

Exhibition Overview

Review of behind-the-scenes details of Expo 2025

“Kawasaki Future Mobility” generated huge buzz, with 100+ million views on social media

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Start by leading the three-company co-creation project

Expo 2025 represents the second time this international exhibition is hosted by Osaka, with the previous one held 55 years ago in 1970. Headquartered in Kobe, a major city in the same region, Kawasaki was willing to contribute to the success of the planned event, and also take the opportunity to participate in the world's fair as an exhibitor to showcase the company's vision of the future.

Kawasaki received a request from Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition to participate in the exhibition co-hosted by 12 companies in the Future City pavilion, and by accepting the request, the company officially decided on its participation in Expo 2025. Within the Future City exhibition, Kawasaki, jointly with Mitsui O.S.K. Lines and Kansai Transmission and Distribution, took charge of the Transportation and Mobility category. Being eager to achieve an outstanding and crowd-wowing presentation and noting the need for effective co-creation efforts for this purpose, we visited the two partners to directly hear their opinions.

We found that each company had an independent exhibition plan, giving rise to a fear that a joint presentation under the single category would likely lack an appropriate sense of unity. To address this issue, we reconsidered the exhibition floor layout plan provided by the Association and proposed a new plan. We also discussed with the two co-exhibitors to explore

a host of possible measures for beneficial cooperation, such as making efficient use of the space to install a large screen monitor for shared use, and collaborations for construction and operation efficiency. Those efforts were similar to those being promoted at Kawasaki's collaboration park KAWARUBA opened within the site of Haneda Airport. Like participants in the park, the three companies shared the common goal of delivering a successful Expo 2025 exhibition and worked together toward the goal while ensuring close cooperation with each other. As a result, our exhibition was able to produce a distinctive feeling of unity befitting the category theme, helping make it the most successful in the pavilion in terms of drawing public attention.

Background behind the decision on the theme of “Impulse to Move”

Within the company, a special taskforce was formed with about 50 members participating on a voluntary basis, and it began to discuss what constitutes “problem-solving future mobility.” Numerous opinions were expressed and collected to search for key terms, among which we took particular note of what could be phrased as “redefinition of being rich.” Values of happiness and richness change along with the times. So, in order to think about future mobility, we recognized the need to define what it would mean to be rich in the future. Based on this recognition, we continued additional discussions, and encountered

research articles published in the U.S. that discussed the theory that humans are predisposed to derive happiness from the act of moving. Simply put, the human brain is genetically programmed to feel happy in response to the act of moving. This could mean that for a human being to have freedom of movement constitutes being happy, and an eternal form of being rich. This thinking gave us a significant suggestion for the direction of continued discussions. That was where we began moving toward determining the exhibition theme of “Impulse to Move” and working out plans for creating future mobility models to fulfill the human impulse to move.

Showcasing manufacturing capabilities and technical basis

For giving shape to ideas for creating “future mobility models to fulfill the impulse to move,” we decided to follow two different paths leading to the personal and mass transportation mode. Technical proposals were prepared accordingly to create three systems — CORLEO for personal mobility, ALICE SYSTEM for mass mobility, and O'CUVOID, hydrogen power generator to power the two mobility systems, a plan to be implemented by utilizing Kawasaki's technological development capabilities for using hydrogen as a hopeful next-generation energy source.

Many interesting ideas were discussed in the company. For ideas on the table to be adopted, they needed to have a technical basis, following the most essential policy as a manufacturer to showcase its technical strengths. Therefore, we requested engineers in the fields of land, sea and air transportation, as well as motorcycle and robotics, to participate in development activities in order to create implementable design drawings and specifications by actually drawing designs and conducting calculation.

Adopt life-size display style highlighting the unique character of Kawasaki

We adopted the life-size display style according to the company's exhibition related policy. This is based on the insights gained through running our corporate museum Kawasaki Good Times World. Take for example the exhibit of the real 0 Series Shinkansen train car. Just sitting in the real car is a special “experience,” allowing many visitors to have a good time enjoying new sensations and recalling old memories of traveling. Using the real thing on display is quite a simple exhibition style, but it should be noted that being real is an essential element of the experience value. This is what we have found from operating Kawasaki Good Times World over 20 years. Based on this finding, we chose to adopt the life-size display style for the Expo 2025 exhibition, which we believed and expected would stir the imagination of many visitors.

Effect of participating in Expo 2025 on corporate value

The recent expo exhibition project included the voluntary participation of many employees, thus allowing them to increase their sense of pride and satisfaction with the manufacturing business. In fact, many participating employees reported feeling happy to see their families enjoying the exhibits, receive media attention and hear feedback directly from visitors in person. I noticed a remarkable improvement in their engagement and motivation.

I also noted that, by engaging in the Expo 2025 project, team members have built new skills, to a significant extent especially for project management. Management of projects with very few specific design requirements, like the recent exhibition, often becomes difficult due to budget inflation. I advised them to try to keep expenses below 90% of the budget, seeing them struggling to make the project a success on a cost-benefit basis with a tight budget and schedule and despite a lack of experience in this kind of work.

Pursue revolutionary concept-based approach, producing unprecedented achievements

The promotion video of CORLEO has received more than 100 million views in one week on social media, while drawing a lot of responses from around the world. This is largely thanks to the pre-launch strategies characterized by staged release of preview information on planning and exhibits and promotional clips featuring the image of the rider barreling across the landscape astride the vehicle, which aimed to build anticipation and momentum. The marketing strategies for ALICE SYSTEM were also successful, chiefly due to intuitive video descriptions of its mechanisms. Additionally, we conducted pre-event activities by sending instructors to local elementary and junior high schools to hold workshops, looking to encourage conversations on this topic.

Particularly for the recent project, we chose to adopt a revolutionary concept-based (“Impulse to Move”) innovation approach, while avoiding our long-established technology-based incremental innovation approach. I consider this successful attempt to forge a new path as a factor bringing about an unprecedented achievement. I hope this successful result will open up new possibilities for Kawasaki's growth.