GENICHI TAGUCHI

AUTOMOTIVE HALL OF FAME - INDUCTED 1997
1924 - 2012

Dr. Genichi Taguchi brought a new sense of understanding to the automotive industry by unlocking the mystery of statistics. Taguchi developed a methodology to improve quality and reduce costs, known as the “Taguchi Methods.”

In 1924, Taguchi was born in Tokamachi, Japan, a town famous for Kimono production. Taguchi attended Kiryu Technical College where he studied textile engineering, intending to join his family’s kimono business. In 1942, he was drafted into the Navigation Institute of the Imperial Japanese Navy.

After World War II, Taguchi’s scientific career began with employment at the Japanese Ministry of Public Health and Welfare, where he met eminent statistician, Matosaburo Masuyama, who nurtured his skill in statistics. At the time, Taguchi was also working for the Ministry of Education’s Institute of Statistical Mathematics. He gained recognition for his industrial experiments dealing with the production of penicillin. He was hired by the Electrical Communication Laboratory (ECL) in 1950 to develop cross bar and telephone switching systems. During this time Taguchi had plenty of time for experimentation and data analysis.

After his stint at ECL was completed, Taguchi began focusing on automotive engineering with emphasis on the use of statistics in quality control. He created books and programs that served auto manufacturers around the world. Beginning in the 1950s, seminars promoting Taguchi methodologies conducted by both Japanese and international quality control and statistical standard organizations trained thousands of experts in Taguchi methods. In addition to stimulating discussion at universities and educational institutions throughout the world, Taguchi methods have been instrumental in the development and continuing improvement of quality control programs of auto manufacturers including Toyota Motor Company, Mitsubishi, and Ford Motor Company.

In 1960, received the Deming Prize, Japan's highest honor, for his contributions to the field of quality engineering; he also received the Deming Literature Award three times for books on quality control methodologies and industrial design.

In 1965, Aoyama Gakuin University invited Taguchi to teach and help develop the university's engineering program where he stayed for 17 years. The Ford Motor Company asked Taguchi to provide seminars on his methods to company executives in 1982. A year later, he was executive director of the Ford Supplier Institute, Inc., which later became the American Supplier Institute.

Taguchi received the Indigo Ribbon from the Emperor of Japan in 1986 for his outstanding contributions to Japanese economics and Industry.