

## Interview with Yasumasa Shimizu

### Manager of Metals Group, Mitsubishi New Zealand

*Briefly describe Mitsubishi in NZ and your role. What bonds does Mitsubishi NZ have with Mitsubishi in other countries?*

- Mitsubishi New Zealand Ltd was established in 1958 in New Zealand.
- Mitsubishi New Zealand Ltd is wholly owned by Mitsubishi Corporation, who is a major trading/investment company head quartered in Japan.
- Website: <https://www.mitsubishicorp.com/jp/en/>
- Mitsubishi Corp have nearly 200 direct overseas offices and more than 1200 consolidated subsidiaries/equity-method affiliates globally.
- Mitsubishi Corp have seven business groups to cover diversity business field globally (i.e. Global Environment/Infrastructure, Industrial Finance/Logistics, Energy, Metals, Machinery, Chemical, Living Essential groups)
- Mitsubishi Corp is a part of Mitsubishi Group companies, who consists of total 37 member companies. The major members are Mitsubishi Motors, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Mitsubishi Electric, Mitsubishi Chemical and Mitsubishi UFJ Bank.
- My role at Mitsubishi New Zealand is manager of Metals Group and also corporate/strategy role.



*What qualities does Mitsubishi look for in an employee?*

The key factor of the employee Mitsubishi Corp looks for is managerial talent. The candidate should be

- Self-motivated for challenges
- Good “listener” and Solution provider
- Understand different culture/background

*What could schools and teachers do to nurture those qualities?*

Nurturing students is the most important role for schools during the course of education at each level (starting from primary to university level). When student get motivated, they start taking actions proactively.

How they can be motivated? I think schools should be taking a role of “providing opportunities” for students. One of ideas is to give students opportunities to meet with top professionals for the fields they are studying. These professionals should give students a hint or clue how they could be reaching higher level (including some failure stories).

Also, a more personal touch with students is good. Now-a-days, under internet/digital environment, people are divided from personal touch with other people. So by “connecting” with other people (including people who have different background – i.e. language/culture/religion etc), students could realize their potential for exploring their opportunities in the future. The language could bridge in between people.

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*What effect will it have on the opportunities of a recent graduate if he/she is multilingual? Why?*

The language is a “tool” for communication. It is important to know how to use the tool. But sometimes the skill level of language is not too important. It is important to communicate with the people, and let the people to speak out from their soul. By using the multilingual language, you could understand better what the local people want and they would like to do. If you and the people have different background (culture), you could discuss the issues with different point of view. This creates more interesting discussions because of the different background (and also you could learn more about the people).

To keep these factors in mind, if students have multilingual skill(s), they have more opportunities in their future careers. More opportunities mean there are more options to choose from. Why do I think so? Because graduates could look for and find their future career not only New Zealand but also abroad.

NZ is a smaller scale economy with limited employment opportunities. So, it is possible for graduates to make plan for future career with multilingual skills in the different parts of the world.

I personally love NZ with good nature, environment and life-style, and most New Zealanders feel the same. Even if young New Zealanders might be leaving to the other parts of the world (with different language environment) for their careers, I am sure that they will be proud of NZ and will work hard, being trying their best to make NZ highlight in the country/regions they are in. This would lead to contribute to NZ in the long run to bring new ideas or biz back to NZ from overseas.

*Why should teachers/parents encourage their students/children to learn a language?*

Learning other language makes your life more interesting (to learn other culture) and give opportunities to connect with the other parts of the world.

*What role do you expect languages to play in the NZ job market in the future?*

It is important for NZ to remain a competitive trades (export) environment to the world with the recent CPTPP (Comprehensive and Progressive agreement of Trans-Pacific Partnership) agreement in place. NZ will be connecting to the world more and more, politically and economically via CPTPP.

In this biz environment, I am sure more export (and import) or investment related job opportunities should be available in the near future. Students who have multilingual skill would have an advantage for those employment.

*You recently attended the Asia After Five event “Multilingual Auckland – Possibility or Pipedream?”.*

*What do you think – Possibility or Pipedream?*

Possibility. There are many countries that have multilingual people there in Asia (i.e. Singapore/Malaysia) and Europe (i.e. Switzerland). There are more than 130 nationalities (or ethnic groups) in Auckland, and the number will grow further in the future. If Auckland could become a multilingual society, it would give Auckland better effects for culture and economy to live, and give good impressions for future immigrants from overseas – “A better place to live or Liveable city”. It would lead further population growth to Auckland.

*Anything else you would like to add?*

As mentioned, language is a “tool” for communication. Through learning another language, you could discover “the world”. Also, the spirit and humanity of people grow by learning other language.