

# Monozukuri and omotenashi: the concepts behind Japan's renowned manufacturing quality

Japanese manufacturers are renowned worldwide for delivering the highest quality, and that quality comes down to *monozukuri*. While it can be translated as "making things" or "manufacturing", *monozukuri* means so much more than its humble translation. It is a manufacturing philosophy – embraced by leading companies like Toyota, right down to the legion of SME manufacturers that follow – that encompasses craftsmanship, the pursuit of perfection, innovation and the strong desire to satisfy the needs of the customer. Indeed, this last point related to the customer can also be linked to Japanese hospitality or *omotenashi*, which describes the Japanese attitude of being caring and attentive toward guests.

"Everything that is made in Japan relates to the craftsmanship and the principles of *omotenashi*, serving the best needs of people who are going to use these products or services introduced by any individual or company. *Omotenashi* and craftsmanship are combined in one package, and it is the starting point of Japanese *monozukuri*," explains Kazuhito Omura, President and CEO of Fuji Kogyo, a manufacturer of original fishing tackle and rod components whose *monozukuri* focuses on "making anglers' dreams come true".

"When you talk about *monozukuri*, it isn't just an understanding of making things in the

most excellent way possible. Prior to that, you must think about your motives behind why you want to make something. The thought behind it is the genesis of our own *monozukuri*."

For Totani, a leading manufacturer of pouch making machines, the company's reputed after-sales services have been heavily guided by the Japanese spirit of *omotenashi*. "For over 40 years now, we have also focused on after-sales services. Suppose we were to adopt software developed by a third party, if they stopped supporting us, we could not provide after-sales service to our customers, which would cause them inconvenience. One of our biggest missions is to support our customers long after the sales of our machines," states chairman Mikio Totani.

"We believe the essence of our success is the success of the customer. We aim to provide a concierge-like service; we can listen to our customer's needs in detail and resolve any problems they might have."

As the 'Made in Japan' brand has faced stiffer competition from regional competitors in recent decades, having good quality products is not enough, highlights Takaki Ichitsubo, Representative Director and CEO of Morito, which is a trader and manufacturer of apparel accessories. "Costs and delivery times have to be considered as well

as giving value to our products through a sense of security that we provide as a company," he says.

"In the past 20 years, the level of production in emerging countries has improved. We used to cater to a stream of customers from the bottom to the very top of the pyramid, but we were forced to focus on middle to high-end products. Combining high-quality products with our company value is necessary to penetrate new markets. We are working with our customers to keep building their trust and assurance through our products and relationships.

Giving his take on the competitiveness of the 'Made in Japan' brand amid the competition from emerging countries, Masayoshi Masuda, President of Iwatani Materials Corporation, says "Japan is still a leading country in the automotive market, optical equipment market as well as many others, such as the air conditioning market".

"Japanese companies are particularly good at production control," he adds, "so we have a very high level of quality and stability that enables us to manufacture very high-quality products; and we can deliver quickly to customers."

By combining the principles of *monozukuri* and *omotenashi*, Japanese companies continue to ensure the high quality and standards for which the 'Made in Japan' brand is renowned worldwide.

## Furniture as a solution: a perfect marriage of Japanese aesthetics and functionality

RF Yamakawa's design concept provides premium products to enrich one's daily life whether at the office or at home.



"We believe that furniture is a solution for people. We want to make people's working lives better."

Sho Kimura, President, RF Yamakawa Co., Ltd.

Employee motivation stems from many sources, with one being the space and surroundings of where they work. In that sense, office furniture can play an important role, which is why RF Yamakawa strives to create office furniture designed to inspire



Head office

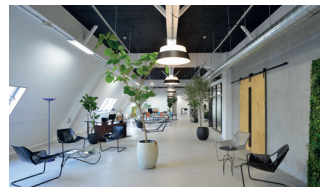
and motivate employees. Indeed, creating aesthetically pleasing, comfortable and functional furniture is all part of Yamakawa's mission: to provide furniture as a solution.

"Our core competencies are design, cost performance and functionality," says president Sho Kimura. "We believe that furniture is a solution for people. We want to make people's working lives better."



Shoe horn

While in Japan, companies traditionally preferred cold and lifeless steel furniture, times have changed, and RF Yamakawa is catering to the demand for more aesthetically pleasing office furniture. The pandemic has also had an impact on the market, for which, in response, the company has developed innovative new products such as its Moto antiviral desk and Lil series of home office desks designed for



Tokyo office

those with limited home space. "As new styles of working are becoming more and more familiar, we are investing in more innovative products," adds Mr. Kimura.

While RF Yamakawa currently only offers its interior design accessories such as its umbrella stand



Office scene

and shoehorn internationally, Mr. Kimura has ambitions to someday bring the company's full range of services and solutions to the U.S. and European markets. In Japan, not only does RF Yamakawa offer furniture and accessories, it also acts as a total solutions provider, incorporating complete office design and services such as electrical installation and renovation work.



[www.rf-yamakawa.co.jp/english](http://www.rf-yamakawa.co.jp/english)

# Iwatani Materials brings 'Made in Japan' quality products to a wider international customer base

With a deft combination of functional materials and films alongside home goods that strike the perfect balance between function and beauty, Iwatani Materials is eyeing the international market.

As Japanese companies – faced with a dwindling domestic market due to the aging population – continue to expand overseas, many leverage their reputation for high-quality, high-end products and the 'Made in Japan' brand when competing on global markets. A renowned manufacturer of household wares, films for the agricultural industry, resin molded parts, metal products and functional materials, Iwatani Materials Corporation is one such company doing just that.



Cover for outdoor air conditioners

A subsidiary of Iwatani Corporation, which was established in 1930, Iwatani Materials was founded in 1967 and has since grown to become a leading manufacturer of plastic and metal products, with 300 employees working across three divisions and 13 units. Aside from its manufacturing base in Japan, the company has factories in Thailand and China, where products are made to the same 'Made-in-Japan' standards as those manufactured domestically. There are about 1000 staff members working in its Thai and Chinese factories.

"Iwatani Materials manufactures various items, and we play a key role in interfacing with customers all over the world," says president Masayoshi Masuda, before highlighting the competitive edge of Japanese firms. "Japanese

companies are particularly good at production control



GOURLAB



I-Wrap

so we have a very high level of quality and stability that enables us to manufacture very high-quality products; and we can deliver quickly to customers."

Iwatani Materials' commitment to high quality and unique products has led to the development of its 'I'm D' brand concept for household wares. "It's basically about creating beautiful and highly functional designed products. The brand concept is for the customer to say, 'Oh, this is exactly what I was looking for!'," says Mr. Masuda. "In these kinds of industries in general, manufacturers make something that is easier for them to make, easier to deliver, or easier to display in stores. For the 'I'm D' products, we consider what the customers are actually looking for, rather than what's easiest for us to produce."



kcud

Among the other high-quality company products highlighted by the president are I-Wrap, a heat-resistant plastic bag for kitchen use that has been a popular seller since 1976, and ECOWARMER, a new type of yutampo (a product that has been used in Japan since ancient times) that provides users with extra heat when sleeping.

"The ECOWARMER is our latest, and most high-end version. It was released this winter. The outside cover

of the ECOWARMER is made from a composite material of washi and fiber, and the container is actually different from existing products, using special raw materials. If you touch it, you can feel the strength and quality of the material, and if



ECOWARMER

you put hot water in it, it gets softer," explains Mr. Masuda. "By using this product you can minimize the heating that you use in your home, particularly while asleep. The product itself is also environmentally friendly, so it contributes to a sustainable society."

Another popular Iwatani Materials household product, GOURLAB is a type of cooking ware for microwaves and ovens, which offers very high temperature resistance of up to 230 degrees Celsius (446 degrees Fahrenheit). An invention of Iwatani Materials employees, GOURLAB is already selling well in the U.S and China via the Internet, and the company is considering developing new sizes.

As part of the Iwatani Materials' sustainability drive, the company has also launched an initiative focused on environmentally-friendly resin products in collaboration with the Iwatani Group. "We procure materials from the Iwatani Group, which is expanding



"We aim to become a creative company through our uniqueness, originality, and our own sustainable products."

Masayoshi Masuda,  
President,  
Iwatani Materials Corporation

globally, and manufacture products using plant-derived bio-resin, which is attracting attention as an environmentally-friendly material," adds Mr. Masuda. "As we continue to sell plastic products in the future, we will also work on product development using environmentally-friendly materials."



Functional polyethylene film "High Barrier" for the agro industry

As Iwatani Materials looks to reach more customers worldwide with its wide range of products, Mr. Masuda stresses that the company will continue to follow its mission and vision focused on sustainability. "Iwatani Materials should continuously develop, so our goal is to achieve sustainable innovation. We aim to become a creative company through our uniqueness, originality, and our own sustainable products."

**Iwatani**  
Iwatani Materials Corp.  
www.imcjpn.co.jp



# UP-T to revolutionize the e-commerce world of custom-designed items

A platform where you can design your own clothing and other items, allowing users to buy and sell items among their peers, UP-T is set to take the e-commerce world by storm.



"Our users can create, buy and sell personalized products on our platform at a fast pace."

Tomoyuki Miyamoto,  
Managing Director,  
Marui Orimono Co., Ltd.

Customization is one of the latest trends taking hold in the fashion and clothing industry. While the business of customized T-shirt printing has existed for decades, the internet and e-commerce-related technologies are helping to take the concept to a new level – with Marui Orimono, the Japanese textiles company behind the groundbreaking platform UP-T, leading the charge.

Initially launched in 2015 to provide original customer-designed T-shirts on demand, the UP-T service has since expanded to include smartphone cases as well as other accessories and novelty goods. The platform is currently available in Japanese, Korean and Chinese, with the English version set to launch in April as Marui Orimono aims to



Item management through QR bring the service to a wider global customer base.



Press conference with Japanese comedy duo Kamaitachi

"The initial idea was for customers to design their own T-shirts for personal use, but we have further launched a system where you can actually sell your designs to other users. I would say that our first innovation was expanding to further product line-ups, and the second innovation was creating a platform where users can design T-shirts and then sell those designs to other users. For example, a T-shirt costs ap-



Printing factory in an old school building

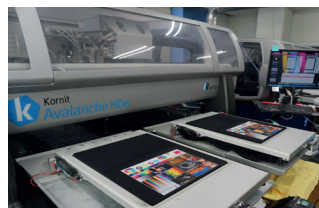
proximately JPY 2000 (around \$15), but a customer can sell their design, and imagine that design sells for JPY 3400. Now the user can make JPY 1400 just from their design," says Tomoyuki Miyamoto, Managing Director of Marui Orimono.

"The third innovation for the service comes in the form of *monozukuri*, and through manufacturing technology. We have been able to introduce a 3D-modeling system where you can see a product in 3D online. In April, we are launching a service that utilizes recent innovations in consumer-level 3D scanning technology. By taking

multiple photos that cover 360 degrees of an object, you can scan that object in a 3D space, and we are then able to print it using our 3D-printing technology."

Of course, Marui Orimono is not the only company to offer a customized T-shirt printing service. Many large clothing brands allow customers to print their own designs in store, while online there are platforms such as Amazon's Merch which offer similar services to those offered by UP-T. So what makes the Marui Orimono platform stand out from the crowd in a competitive market?

"Certain large brands have a limited number of items you can print on, but with UP-T, we actually have a choice of over 3,000 items for our customers. Our three-day delivery is also another strong point of the brand, and if I'm correct, competitors' products take five to



Printers that can print even when wet

seven days for delivery," Mr. Miyamoto responds. "Our strength lies in our integrated product and sales

system where we have developed our own production scheme. Currently, 97% of products are made in-house. I would say our biggest competition currently is the Merch by Amazon brand, but at this point, they have only been able to produce T-shirts. Our products are very price competitive, with customers considering the price as very reasonable."

With the English version of the website ready for launch in April, Marui Orimono hopes to take the U.S. market by storm, while the launch of its NFT service – which allows users to buy any of the one million images that have been sold through the platform – is expected to create a lot of buzz around the UP-T brand.



Second printing factory

"For our overall overseas strategy, we would like to start by focusing on the U.S. market, and then further expand from there. What is interesting is that we have a marketing page on which users can sell their designs. Currently, this page is only offered to Japanese, but we want to open this up globally," adds Mr. Miyamoto. "Anybody should be able to access this page and order designs. I actually recently became aware of DeepL, and I am thinking we could possibly use their automatic translation neural network to translate back and forth from English to Japanese. By using automatic translation, Korean users can purchase designs from Americans and Japanese for example. We can enable the worldwide sharing and sale of original design work. This is the direction we are focused on right now."

**UP-T**  
<https://up-t.jp>

# Morito targets becoming a 100-billion-yen company as it looks to expand international presence

Morito combines expertise in trading of apparel accessories with manufacturing capabilities to offer solutions for various industries, including clothing, furniture, automotive and medical.

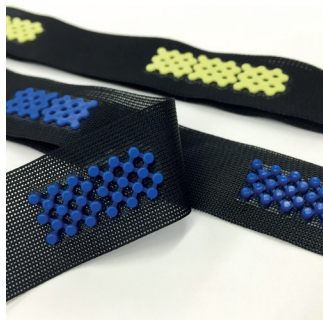


"We want to provide a comprehensive service that caters to global companies."

**Takaki Ichitsubo,**  
Representative Director & CEO,  
Morito Co., Ltd.

Japan's trading companies have played a particularly important role in bridging the gap between the nation's SME manufacturers and global customers, particularly in the B2B sphere. But in today's business environment, these traders have had to evolve in order to survive. No longer do they merely provide financing and logistics, they also add value in new ways, whether through co-creation, consultation, R&D, or even taking on the role of manufacturer themselves.

Established in 1908, Morito is one such trader that has evolved with the times in order to build a thriving international company engaged in the supply and manufacture of apparel accessories.



Morito's patented item, "tapey snapper"

Today, the products that Morito supplies are found not



Morito's new plating

only in clothing, they are also used in cars, furniture and in Japan's Shinkansen trains, with the company also setting its sights on expanding into the medical industry.



Morito's standard press fasteners

"All our products are based on the concept of our founder which is to create products that connect, fix or decorate," states Takaki Ichitsubo, Representative Director and CEO of Morito. "Snap fasteners are especially prevalent in apparel, but they are also utilized in the automotive field. Car floor mats use eyelets and snap fasteners to hold them in place. Sofas have eyelets or small holes for ventilation. Moreover, our snap fasteners are used in the curtains in airplanes, and our cords and laces are utilized in hooded outfits. We also provide the mesh net that employs our weaving technology used behind cars and Shinkansen seats."

Acting as a bridge between manufacturer and customer, Morito focuses on the trading of products manufactured in Japan by SMEs who often do not have enough capability to do sales. By providing informa-

tion on what kind of market requires what specific products, it can give new ideas and hints to manufacturers to drive innovation. Meanwhile, the company is driving its own innovation as a manufacturer of several products, particularly metal-processed parts. Twenty percent of its revenue now comes from its manufacturing arm.

With its sights set on becoming a "100-billion-yen company" and a "number one niche company globally", Morito has outlined several pillars in its long-term strategy, namely: expanding its manufacturing capacity while also targeting B2C markets; growing its international business through M&As and other alliance opportunities; strengthening its presence in markets with high growth potential, such as China and Southeast; and moving into new areas such as the medical industry.



Variety of snap fasteners

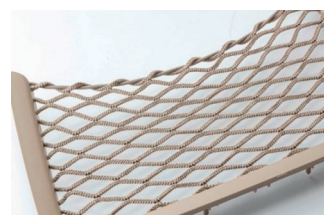
"We are trying to provide and supply to various industries, but we envision growth in the medical field. We are not plan-

ning to provide any life-critical components. Rather, we want to focus on the products and other devices that we already have," says Mr. Ichitsubo. "Our product lineup is so diversified, but our philosophy is to grasp current demands and provide something that is a little bit ahead of time to satisfy the needs of society."



Many brands use Morito's trims

The president also stresses the importance of M&As in order for Morito to reach its goals, with the company aiming to complete three to four M&A agreements per year. "Of course, we are not only doing M&As. Our company's philosophy is not only to actively seek growth but also to steadily grow. The current value of our company is JPY 50 billion (approx. \$368 million). In order to double that



Luggage net used in cars and bullet trains

in the near future, each company within the group must strive to pursue and excel in its individual market with its own uniqueness and innovation. At the same time, we have to fully utilize our network to serve our global customers. We want to provide a comprehensive service that caters to global companies."

**MORITO**  
www.morito.co.jp/en



# Nippon Molding providing the next generation of packaging

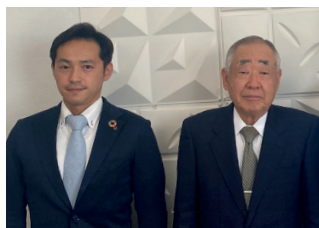
The number-one egg tray manufacturer in Japan, Nippon Molding is providing sustainable solutions as the packaging industry aims to reduce its use of plastic.

Founded in 1956, Nippon Molding is a sustainability-focused company that specializes in the manufacture of pulp mold egg trays for the poultry industry, as well as similar packaging for products such as fruit and vegetables.

As Japan seeks to cut back on its plastic waste generation, Nippon Molding's trays are supporting this drive. "Pulp mold is a molded paper product made by mixing recycled paper containing plant fibers with water, meaning that it's 100% eco-friendly, biodegradable, recyclable,



Fruit tray



"One of our goals is to achieve a sustainable society."

Akira Ishihara, President (right),  
Takehiro Ishihara, Managing  
Director (left),  
Nippon Molding Co., Ltd.



One-way pallet "LOGIPALE"

and is a good alternative to conventional plastic products," says President Akira Ishihara. "It's a good contribution to society."

As part of its commitment to promoting the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals, Nippon Molding also plays a role in ensuring a stable food supply. "Our trays actually extend

the life of fruit and vegetables and other products by maintaining their features, such as freshness and hardness or softness," Mr. Ishihara notes.

Among Nippon Molding's best-sellers is the LOGIPALE transportation pallet, which typifies the firm's dedication to creating trays that protect not only the products



Apple tray gift box

they carry, but also the environment. "Companies usually use plastic, which transmits vibration to the products being shipped, but our pallets absorb those vibrations," Managing Director Takehiro Ishihara explains. "They're made from molded pulp and cardboard, which is also highly recyclable."

A company that already boasts partnerships in Malaysia, Thailand and Mexico, Nippon Molding is looking to add to its international presence. "Whilst we're focused primarily on domestic demand, we're also putting out feelers around Southeast Asian countries, since they're geographically close," Takehiro Ishihara says. "We're also pursuing certifications that will make our products more attractive in overseas markets."

**PULP MOLD**  
www.mold.co.jp

# From paper envelopes to shopping bags, Mutoh Unipack delivers on quality

Having sealed its reputation as one of Japan's top manufacturers of envelopes, Mutoh Unipack is now making shopping bags for leading Japanese beverage and skincare companies.



Mutoh's unique style of shopping bags

For close to a quarter of a century, Mutoh Unipack has been one of Japan's premier manufacturers of paper envelopes, leveraging *monozukuri* – the Japanese manufacturing philosophy based on craftsmanship and the pursuit of perfection – to create products of the highest quality that are free from defects.

Since the introduction of Japan's Act on the Protection of Personal Information in 2003, paper envelope makers have had to focus even more on quality to ensure that their envelopes can protect and secure the often sensitive nature of their

contents, says Mutoh president Fumio Yamano. "If the customer finds one defective envelope, they have to inspect all the other envelopes, which requires extra effort. In such cases, we are causing extra work for the customer, and as a manufacturer of those products we should avoid such situations," he says.

"The essence of *monozukuri* when manufacturing any products is whether our product is accepted by users or not. There can be whatever type of good materials, or design, or specifications between manufacturers,



Honey harvested through the beekeeping project

but if the users don't accept it, it doesn't make sense so it's just a matter of utility.

In the field of *monozukuri*, what I usually value is getting the point of view, or perspective, of users or customers."

While Mutoh will continue to follow its belief and focus on the production of paper envelopes (which currently makes up 80% of its business), it has been shifting focus to its other area of business, shopping bags, in response to lower demand for paper in our increasingly digital world. "We have been manufacturing shopping bags for over ten years now, and the quality of our products has been highly evaluated by customers. One of our major customers is one of Japan's most well-known alcoholic beverage companies which is very strict in terms of quality, and they do an audit of the plant where



Mutoh's products are quality-renowned

the bags are manufactured," adds Mr. Yamano. "We also deal with famous Japanese skincare products, which are very expensive and require a very high-quality product from us, involving precision down to one millimeter. By accepting these companies' standards, the quality of our products has risen."

Apart from the main business, Mutoh is actively engaging in its local community. For example, the company joined the Koto City Honeybee Project and keeps bees on the grounds of its head office for the purposes of enhancing city greening, urban biodiversity and public welfare.

**MUTOH UNIPACK Co., LTD.**  
www.mutoh-u.co.jp

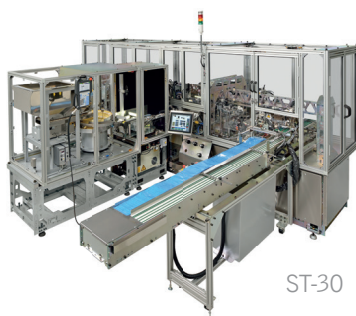
# 'Think Sustainable': packaging machinery for a greener future

A leading manufacturer of pouch making machines, Totani Corporation is leading the way when it comes to developing solutions for a greener future.

Amid increased competition from regional peers in recent decades, Japanese companies have continued to excel in niche manufacturing fields characterized by high-mix, low-volume production. That is certainly the case for Totani, a leading manufacturer of pouch making machines whose in-house developed technology and after-sales service is second to none.

"What we have cherished over many years is our ability to focus on niche fields and through that, we gained a position as the number one in the global market," says president Ryuichi Totani. "Over the past 50 years, we have developed new technologies on our own without outsourcing. What we are producing now has come as a result of that accumulated technology that we have focused on over many years."

Totani's reputed after-sales services have been heavily guided by the Japanese spirit of *omotenashi*, the basis behind the nation's famous hospitality. For Totani, the installation of its machines – which may last for 30 years or more – is not the end goal for the company, but the beginning of its service. "One of our biggest missions is to support our customers long after the sales of our machines," states chairman Mikio Totani. "We believe the essence of our success is the success of the customer. We aim to provide a concierge-like service; we can listen to our customer's needs in detail and resolve any problems they might have."



ST-30



"When it comes to new materials, one of the strengths we have is that we have accumulated test data going back 20-30 years."

Ryuichi Totani, President (left), Mikio Totani, Chairman (right), Totani Corporation  
[www.totani.co.jp/en](http://www.totani.co.jp/en)

As a result of this dedication to after-sales service, and thanks to the possibilities brought about by new technologies such as IoT and Big Data, Totani has developed its Data Communications System (DCS). By providing a large amount of usable data in real time, the DCS enables Totani's clients to improve efficiency, track the cause of bag defects, and monitor the operation status of machinery. "When you deal with machines and operators there are always some mistakes, and this DCS system can trace back and see what happened should a mistake occur," the chairman explains. "We are able to trace such data using this system and this gives us the ability to enhance the quality of production going forward."

Having such a close relationship with the customer has allowed Totani to keep up with the needs of the market, such as the demand for smaller packaging and environmentally friendly solutions. The company invests heavily in R&D and harnesses

Due to environmental concerns, demands are also high for Totani's recyclable pouch making machine, particularly from clients in Western countries. "We have accumulated special technologies to enhance productivity and speed, so with these in place, I believe that we are able to cater to the new demand for eco-friendly materials," adds president Ryuichi Totani. "When it comes to new materials, one of the strengths we have is that we have accumulated test data going back 20-30 years."

Thanks to the development of such machines, Totani's sales have tripled in recent years, increasing from 4 billion yen in 2010, to 12 billion yen (\$89 million) in 2019. However, profit is not the company's only goal; so too is contributing to a sustainable society.

"We have a history of focusing on the development of new materials, such as recyclable and biodegradable materials," says chairman Mikio Totani. "In that sense it can be said that we have been incorporating an SDG (the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals) perspective into our management over a long period of time. We adopted 'Think Sustainable' as our company slogan and are determined to contribute to a sustainable society through our pouch making machines, while pursuing sustainable management."



BH-60DG

the power of data to develop world-class machinery such as the CT40, which can make stand-up pouches from a single film roll, whereas conventional machines require two film rolls. The advantage of the CT40 allows for high-mix, low-volume production and sudden design changes, while the machine can also make smaller-sized bags, which are in high demand these days.

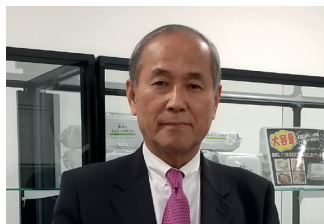






## Natural ingredient-based cleaning products to reduce ocean water pollution

With R&D focused on alkaline electrolyzed water, Hattori Paper has been able to develop eco-friendly cleaning products that are good for the skin and the environment.



"I would like to pass on our mission to 'clean up kitchens safely and securely worldwide' to the next generation."

Masakazu Hattori, President, Hattori Paper Mfg. Co., Ltd.

In today's green-conscious world, most consumers are acutely aware of the impact of household cleaning products on the environment, not to mention on our skin and overall health.

Having long held a desire to clean up the oceans, Masakazu Hattori,



Alkaline electrolyzed water wet cleaning wipes

the fourth president of Hattori Paper, decided that the company should reorient its focus to develop environmentally friendly products in the early 2000s. As a result, he succeeded in developing kitchen wet cleaning wipes using alkaline electrolyzed water.

Hattori explains: "Alkaline electrolyzed water is alkaline, but it is gentle on the skin and environmentally friendly. We are the only company developing wet cleaning wipes using alkaline electrolyzed water without using a pH stabilizer."

With Hattori's products already popular in Japan, the company now aims to reach a wider global audience. "We are a small manufacturer, but we have a big dream. Our mission for alkaline electrolyzed water is to make kitchens around the world cleaner," adds the president. As part of its strategy to appeal to U.S. and European consumers, for example, Hattori has increased the capacity of its Wet Cleaning Wipes packaging to hold 80 wipes instead of 20.

As the company looks to expand its international reach, Mr. Hattori's vision is to "contribute to health and the environment on a global scale".

"Our 'sodium bicarbonate electrolyzed water' and 'alkaline electrolyzed water' are cleaning agents that do not use synthetic surfactants and are therefore less harmful to the skin and the environment," he says.



Strongly acidic electrolyzed water skin care sheets

"In addition, we hope to contribute to relieving skin problems around the world by selling these products as strongly acidic electrolyzed water is a skin care material with no reported side effects. To achieve this, we would like to spread our products in every way."

服部製紙株式会社  
HATTORI PAPER MFG. Co., Ltd.

[www.hattoripaper.co.jp](http://www.hattoripaper.co.jp)

## ATEX: driving automation in agriculture

Japan's ATEX is developing automated machines that improve the efficiency and capabilities of farms of all sizes.



Kariba-0

Automation in agriculture is often associated with large farms and heavy machinery, but a new generation of hybrid machines is changing the working lives of smaller ones too. One of the companies providing forward-thinking solutions for farms of all sizes, as well as society as a whole, is Japan's Atex Co., Ltd.

Founded in 1934, Atex produces brush cutters, electric scooters, and carriers, among other products. The company is dedicated to using research and development to create new solutions centered on quality. One such machine is the Kamigari, the first hybrid remote



"Our strength is with our out-of-the-box innovation and we believe what satisfies the customer is quality and cost."

Masahiro Murata, President, ATEX Co., Ltd.

controlled brush cutter to feature smartphone connectivity. Kamigari can run for one hour when fully charged if it runs out of gas, so it is possible to come back to refuel. Not only that, it can cut grass at an angle of up to 45 degrees, making it possible to work in places that are difficult to cut.

Company president Masahiro Murata reveals Atex's



Mypia

Kariba-0 ride-on brush cutter has sold well overseas, and the company's international presence includes a Chinese factory which it runs directly. Mr. Murata says Atex is always looking for new partners both at home and abroad, explaining: "We have direct contracts with local agents to



Kamigari

sell our branded products, and we also do OEM."

Atex's products are not limited to the agriculture industry, with the company also producing its Mypia electric scooters with the same dedication to performance seen in its brush cutter. Mr. Murata says as Atex targets further overseas expansion and develops new products for the digital age, it will not lose sight of the quality that drives the company forward, stating: "We believe that what satisfies the customer is quality and cost."

atex  
<https://atexnet.co.jp>

# Making anglers' dreams come true

A top manufacturer of fishing tackle and rod components, FUJI Kogyo leverages *monozukuri* to develop unique products loved by anglers and is constantly innovating to meet the ever-changing demands of the sports fishing industry.



"We listen to the voices of anglers, and develop products which match their needs, in order to bring the joy of fishing to them. It is simple, but this is the starting point of FUJI's *monozukuri*."

Kazuhito Omura, President & CEO, FUJI Kogyo Co., Ltd.

Followed by Nippon companies both big and small, *monozukuri* is the Japanese manufacturing philosophy focused on craftsmanship, attention to detail, the pursuit of perfection and constant innovation. And in the case of FUJI Kogyo, a manufacturer of original fishing tackle and rod components, the principle of the company's *monozukuri* is "making anglers' dreams come true".



FUJI hand tag

"FUJI's product development and manufacturing is to provide excitement to anglers by making original products," says president and CEO Kazuhito Omura. "We would like to be an independent, stand-alone rod component manufacturing company, a one-of-a-kind and unique enterprise. We believe that the reliability of

the company is established by continuing to serve stable and value-added quality to customers, and that enables us to distinguish ourselves from our competitors."

While to an outsider, the fishing rod market may not be seen as one which is constantly evolving, that could not be further from the truth. Indeed, the needs and demands of anglers are con-

expanding its product range for the anglers who want to create a "one-of-a-kind" rod in a "DIY-type concept".

"We can say our business is shifting slightly from B2B to B2C where you have much more custom-made solutions, this is a transition we have been making for the past several years," states the company president.



Variety of rod components

tinuously changing. And with the evolution of materials and components, as well as changes in fishing methods and rod usage, FUJI expects that it will become even more important to meet various needs and take manufacturing one step further in the future.

"We strive to manufacture something that best fits the needs of the customers. We are a manufacturer of rod components, but rather than only trying to sell the components themselves, we tell our customers how the performance of their fishing rods is improved by using our rod components," adds Mr. Omura. "This means that we believe that it is very important to propose both the 'Hard (products)' and 'Soft (concept)' to customers. And our mission is to keep innovating products which meet various needs from customers, in harmony with new materials and new styles of fishing."

Besides its mainstream business, FUJI is also now focusing on creating a new market for "custom-made rod building" by

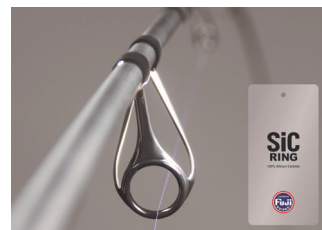
The needs of anglers across the globe differ from country to country, and to cater to varying needs, FUJI has built up a product catalog comprised of a staggering 10,000 types of rod components, including guides, reel seats, top cover, butt accessories, grip materials, metal parts, sinkers, and hook keepers. As Mr. Omura ensures: "All our products are developed for the needs of anglers. We listen to the voices of anglers, and develop products which match their needs, in order to bring the joy of fishing to them. It is simple, but this is the starting point of FUJI's *monozukuri*."



Product test by pro-staff

*Monozukuri* is firmly associated with 'Made in Japan'. And although many of FUJI's products are made

in its Chinese factory, the company ensures the highest Japanese standards are followed to ensure the highest quality components are created. "We pursue *monozukuri* at our Chinese plant, thoroughly sticking to the quality standard of 'Made in Japan,'" says Mr. Omura. "Quality first" is the principle of our business and that is the mantra shared by all our employees. No matter where a product is manufactured, to achieve 'Japan quality' and 'FUJI quality' is the most important consideration and that is the objective of our production plant in China. We have been working and cooperating closely with our staff in China in order to achieve 'FUJI quality' there."



SiC (Silicon Carbide) guide

For FUJI, its commitment to society and the environment is just as important as its commitment to anglers. In 2008, the company introduced the "We Love the Earth" concept, which shares the same values as the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals. "We, of course, try to decrease the burden of our production processes and in addition we are doing some nature conservation activities in cooperation with the local community," adds Mr. Omura. "We are a manufacturing company, but want to raise the value of our existence by contributing to the environment, local society, and the fishing tackle industry, as 'a company creating culture'."



www.fujitackle.com