

Blending tradition and innovation through *monozukuri*

For many people these days, most of the words we read or write are formed by pixels on a digital screen, as digital technologies have quickly replaced the books, newspapers, magazines, pens and pencils that were the predominant media for centuries. The printed and written word are undeniably in decline, but they will remain essential forms of communication, and indeed inspiration, for many years to come.

In a country renowned for seamlessly blending tradition and innovation in manufacturing, Japanese companies involved in the print and stationery industries continue to ensure the survival of traditional media forms. Adopting the Japanese *monozukuri* craftsmanship philosophy, these companies strive to deliver high-quality products constantly adapted to the ever-changing demands of the modern world.

"Japanese writing instrument manufacturers are all prioritizing R&D and investing a great deal in enhancing the technologies behind their products. As a *monozukuri* company, R&D is indispensable. While we continue to invest in R&D, we can continue to keep

our innovative edge," says Shigehiko Suhara, President of Mitsubishi Pencil, which manufactures the world-renowned Uni-Ball brand of pens.

Innovation has enabled the company's diversification into new areas such as its PTFE dispersion technologies, which have potential applications in fields such as cosmetics. "We want to further develop and diversify our existing technologies for other fields. With these improvements in our technology, we hope there will be a boomerang effect on our writing instruments," adds Mr. Suhara.

Like Mitsubishi Pencil, Nakabayashi is focusing on R&D to develop new technologies, while also continuing to meet high demand for its more traditional products. "Digitalization and the growing paperless society are really taking a toll on the stationery business in Japan. But writing seems to be an ingrained part of the culture, as exemplified by calligraphy," says Hideaki Yumoto, President of Nakabayashi, a manufacturer of stationery, office products and fountain pens.

"There is solid demand for the notebooks we sell. This part of our business has not been greatly affected by digitalization. Our company

predicted this situation eight years ago, and we have come up with many solutions. We have developed not only traditional products, but also notebooks that enable digital and analog integration, which makes our products more attractive."

Japan has a long history in the printing industry and one of the nation's leading players is Horizon Group, which operates the world's largest facility for manufacturing products for the five major paper finishing operations: folding, collating, binding, stitching, and cutting. While printing remains a labor-intensive industry involving analog machinery, Horizon is breathing new life into it with digital innovations such as its iCE LiNK Network, which enables machine-to-machine connection and data collection to enhance efficiency and automation.

"We have been developing software for many years to respond to the digitalization trend, with our first product being the pXnet and now we are introducing our iCE LiNK Network," says chairman, Eijiro Hori. "We always try to improve our processes and we are giving our customers the tools to

do the same. Our R&D and innovation is driven by the philosophy in which we have succeeded since the foundation of our *monozukuri*, which has three elements: development, manufacturing, and sales."

Shachihata Inc. is another company mixing analog and digital as part of its growth strategy for the future. Aside from manufacturing stationery, the company also offers cloud computing services with Shachihata Cloud, which is expected to generate annual sales of \$32 million by 2025, as well as its Electronic Seal System for the certification of digital documents.

"We currently boast both strong analog products and a digital certification system. Especially in Japan, a country that is attached to its traditions, digital and analog solutions can be mixed," president, Masayoshi Funahashi, explains. "Mixing analog and digital solutions is a combination that is very convenient for the Japanese culture, business system, and individual lifestyle. Looking at the future, I believe that our company will become a mixed business that is 40% digital and 60% analog; or perhaps the opposite."

Shachihata supports the Sustainable Development Goals



Shachihata



Traditional stationery company with 96-year history, plays its role as a leader in sustainable manufacturing

Since its establishment in 1925, Shachihata has manufactured products that can be used for long periods of time, thus supporting the protection of the environment, and eco-action will remain a guiding principle of Shachihata's operations going forward.

With its LCA (Life Cycle Assessment), Shachihata performs systematic analysis of the potential environmental impact of products during their entire life cycle, including production, distribution, use and end-of-life phases. For example, the company has reduced the life-cycle CO2 emissions of its K-177N Dry-Safe Marker by 15% by re-considering the material.

Since 2012, Shachihata has incorporated renewable energy in manufacturing and aims to reduce its CO2 emissions by around 100 tons per year by using solar energy. More than

1,000 solar panels have been installed at its main factory in Inazawa, Japan, which generated approximately 270,600kwh of power in 2019.

Carbon offsetting enables individuals and organizations to compensate for the emissions they cannot avoid, by supporting worthy projects that reduce emissions elsewhere. Shachihata has been purchasing carbon credits in global hydroelectric power generation projects in Thailand to offset the emissions associated with the markers it sells in Australia, a major market for its Artline markers.

In addition, using recycled materials has been a basic aspect of Shachihata's production process for 20 years, with its most well-known product, the XL-9 Name



XL-9 Name 9 (name stamp)



9 (name stamp), composed of 83% recycled plastic materials. Among the plastic materials purchased by the Inazawa factory in 2019, 149 tons (52%) were recycled plastics.

Shachihata also supports pediatric cancer patients both in Japan and in develop-



Masayoshi Funahashi, President, Shachihata Inc.

ing countries, donating approximately \$45,000 to the Nagoya Pediatric Cancer Fund in 2018, while in 2020 and 2021 it also donated a portion of sales of its new Capless 9 (name stamp) with cat illustrations to the Animal Care Center in Nagoya City. Celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2025, Shachihata will continue to be responsible for both global society and the environment, with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals being an important part of its long-term business continuity.



Capless 9 (name stamp)

www.artlineworld.com

Writing is the painting of the voice

Japanese writing instrument manufacturers are prioritizing R&D to enhance the technologies behind their traditional products, and Mitsubishi Pencil is leading the pack.

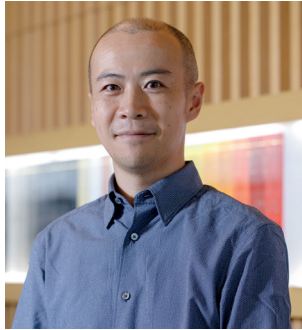
For over a century, Mitsubishi Pencil – the manufacturer behind the world famous Uni-ball brand – has been a global leader in providing writing and art instruments that provide functionality and affordability, and inspire creativity and connection.

In today's modern world, where traditional hand-scribed communication, art, and design has been all but replaced by digital tools, challenging times exist for the humble pencil. Emphasizing the scale of this challenge, Cambridge University, one of the world's foremost academic institutions and a totem of the education sector which represents one of Uni-ball's key global markets – recently announced that it would begin accepting type-based exams



Uni-ball Gel Impact

from "digitally native" students. However, despite the obvious obstacles to growth posed by digitization, Mitsubishi Pencil perseveres and is finding



"There is an emotional element involved with writing, in development we consider the value of holding a pen in your hand and using it as a unique means of self-expression."

Shigehiko Suhara,
President,
Mitsubishi Pencil Co., Ltd.



Industrial material product examples

innovative ways to reach the market and attract a new generation of customers.

"Digitalization has been a constant theme for discussion within our company's management. In these discussions, we have to understand the greater value that writing instruments have," says Shigehiko Suhara, President of Mitsubishi Pencil. "Writing instruments are used to record and serve as an aid to our memory; a valuable function that digital writing cannot provide. There is also an emotional element involved.

We often consider the aesthetic and design elements when we manufacture writing instruments, such as the value of holding a pen in your hand and using it as a unique way of self-expression. These are some of the hidden functions that we deliver to our customers."

This does not mean that Mitsubishi Pencil is not fully focused on prioritizing the functional value of its products.



Uni-ball Signo

ucts, explains Mr. Suhara, highlighting that 5% of all revenue goes towards R&D each year precisely for this purpose.

"We have continually enhanced the functional value of our products while at the same time incorporating and understanding the importance of other value-added elements. We still have a lot of room to grow in this area, especially in the digital age," he says.

"We do understand that globally, the writing instrument market is not as robust as a generation ago with the onset of digital technology impacting it, and therefore our management strategy is to focus on the core technologies that we developed through our R&D efforts and use them in other business fields to be able to create other business cores or pillars for our company. While we continue to invest in R&D, we can continue to keep our innovative edge."



uni
MITSUBISHI PENCIL

Fountain pen maker channels Japan's lacquerware and samurai traditions

TACCIA is a luxury writing instrument brand born in California, whose award-winning fountain pens are loved by avid writers across the globe. In 2018, Japanese company Nakabayashi, which manufactures and sells paper products and office equipment, took over TACCIA's overseas sales business. And in just three years, the company has sold numerous high-end lacquer fountain pens around the world.



TACCIA's Miyabi Maki-e Winter Breath has been selected as the Reader's Choice Pen of the Year and Best Urushi Arts win-

ner for 2021 by *PEN WORLD*, North America's leading luxury fountain pen magazine. The Miyabi Maki-e Winter Breath fountain pen is made of abalone and eggshells, which are fitted onto the body of the pen to create the "frozen" effect, depicting the beauty of winter. The limited edition series of 88 Winter Breath pens has already sold out, and the company is currently developing a second version of the pen with a larger nib, which will be a high-end fountain pen.

Meanwhile, the Hyakkou Hisho was created not only for its robust and elegant finish, but also to further pursue the beauty of Wajima-nuri lacquerware. Hyakkou Hisho is a collection of lacquerware patterns from the Kaga clan, which has its roots in the fashionable lacquerware used on the scabbards of samurai swords. The collec-



tion was created to project the image of the fighting samurai. In addition, instead of using Hyakkou Hisho's collection as it is, TACCIA has improved it so that it looks more striking when expressed as a fountain pen.

Lacquerware and ceramics, also known as 'Japan' overseas, are highly sought after by collec-

tors all over the world, and TACCIA will continue to use lacquer painting techniques to create a variety of high-end fountain pens to cement its reputation as a world-class brand.

Nakabayashi

www.nakabayashi.co.jp

Print finishing for the modern world



"We are a one-stop shop that provides automated, user-friendly solutions for every step in the print finishing process."

Eijiro Hori,
Chairman,
Horizon International Inc.

Japan's Horizon Group offers its clients the opportunity to procure all their print finishing needs in one place, whilst using its founding principles of *monozukuri* to ensure the highest quality.



4 Clamp Perfect Binder BQ-500

The printing press is seen as one of the most important innovations in history, and Horizon Group is maintaining the rich tradition of bookmakers with

its industry-leading selection of printing finishing equipment for every client's needs.

Since its founding over 70 years ago, the company has used its foundations of quality, price, and delivery to grow, both figuratively and literally, with Horizon now operating out of the world's largest facility for manufacturing products for the five major print finishing operations: folding, collating, binding, stitching, and cutting.

Horizon Group Chairman Eijiro Hori explains that this integrated system allows the company to not only make the highest-quality products, but also tailor these products to the customers' needs. "We listen to the thoughts of our customers and we forward them to our development team and manufacturing lines. Having these elements in one place gives us the competitive edge," he adds.

Horizon Group's best-selling product line is its perfect binding equipment which uses glue to hold a book's pages together, instead of staples, and the company is looking to the future with its iCE Link Network. This network can connect all of a customers' machines, and then extract the useful information to help clients increase their equipment effectiveness.

The company's commitment to *monozukuri* principles has allowed it to expand globally, establishing itself overseas in printing powerhouse Germany



6 Buckle Cross Folder AFV-566FKT

in 2014 where it focused on grasping the distinct needs of the European market. With strong sales across Asia, Europe and North America, Mr. Hori says Horizon Group is "always looking for potential co-creation partners".

Indeed, 60% of Horizon Group's products are tailored to the foreign market, and the company hopes its unique, one-stop shop for equipment can help keep the printed word alive and well for years to come.

Horizon

www.horizon.co.jp/

Japanese firms at the forefront of global challenges

From leading car makers to companies working in packaging, printing and hygiene, one thing Japanese manufacturers all share in common is a commitment to *monozukuri*, which focuses on manufacturing craftsmanship, innovation and solving client, industry and societal needs. Leveraging their *monozukuri* capabilities, Japanese companies have placed themselves at the forefront of global challenges like the environmental crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Those operating in the packaging industry such as Toyo Seikan Group Holdings, are developing new solutions in a sector that must play a big role in tackling the plastic waste crisis.

"In response to environmental issues, we are shifting from plastic to paper," says Toyo Seikan president, Ichio Otsuka. "We are currently developing bento boxes, coffee cups, straws, and lids made of paper. Also, we are creating microwavable transparent food pouches with lower environmental impact so that we reduce energy loss that occurs in heating food in boiling water."

Daiwa Can Company is also playing its part through the devel-

opment of more environmentally friendly packaging products. "The essence of *monozukuri* is a devotion to producing products of high quality," says Hirohisa Yamaguchi, president of Daiwa Can, which has introduced green solutions such as New Bottle Can, bio-polyethylene tube packaging and Film Lamination Bottles to the global market.

"We develop our technology to address the needs in the market as well as giving consideration to environmental regulations." Moreover, Daiwa Can has introduced technology to "reduce the CO2 emissions during the manufacturing process," adds Mr. Yamaguchi.

For its part, seal and label manufacturer Osaka Sealing Printing (OSP) is another firm drawing on R&D to come up with more environmentally friendly solutions. "In the current printing method, solvent ink is often used with an emphasis on quality, but in consideration of the impact on the environment, we have developed water-soluble inks as well as water-soluble adhesives. Of course, the functional quality is maintained," says president, Tadashi

Matsuguchi. "We are also focusing on the use of plastics. We think that we need to continue to use plastics in order to reduce food loss, for example, but there are a lot of other areas where we can replace plastics with other materials, so we are working on how to replace film with paper also. Our new product line Paper Attention is one such example."

Global environmental challenges have been somewhat overshadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a major impact on Japanese firms like Matsui Shikiso Chemical, a company that develops eco-friendly water-based inks. In light of the pandemic, Matsui has aimed to turn this unprecedented challenge into a new opportunity, particularly by growing its new digital ink business.

"We tell our employees that we don't want to go back to a pre-COVID situation, rather, we are trying to be something new. Even though COVID-19 has many negatives, it did offer us opportunities for change," says president, Yoshiyuki Yasuda. "We are more focused on digital ink because our clients are trying to digitize their production lines. Of course we have

installed some digital technologies for our production line, but for us, it is more about capitalizing on the digitization of society as a whole. We are tailor-making the inks and products for a digitized society now."

With increased demand for alcohol-based disinfectants due to the pandemic, hygiene products manufacturer Niitaka has significantly increased production of its top-selling NOROSTAR food sanitizer and N-STAR hand disinfectant, which have proven to be effective against coronavirus.

"It is evident that alcoholic agents are effective against the coronavirus. The level of demand exceeded our production capacity so in order to contribute to the global solution to the pandemic we increased work shifts at our plant from one shift of eight hours to two shifts," says president, Yoshiaki Okuyama.

Thanks to their focus on *monozukuri*, innovation and addressing societal needs, Japanese companies will continue to be on the frontline of global challenges – be it the environmental crisis or another pandemic – that will define the 21st century.

Keeping the color and future of the planet bright for over 97 years

Matsui Shikiso Chemical was founded in Kyoto, Japan in 1923 by Kenji Matsui. Since then, his family paint business has passed from generation to generation, creating revolutionary inventions with colors along the way, always in characteristic harmony with Japanese excellence.



"Japanese companies focus on rare fields, as well as products that have inherent value. That's why Japanese companies have maintained their leadership in niche areas."

Yoshiyuki Yasuda, President,
Matsui Shikiso Chemical Co., Ltd.

Having started out by making crayons and painting materials, by the 1950s Matsui transitioned into the production of pigments and resins for printing. Once the 1980s came about, the company decided it was time for a change and it created *Chromicolor*, its best-known color-changing specialty ink. Most recently, in the early 2000s Matsui decided that the majority of its ink should be water based with environmentally friendly properties, so called 'Green Products'.

Today, Matsui is in the midst of another slight shift in direction: which entails a new focus on developing and selling digital ink, a niche market which President Yoshiyuki Yasuda believes Matsui can take advantage of. "For us, it is more about capitalizing on the digitization of society as a whole. We are tailor making the inks and products for a digitized society now," he explains.

Matsui now provides its clients with the ability to dictate their print-

ing needs themselves, a logical and necessary step since its clients are also trying to digitize their production lines. For example, Matsui's next generation ARTJET printer dramatically reduces the labor intensity involved in the printing process: ARTJET's digital control configuration means no engineer or expert skillsets are required. The result is a digital overhaul of a once laborious practise.

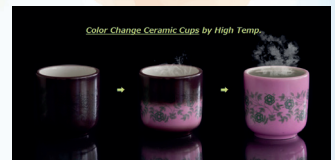
With a presence all across the world through its sister company Matsui International Co., Inc.,



Thermochromic Dye



Matsui head office



Thermochromic Ceramic Cup

Matsui Shikiso Chemical Co., Ltd. continues to be a family business dedicated to offering a wide range of exclusive products where each product is manufactured with the highest standards in reliability, always fulfilling the promise of unmatched quality synonymous all over the world with its Japanese heritage.



Sticking to objectives: OSP targets sustainable growth

Seal and label manufacturer Osaka Sealing Printing (OSP) is developing solutions that add value to its customers' products, with a particular focus on creating packaging that not only enhances visual appeal but environmental credentials, too.



"The value of the packaging comes down to several characteristics such as ease of use, eco-friendliness and clarity of information."

Tadashi Matsuguchi,
President and CEO,
OSP Group

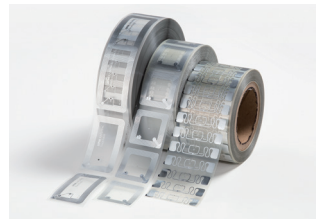
As a company which holds one third of the adhesive seal and label market in Japan, Osaka Sealing Printing (OSP) knows a thing or two about generating profits and creating long-standing relationships with customers that – like its products – stick around.

"The secret of generating profits at Osaka Sealing Printing (OSP) – what we call 'OSP magic' – is that we review all the business opportunities that don't bring about profits for us and mash them together to create something profitable," says Tadashi Matsuguchi, President and CEO of OSP Group. "We are now getting 14 million orders per year, or 6,000 orders per day, whereas originally the orders for sealing or labels were very small.

Mr. Matsuguchi uses the example where a hypothetical customer who makes a small order for 10 different types of labels in three different colours, of three different shapes, using different types of paper. "In this situation, no profit can be generated," he says. "However, if we receive 100 different orders, then we start having some orders that look very similar to each other. Then if we receive 6,000 different orders, then we may be able to categorize those orders by their colors or shapes. This is how we can turn many small orders into a large lot order. This is our so-called 'OSP Magic', as it's come to be known in the industry."

Beyond its sticker and label business, OSP has four other main business areas diversified across carton packaging, film packaging, promotion tools, and machinery. However, it is the stickers and labels that provide most of the company's commercial growth and is a field in which it is constantly developing new products and innovative solutions. In recent years, it has introduced its popular product line of 'Clear Thermal' – a translucent packaging allowing consumers to see the product contents – which has been adopted by major convenience stores in Japan.

"By showing the contents, you can enhance the appeal and the safety of the product," explains Mr. Matsuguchi. "Currently, we are also promoting our Clear Thermal line overseas, and we plan to expand it widely in the future."



OSP's plans for Clear Thermal would appear to come at an opportune time, with the global packaging industry set to continue to grow worldwide on account of emerging economies demanding more consumer goods in the coming years. With this growing demand in mind, how does OSP aim to reach these new markets? When it comes to package value, the OSP CEO highlights three characteristics that are constant wherever you go in the world: ease of use, eco-friendliness, and clarity of information.

"When those three characteristics are aligned, the ethical value of the product and the core value of the product itself, then customers are going to choose your product," he says. "So, we would like to continue to work with brand owners to develop more valuable products like this, providing them with value-added packaging solutions that expand this activity to the global market."

Unsurprisingly for the packaging industry, which has come increasingly under the microscope in regards to environmental impact, sustainability is a key area of focus for OSP, which invests

substantially in R&D to create more environmentally friendly packaging solutions.

"When it comes to printing, every factory is looking for ways to eliminate energy-wasting and environmentally burdensome production processes. In consideration of the impact on the environment, we are now transitioning to solvent inks to water-soluble ink. Of course, the functional quality is still maintained," says Mr. Matsuguchi.

"Apart from those things, we are also focusing on the use of plastics. Sometimes you need plastics from the performance or functionality perspective, but there are a lot of other areas where we can replace plastics with other materials, so we are working on how to replace film with paper. Our new product line, 'Paper Attention', is one of them. It is a product that can appeal to ethical customers."


OSP GROUP
osp-group.jp

The Can-do attitude bringing convenience to the world



With its years of experience and technical expertise, Daiwa Can Company is supplying Japan's major beverage manufacturers with top quality containers and packaging solutions with a creative and value-added approach.



"With the spirit to challenge, and the determination to realize the impossible, Daiwa Can will strive to become a company acknowledged by all as indispensable to society."

Hirohisa Yamaguchi,
President,
DAIWA CAN COMPANY

Containers are an essential means of maintaining the quality of the contents and oftentimes also serve as an important communication tool between the product and customer. As they are the consumer's first point of contact with a product, containers play a vital role in product branding and conveying the product's message. In that way, containers need to be functional, but also aesthetically pleasing.



Nursing care food

For more than 80 years, Daiwa Can has been a leader in the development of highly functional, high-performing containers that are pleasing to the eye, with its revolutionary products used in a broad range of industries, including food, beverage and beauty care, among others.

"Daiwa Can was founded in 1939, started producing metal

cans from the latter half of the 1940s, and expanded its business through the manufacturing of beer and beverage cans, starting with the world's first can for canned coffee," says president, Hirohisa Yamaguchi.

"Daiwa also started manufacturing plastic containers such as tubes and dispensers from an early stage in Japan to become a comprehensive container manufacturer, and under the fundamental principle to contribute to society, has been carrying out business by swiftly providing the best solutions to customers who require attractive and high-performance containers."

Daiwa's containers for beverages include the standard 2-piece DWI cans and 3-piece welded cans using aluminum or steel as the material, as well as plastic containers. But the all-metal bottle, New Bottle Can, equipped with a re-sealable aluminum pilfer-proof cap, is a can which was developed as a world's first by Daiwa Can.

As a packaging manufacturer aiming to contribute to society, the company strives to develop environmentally friendly products, with its innovation focused heavily on green technologies. The New Bottle Can has gained worldwide acclaim for being an environmentally friendly container that not only has a re-seal function but also because it requires no water during the manufacturing process. In conventional can manufacturing, water is used heavily throughout the process. Because the New Bottle Can's inner and outer surfaces are laminated with PET films, however, it requires no washing, thus reducing water consumption. This also means that there is no wastewater.

Daiwa's containers for the food industry include a double-safety Full Open End (FOE) which ensures the safety of the opening and also withstands retort sterilization. As for containers for cosmetics and daily needs, Daiwa has a line-up of plastic containers such as plastic tubes, pump and squeeze foamers,



blow bottles and jars, with application in various sizes, diameters, shapes, and decorations.

In view of the worldwide concern towards the environment and the move to anti-plastic, Daiwa Can is expanding its product line to include bio-polyethylene tubes, which use resin made from ethanol sourced from sugar cane.

"The strength of Daiwa Can is that we have developed the main elements of the value chain of the manufacturing and sales of containers in-house, allowing us to have the technology and know-how-related material development, forming technology, industrial designing, development of manufacturing equipment, sterilization, packing and transportation," Mr. Yamaguchi explains.

In order to meet the diversifying needs of the market, Daiwa Can has a culture that encourages employees to take on new challenges with the spirit of "realizing the impossible", and this can be seen in the expansion to new business categories such as nursing care food and medical appliances.

Furthermore, Daiwa has expanded its activities overseas, such as in North America, China, and Europe, and takes it as its corporate mission to work with its customers not only in Japan but globally to deliver safe and secure products with unique experiences and affluence through the spirit of Japanese *monozukuri*.

As examples, DS Containers in the United States manufactures the world's first and only laminated steel aerosol can to deliver safe and secure containers to customers with a short delivery lead time, and Wuxi Tonyi Daiwa in China manufactures the New Bottle Can to promote value added and envi-



(Above) New Bottle Can line-up;
(Below) Plastic tubes and foamers



ronmentally friendly packaging to the fast-growing Chinese market.

Mr. Yamaguchi concludes: "We aim to become a '100-year company' by accurately grasping the transition occurring in society and continuing to provide products and services meeting the needs of consumers worldwide."



Laminated steel aerosol cans produced at DS Containers

KOIKEYA: Premium snack food maker is the new ambassador of Japanese cuisine

Renowned in Japan for its range of finely-crafted and premium-quality potato, corn and health snacks, KOIKEYA aims to delight the taste buds of a whole new set of consumers in the US, Europe and Asia.



Japanese manufacturing is synonymous with *monozukuri* craftsmanship and the constant pursuit of innovation. And these concepts even extend to the nation's snack food manufacturers like KOIKEYA Inc.,

nent in a domestic market defined by Japan's aging population.

As such, KOIKEYA has maintained its success throughout its history by constantly appealing to the changing taste buds of a

and Sucorn), KOIKEYA has focused more attention on the global market in recent years, including the US, Europe, and fast-growing Southeast Asia, which offers ample opportunities for Japanese companies in the snack food industry thanks to ever-increasing demand from a rapidly expanding base of consumers.

KOIKEYA's quest to grow globally will be helped by the fact it is a member of Nissin Foods Group, which can share a far-reaching global network, distribution channels, technology and human resources with its snack food subsidiary. With five production sites and five sales bases internationally, KOIKEYA already has a presence in approximately 30 countries and regions, including the US, Canada, Europe, China, Thailand, Vietnam and Taiwan. In Europe, the company has expanded to 20

would like to make a potato chip that can be enjoyed by trying to avoid as many other ingredients as possible. At the same time, we're going to make these sub-categories like 'Pure Potato'," says company president, Akira Sato.

"'Pure Potato' focuses on the deliciousness of the potato itself,

"We believe potatoes should be treated as vegetables, and we would like to make a potato chip that can be enjoyed by trying to avoid as many other ingredients as possible."

Akira Sato,
President,
KOIKE-YA Inc.



Europe



Thailand



Vietnam



Japan



Taiwan



U.S. & Canada



Hong Kong,
Macau & China

whose unwavering commitment to *monozukuri* sees the company craft potato chips, corn snacks and health snacks of the finest ingredients, thus ensuring the highest quality and irresistible flavor.

Since its establishment in 1958, KOIKEYA has continued to grow to become one of Japan's leading snack food players, with 830 employees, annual sales of \$360 million (FY2021) and a popular listing on the Tokyo Stock Exchange (Code: 2226). The first company to mass produce potato chips in Japan, KOIKEYA continues to pioneer innovation in flavors and formulations to appeal to a new generation of young experimental consumers. The company is also leading the way with healthier and more natural snack food products for older, health-conscious customers, which is particularly perti-

continuously evolving market. Over the years it has launched a number of unique and original brands such as Karamucho, a giant brand which hit it big in Japan, growing year-on-year since its launch in 1984 to become the nation's number one spicy snack. With Karamucho now dominating the Asia and Southeast Asian markets, KOIKEYA's next target is customers in the US and European markets seeking a superior-quality spicy snack, and the brand has already hit the shelves of some big local supermarkets.

Having cemented its position on the domestic market with products such as Karamucho (as well as other top-selling brands such as Salt & Seaweed, Suppamuchio

countries since entering the market just five years ago in 2016.

As it looks to build its reputation on the very competitive US and European markets, KOIKEYA is focusing on marketing its premium or healthy snack food products

that are already a hit in Japan, where standards among consumers when it comes to food are among the highest in the world. These include the aforementioned Karamucho brand, its Potechi range of premium potato chips, which come in interesting flavors such as Teriyaki, Wasabi Nori and Sweet & Sour Pickled Plum, and its 'Pure Potato' brand of thick-sliced potato chips.

"We believe potatoes should be treated as vegetables, and we

really bringing out the full flavor of the natural ingredients, and we give our attention to that. In Japan, the concept has been very successful. And now 'Pure Potato' is coming to Vietnam, Thailand, Europe and the US after its incredible success in the Japanese and Taiwanese markets."

Given the reputation and popularity of Japanese food in Europe and the US, Mr. Sato is confident that the company's range of finely-crafted and premium-quality potato, corn and health snack brands can be a hit with consumers.



KOIKEYA

Japan: koike-ya.com/en

U.S.: us.koike-ya.com

Europe: koike-ya.eu/

