The large auction sites naturally attract a higher volume of vehicles thanks to the brand power of USS. However, small and medium-size auction sites that have a closer relationship with customers must provide more comprehensive services to encourage them to auction their vehicles. For example, I call and thank customers who have put their vehicle up for auction or regularly visit with them. This kind of sincere communication is important. In fact, I would often make sales visits when I was first appointed the Manager of the Shizuoka Auction Site to build customer trust. This successfully increased the number of vehicles consigned by USS, which had been a challenge.

Employee communication is vital when undertaking these kinds of measures. That is why I would actively talk and build trust with staff when I am appointed to a new auction site as a way to motivate them.

In my new position as Executive Officer, I hope to use this experience to offer advice on how to run each auction site while helping foster Group-wide growth.

Q. Could you tell us what you see as the medium-term challenges for USS as well as policies to overcome those challenges?

A. I think it is important to train the next-generation of employees as vehicle inspectors and auction site staff.

The quality of an auto auction site really depends on the accuracy when appraising vehicles for auction. That is why it is important to recruit and train vehicle inspectors. I also think USS must emphasize the development of the next-generation of human resources who can run auto auction sites.

We are already selecting more junior employees to act as managers or future managers of auto auction sites, which is a good sign. USS would still benefit from a framework that gives opportunities and encouragement to more junior employees though. For example, we could put in place a program for the employees who currently belong to small auto auction sites in more rural areas to improve their skills through on-the-job training at Nagoya or other large auction sites.

Human resource strategies not only require consistent effort but also long-term growth as one essential factor. I hope to do my part to spearhead corporate growth through these kinds of new human resource development systems.

I will help contribute to platforms for auctions that provide greater convenience and a fair and equal standing to everyone.

Masahiro Mikami

Executive Officer and Manager of Tokyo Auction Site USS Co., Ltd.

PROFILE :

Masahiro Mikami joined USS in 1994. He served as Manager of the Sales Division at the Tokyo Auction Site before acting as Officer of the Auction Operation Office at the head office in 2014. Masahiro Mikami was involved with formulating auction rules to realize auctions that give a fair and equal standing to everyone, putting together the certification program to train vehicle inspectors, and building our claim management system. He served as the Manager of the Yokohama Auction Site from 2016 before being appointed the Manager of the Tokyo Auction Site in 2019. Masahiro Mikami was appointed Executive Officer in June 2023.



Q. How do you think you can use the wealth of experience you have gained thus far in your career?

A. I will work very hard to improve auction systems as well as guide and educate the people running those auctions.

As an employee who belonged to the Auction Operation Office, I have long been involved with devising rules and frameworks to ensure auto auctions provide a fair and equal standing to everyone. I was also involved in formulating the program to certify vehicle inspectors and building our claim management system. I have striven to build platforms to deliver auto auctions with greater convenience that provide a fair and equal standing to everyone from many different perspectives.

In the future, I hope to leverage all of this past experience in updating the core auto auction system over the medium term as one initiative in our digital transformation. I will also work to provide guidance and education so that each auction site adheres to the rules and properly uses our systems.

Q. Could you tell us what you see as the medium-term challenges for USS as well as policies to overcome those challenges?

A. I want to look into new ways to increase the number of vehicles consigned by USS.

The Tokyo Auction Site that I oversee as manager auctions 720,000 vehicles every year. This is equivalent to one-fourth

of all the vehicles consigned at USS. My site holds 10% of the market share and is the largest auction site in Japan. The success of the Tokyo Auction Site greatly influences the success of overall USS performance.

In the Kanto region, USS also has two small auction sites in Saitama and Gunma. Using my appointment as Executive Officer as an opportunity, I will examine approaches to generate synergy and bolster our numbers, such as collaborative projects between these sites, to revitalize and improve the performance of the entire Kanto region. To do this, I believe I must first see a variety of auction sites with my own eyes and talk extensively with many different employees. We expect to start facing distribution issues during the 2024 fiscal year, and members will encounter rising costs to transport the vehicles that they want to auction to the auction site. I hope to roll out a wide range of measures to prevent these extra costs from driving down the number of vehicles consigned by USS.

In addition, I would like to expand the potential use of video for auctions. By standardizing the varying resolution currently used for auctions to a high-definition format, our auction sites will be able to collaboratively auction vehicles in the future. I will look into a program to gather, inspect, and photograph vehicles at yards off site, and then distribute that information to members as an auction platform. Off-site yards like this in various regions would lower the labor and cost of transporting vehicles to auction sites, which should improve the number of vehicles consigned by USS.

I will propose these new types of systems in the hope of increasing our long-term market share and business performance.