

STAR-M: pioneering innovation in woodworking drill bits



Manufacturing with passion is the name of the game at STAR-M, a Japanese drill bit maker that's celebrating its centenary in 2023.



"We try to deliver whatever our customers need, even when they only ask for one product or large quantities. Our mission is to give shape to what our customers want."

Tokiko Kobayashi,
President,
STAR-M Corporation

A company in its centenary year, STAR-M Corporation is a market-leading Japanese specialist in the design and production of woodworking drill bits. Based in Miki City, Hyogo Prefecture, the firm is guided by its commitment to *monozukuri* – Japan's pursuit of perfection in manufacturing – as it creates high-quality, cutting-edge products that are sold in over 30 countries worldwide.

"Japanese manufacturers employ creativity, and the *kaizen* philosophy of continual improvement, in every product they manufacture," STAR-M president Tokiko Kobayashi says. "At the same time, we listen to our customers' voices to determine what they want. Put all these things together, and that's what Japanese *monozukuri* is about. I believe that by manufacturing with passion, the final product will be strikingly different. It's a philosophy that our employees uphold – they dis-



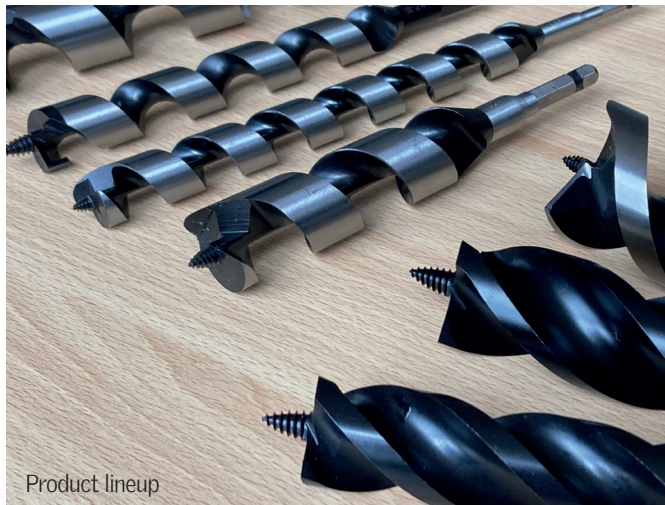
STAR-M INT. LTD. "WoodOwl"



Core cutting process



Polishing process



Product lineup

play a passion for the individual products they manufacture."

In addition to turning 100 in 2023, STAR-M is celebrating the 20th anniversary of its U.S. affiliate company, STAR-M International. Located in Lombard, Illinois, it sells the WoodOwl brand of drill bits created specifically for American customers. "We currently have a 70% market share in Japan. Upon achieving that significant domestic market percentage, we looked for potential targets and decided to challenge ourselves in the U.S. market," explains Ms. Kobayashi.

"U.S. clients' specifications greatly vary from those of Japan. We only had single-spiral products in the beginning, but we sought to tailor our products to meet the needs of our clients, so we produced drill bits with double and triple spirals. One of our drills which is often used in America works very well for the wooden pylons that support their electrical wires. Our clients have also said that with our Tri-Cut triple-spiral drill bits, which are regularly used in the construction of two-by-four houses, they are able to bore highly accurate holes through the wood."

STAR-M's successful adaptation to American clients' requirements owes much to rigorous R&D efforts. "We perform several tests, using the actual power tools they use," Ms. Kobayashi explains. "We do a lot of trial-and-error testing to adjust the design and model to bring about the perfect hole in varying types of woods. And our testing to find out the best drill-bit design for our customers is not limited to the U.S. It's our philosophy throughout STAR-M Corporation. We try to deliver whatever our customers need, even when they only ask for one product or large quantities. Our mission is to give shape to what our customers want."

STAR-M's comprehensive, continuous R&D processes also ensure that the firm's drill bits keep pace with the evolution of the power tools and wood types available to their customers. "They are constantly changing, especially recently, so we have to keep updating our products to respond to the advanced types of power tools and wood material variations," Ms. Kobayashi notes. "Our ability to constantly update our products comes from the deep knowledge and experience we have cultivated over the past 100 years."

This commitment to constant progress goes hand in hand with the message that STAR-M's special new logo, created to commemorate the company's centenary, seeks to convey. "The design is based on the image of infinity, which means that drilling has no limits," Ms. Kobayashi says. "And the slogan '100 years and counting' speaks to our dedication to never, ever stop challenging ourselves."



www.starinfo.com/en

Sanwa Metal: unceasing quality that makes the difference

When it comes to grease nipples – which are an essential part of mechanical systems – Sanwa Metal Industry is a supplier that clients can rely on. The company has built and kept a top share in the Japanese market through its efforts to maintain reliability and reasonable pricing.



"We want to increase the ratio of foreign companies that have been placing orders with us."

Yoshimori Kitayama,
President, Sanwa Metal Industry Co., Ltd.

Sanwa Metal Industry is a market-leading Japanese specialist in the production and sale of grease nipples – a small but crucial product that allows lubricant to be fed into machinery.

Based in Matsubara City, Osaka Prefecture, the 78-year-old firm is dedicated to following the principle of *monozukuri* – the Japanese pursuit of perfection in manufacturing. It's a quality commitment that ensures Sanwa Metal is a company clients can depend on.



SD nozzles

"We have seen customers shift their supply chain and give preference to cheaper manufacturers in China, before coming back to us," says Sanwa Metal's presi-

dent, Yoshimori Kitayama. "Japanese companies have always been able to provide sustainable and reliable quality."

Although it opened an overseas factory in Thailand in 2012, the manufacturer remains chiefly a supplier to Japanese customers: just over 90% of the orders it receives are from domestic companies.



However, building on the growing success it has enjoyed in Indonesia in recent years, Sanwa Metal is out to increase its portfolio of international clients.



Grease nipples and related products

"Indonesia is a very important market for us, and we have seen an explosion of interest not just there, but also from neighboring countries such as Singapore and Malaysia. The Southeast Asian market is very important to us, so we have been building our brand in these countries.

"My son, Muneyuki Kitayama, is responsible for foreign market exposure, and he is trying to increase the ratio of foreign companies that are placing orders with us."



SANWA METAL INDUSTRY Co., Ltd.
株式会社 三和金属工業

www.sanwametal.co.jp

Naniwa Whetstone a cut above the rest

Naniwa invites professional chefs and home cooks alike to discover the unmatched quality of its whetstone knife sharpening tools.

As any good professional or home chef knows, the key to finely prepared food is a finely sharpened kitchen knife.

The kitchen knife is undoubtedly a chef's best friend – an essential tool that must be sharpened regularly to ensure top performance. For kitchen samurais aspiring for the best, only

the Japanese-made Naniwa Whetstone sharpening tools will do.

Made to the highest Japanese quality standards, offering sophisticated design and unmatched reliability, Naniwa Whetstone sharpening tools promise to enhance your cutting skills, cooking performance and creativity in the

kitchen. What's more, Naniwa has more than 80 years of experience in creating the perfect sharpening tools for industrial, restaurant and home use, and the quality borne from this experience can be seen and felt in each of the company's products.

"Sushi is, of course, the most famous Japanese cuisine," says Naniwa president Nobuhiro Sadakane. "You must have a very sharp knife to make the best and tastiest sushi, and whetstones are required in order to maintain the sharpness of the knife. We have been in this business for over 80 years, so we have a wide range of products, focusing only on whetstones, and a wide variety of materials, which is the culmination of our technologies and knowledge."

When it comes to knife sharpening, Naniwa stresses that a 15-degree angle is the critical angle when using whetstone. "We named the 15-degree angle as the 'Perfect Angle,'" adds Mr. Sadakane. "All



"My goal is to be number one in the world for whetstones."

Nobuhiro Sadakane, President, Naniwa Abrasive Mfg. Co., Ltd.

our product packaging has been updated and includes sharpening guidelines on the packaging. These changes to the packaging also make it easier for the customer to choose the right product."

With its products the longstanding preferred choice of sushi chefs across Japan, Naniwa now aims to take its Japanese-crafted whetstone sharpening tools to chefs and home cooks throughout the world.



New designs for summer 2023



Naniwa standard stone series



www.naniwa-abrasive.com

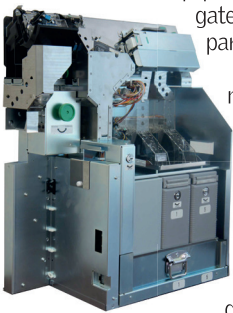
Takamisawa Cybernetics aims to take its machinery global



"Takamisawa Cybernetics' corporate philosophy is to be a company that creates machines that are indispensable to the world."

Kazuo Takamisawa,
President and Representative
Director, Takamisawa
Cybernetics Co., Ltd.

Established in 1969, Takamisawa Cybernetics is a leading manufacturer of automatic ticket vending machines, automatic platform doors and turnstiles used in train stations across Japan. The Japanese firm also supplies mechatronics systems designed to handle tickets, bills, coins and cards, as well as specific system machines designed for applications such as disaster prevention, measurement equipment, security gates and bicycle parking lots.



Coin handling machine while also continuing to spread its cash and coin-based machinery to overseas markets such as China and Southeast Asia.

The coronavirus pandemic has no doubt accelerated the global shift to a cashless society. In Denmark and Sweden, almost 80% of all payments are now cashless, but countries like Japan, Italy and Spain have been much slower to adopt. With this in mind, Takamisawa Cybernetics president Kazuo

If you have ever used Japan's famous train network, then you are probably familiar with the technology of Takamisawa Cybernetics.

Takamisawa believes that supplying coin-handling systems will continue to be an important part of the business for the company, even in China, where demand for coin-based machinery remains high

is about 20-30%. When you go a little bit deeper, 70% of that cashless element is credit cards. One element we have introduced is our turnstile equipped for VISA touch card payments, which was



Station utilization

despite the fact that the Chinese market is now mainly cashless.

"I do believe that cashless is something that is going to continue to expand here in Japan, but I also think that in order for us to be completely cashless it will take time. I think there needs to be a balance struck between having both options. So, therefore, there will be a need for advancements in technology for both elements," he says.

"Currently what is most important when it comes to really supporting a cashless society is to ensure that the machines we have installed, such as the automatic ticket vending machines and security systems, are equipped for cashless transactions. I think that the closest way we have been



Automatic ticket gate (VISA)

able to provide our support for that is through the credit card payment system. The percentage of cashless payments in Japan

born out of a collaboration with the railway companies."

Having cemented its reputation in Japan, Takamisawa Cybernetics took its industry-leading technology to China, where it has sold around 22,000 units to date. "The reason our coin systems were installed in 2010 and became such a huge hit in China comes down to a number of different reasons," explains Mr. Takamisawa. "One is the high level our systems have in terms of counterfeit detection. Second is the ability to insert a number of different denominations of coins at one time, which is very different from the old system of one coin at a time. Finally, it is possible to recycle the money you put in and receive it back as change. I think this is our company's strength; the ability to really pursue the greatest technology when it comes to our products and to continually improve upon our technologies. We are a company that takes pride in our ability to constantly improve our technology and evolve."

This ability to constantly evolve its technology has seen Takamisawa Cybernetics develop new



Security gate (Good Design Award)

solutions, such as its touch-free security gates using sensor-based technology. "Our strategy in that market is to ensure that we have a variety of different products, diversify the machines, and put efforts into making designs that look aesthetically pleasing," adds Mr. Takamisawa. "Many security gates have the same shape at the entrance and exit. We customized this according to the design of the building itself, and produced a security gate with different stylish shapes for the entrance and exit. For that reason, we have been highly appraised and one of our gates won a Good Design Award."

Moving forward, the company's strategy is to take the business model that has been so successful in China and move it to Southeast Asia as a whole, while developing new partnerships with local firms. "As far as Takamisawa Cybernetics' evolution in the future, developing business overseas is what we are really looking to do," says Mr. Takamisawa. "That isn't limited to coin-handling systems, and we are really excited to build partnerships with local companies overseas. We really want to understand the needs of local markets and the best way to achieve that is through local partnerships."



Automatic ticket vending machine



Providing the world's most advanced mesh technology



By combining existing technologies with unique new discoveries and techniques, NBC is developing new meshes enabling functions unimaginable with conventional mesh solutions.



"Our target is to become a material company contributing to the improvement of the environment as well as the welfare of human beings."

Tetsuya Kaji,
President, NBC Meshtec Inc.

Originally founded in 1934, NBC Meshtec is committed to manufac-

turing products that contribute to sustainable objectives in order to protect the global environment and create a prosperous society. Company president Tetsuya Kaji elaborates.



Weaving machine for high performance mesh

"Our corporate philosophy involves maintaining the quality and trust gained by providing services that are needed by customers, while adapting to what we call society and streamlining our communities."

The advanced mesh technology offered by NBC Meshtec opens up a number of fields.

"For example, our mesh for acoustic products, it can help with the expansion of 5G and 6G markets," explains Mr. Kaji. "Then there are solar panels and hydrogen-related technologies and products for a decarbonized and hydrogen society, and ion-exchange membranes for wastewater treatment and other applications to strengthen environmental protection initiatives."



Solar farm

While growth is expected in the automotive industry, much is also being done for the medical sector.



EV charging station

"Antiviral and antibacterial products from our Cufitec® product range aid in hygiene goals," he says.

With thoughts to the future, Mr. Kaji is focused on profitability, investment and improving the lives of everyone.

"I am confident that our chosen path is the right one, and will benefit the company, our employees, our customers and the planet. When I retire, it will be very satisfying if I can say that NBC Meshtec made a significant contribution to society."



Innovative resin products supporting critical industries

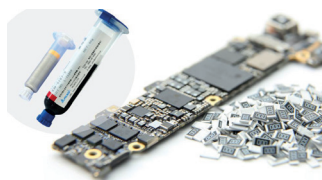
Pelnox's extensive product line is utilized by over 1,000 global firms in diverse fields, from electronics to auto-parts, sports equipment, and daily essentials.

Founded in 1970, Pelnox has leveraged its proprietary technology and know-how for extraordinary growth as a formulator of resin compounds and tailored products.



Power semiconductor modules and automotive devices

In a conversation with company president Yoshihiro Motoki, the company leader points to the strength of the Japanese chemical industry. "The most advanced area is its capability to provide photoresist for semiconductors. Japanese companies dominate with 90% of



Next-generation components

the global market share because they can mass-produce high-purity products with fine synthesis and filtration technology."

The miniaturization trend in electronics has led to a demand for advanced functional chemicals for products such as LCDs, solar cells, OLEDs, and EVs.

"For us, the more types of raw materials we can use, the more we can demonstrate our compounding and mixing technologies," Mr. Motoki explains. "The insulating

materials business has potential for developing new products, while the company is also entering new markets, such as binder materials for CFRP used in rockets."

The shift to electric vehicles is a great opportunity due to the increased number of electronic control unit circuits they need.



Binders for CFRP used in rockets

"Our strength is our ability to provide heat resistant and heat dissipating materials, functioning in extreme temperature environ-



"We have witnessed extraordinary growth as a formulator of resin products tailored to meet the demands of our loyal customers."

Yoshihiro Motoki,
President, Pelnox, Ltd.

ments where our resins don't crack. We are collaborating with major semiconductor module manufacturers to develop resins for use in next-generation semiconductors for EVs."

Growth and profit are clearly part of Pelnox's objective but as Mr. Motoki says: "The passion of our employees to challenge themselves is what matters most."



Sanwa Kako to focus on environmental initiatives

High-mix, low-volume production and flexibility are key strengths Sanwa Kako utilizes to add value to its products.



Head office building

One of the first companies to start manufacturing polyethylene foam, Sanwa Kako was established in 1965 and can call on more than a half century of industry experience.

Among its few thousand different products, perhaps the most famous is SUNPELCA, a chemi-

"If companies elsewhere are interested in our technology, we see potential in providing it in a joint venture."

Norio Yoshida,
President,
SANWA KAKO CO., LTD.



cally cross-linked extra-thick cell foam that has many applications in the civil engineering, construction and IT industries.

However, the chemical sector is changing, and with the Japanese government aiming for total carbon neutrality by 2050, company President Norio Yoshida is looking at ways to

reduce the burden his company places on the environment.

"Our goal," he states, "is a reduction of oil used in production by 80%." Meanwhile, the company is taking several additional steps.

"The first is the thermal recycling of foam that goes to waste, creating a more sustainable energy cycle," Mr. Yoshida continues.



Kickboard



Joint mat

"At the same time we are trying to introduce the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and we have created recycled resin pellets, with these pellets making up 50% of 3R products."

Looking to the future, Sanwa Kako sees high growth potential in both the automotive industry and disaster prevention, and is hoping to build on its existing presence in Vietnam by moving into neighboring countries such as Thailand and Malaysia.

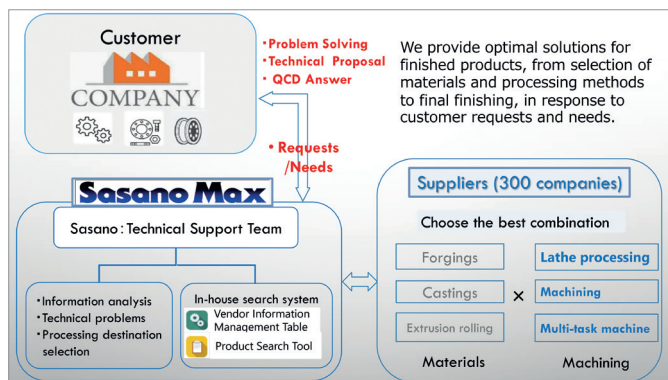
As for Mr. Yoshida, his goals are a little closer to home. "Yearly profit is important, of course, but equally important is raising the next generation so that we can create valuable human resources and a base for sustainable company operations."



<http://en.sanwa-chemi.co.jp>

Sasano looking to bridge gaps in a variety of industries

As a trading firm, Sasano Max is looking to provide quality service and products to its growing clientele.



With non-ferrous metal materials and products, Sasano Max has worked with many different companies across a wide range of industries since its establishment in 1947.

"Our role is to support manufacturing firms so that they can focus on elevating their product

levels," says company president Takihei Sasano.

And while the company continues to focus on the semiconductor and automotive industries, with Japan's aging and declining

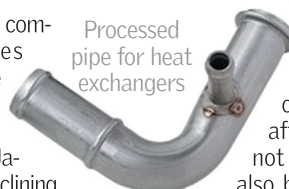
population, Mr. Sasano sees great potential in the field of mobility.

"We, as a trading firm, want to understand and predict market needs, and act as a pioneer in finding solutions by working together with institutions which carry out research and development."

With an established presence in China, Thailand and the U.S.A., meanwhile, Sasano Max is also looking to open additional operational bases in countries such as Mexico and India.

Elsewhere, Mr. Sasano makes no secret of his desire to diversify

the group's supply chain so that it can expand its channels of procurement, with the company having been affected in recent years not only by Covid-19 but also by the increase in cus-



Processed pipe for heat exchangers

"We want to offer and provide the best-matching solution to our clients, and be able to supply the service at a cheaper cost in an efficient way."

Takihei Sasano, President,
Sasano Max Company Limited

toms taxes levied on Chinese products by the Trump administration.

That, along with his goal to increase the percentage of processed parts and component sales to 50%, could add "unique value" to the company and ensure it is trusted and relied upon by clients for many years to come.



www.sasano.co.jp

Coloring the world

Using its unique technologies, Sumika Color is bringing its solutions to new markets.



"We have the expertise to improve the performance of plastic materials."

Toshiro Kojima, President, Sumika Color Co., Ltd.

A chemical solutions company best known for developing its unique palletization technology, Sumika Color was established in 1950 and is an established international presence with bases in China, Taiwan, as well as Japan.

However, as the country faces well-documented demographic is-



New factory

sues, Sumika president Toshiro Kojima is focused on ensuring that the company continues to thrive.

"Going forward," he says, "it's important to look into talent from overseas markets. We also need to use more female workers. In factories, meanwhile, we have to promote digitization and automation using AI."

The latter in particular has the potential to appeal to a younger workforce, for whom the chemical industry has not always been synonymous with innovation.

Also on the agenda according to Mr. Kojima is a new business related to materials derived from biomass and plastics recycling.

"Right now a lot of companies are targeting carbon neutrality," he states. "Biomass plastic is currently weaker and less durable than its petroleum-based counterpart, but we are looking at ways to improve those weaknesses using our technology. If we can achieve that, we can expect the consumption of non-petroleum plastic to increase."



Masterbatch

Given its lower barriers to entry, one potential application for biomass-based plastic is laptops, but in time, Mr. Kojima hopes to expand into the automotive industry, which still represents the company's dominant customer base.



Two-layer pellets

Looking to the future, Mr. Kojima is keen to enhance Sumika's presence in China, with increased capacity in the field of research and development, and a focus on lowering its environmental impact.

With TSMC, the largest manufacturer of semiconductors, currently based in Taiwan, there is potential for Sumika to diversify operations into the semiconductor industry, while the prospect of a technological license agreement with Tah Kong Chemical Industrial Corporation may also present opportunities in neighboring Vietnam.

It is a development that may prove vital in restoring Japan's competitive edge in a chemical industry that accounts for 10% of the country's GDP.

SUMIKA COLOR
www.sumikacolor.co.jp

Special steel: the backbone of Japan's *monozukuri* might

"It is said that special steel gives rise to Japanese industries, and we see this as key," says NSSI president Yoichiro Nakagawa.



Head office in Tsukiji, Tokyo

Established in 1924, NAKAGAWA SPECIAL STEEL INC. (NSSI) has been supporting Japan's industrial development as a reputed trader of special steel for almost a century. With a long-established network of partner companies and a long-standing, stable supply chain, today the company provides the special steel to support the growth of new industries and technologies both in Japan and beyond.

Speaking about NSSI's role as a trading firm within the Japanese manufacturing ecosystem, president Yoichiro Nakagawa stresses the importance of QCD – quality, cost, delivery. "Of course, steel manufacturers conduct QCD, but we complement and enhance it. It can be said that this is the value of NSSI."

Steel produced by steel manufacturers is delivered to clients in the automobile, construction machinery, and industrial equipment industries through multiple supply chains made up of companies engaged in secondary processing, tertiary processing, parts, and assembly.



Tennoz Central Tower in Tennoz Isle, Tokyo

"Special steel trading companies such as NSSI have entered these long and complicated supply chains next to steel manufacturers, with the specialized trading companies grasping the QCD required by customers and being able to provide supply-chain SMEs with details or even make adjustments of various

requirements to satisfy final users' QCD needs. As a result, we believe that good supply chains where trading companies such as ours are located lead to good manufacturing and excellent *monozukuri* (manufacturing craftsmanship)."

As a very basic material, special steel has applications in various new industries, including electric vehicles, renewable energy, and 5G-related products. "We are going into those markets and many of our customers are also focusing their attention on these markets moving forward," adds Mr. Nakagawa.



Founder of NSSI (second from left)

Looking to the future and beyond its imminent 100th an-

niversary, NSSI – which is also engaged in warehousing, steel processing and the urban development real estate business – aims to strengthen its global presence,



Factory in Chonburi City, Thailand

particularly in the U.S., Mexico, India and Southeast Asia, where it has already played a notable role in supporting industrial development. "In Southeast Asia since there are existing supply chains of special steel including those built by NSSI for automotive industries, there is space for growth and improvement for our company."

NSSI
NAKAGAWA SPECIAL STEEL INC.
www.nssiglb.com

Bubble time for that sparkling shine

As Japan's oldest vehicle washing machine manufacturer, JCW knows a thing or two about removing grime to really make vehicles shine.



Bus wash (Kuala Lumpur)

A vehicle can be transformed by the sparkle from a wash, and that goes from the smallest car to a full-length train. Japanese firm JCW Nihon Sharyou Senjouki has been providing sparkling cleanliness through its washing machines for vehicles since 1957 and continues to expand its reach.

The Japanese firm designed, manufactured, and sold the first



"Our company's credo is to always surprise our customers and to bring them happiness."

Naohiro Masuda,
President & CEO,
JCW Co., Ltd.

automobile washing machine in Japan and has remained at the forefront of the industry ever since. Company president Naohiro Masuda says JCW focuses on the client's objectives when developing new technology. This is seen in its development of solutions suitable for the extreme temperatures of Japan's Hokkaido island, where

machines have to be able to function at -30°C.

JCW's environmental credentials are strong, with a system that recycles 100% of the water used in washing trains for railway companies. This type of innovation has enabled the company to expand into India, where it is working on the country's high-speed train system through its base in New Delhi.



High-speed rail cleaning (Taiwan)



Bearing cleaning (Tokyo)

JCW has also established a base in Indonesia, which – much like India – is in the process of developing its infrastructure for transportation. As such, the company is on the lookout for similarly-minded companies with local knowledge to partner with. As JCW approaches its 70th anniversary, Mr. Masuda hopes the company will develop into a global leader of not only washing machines, but overall washing technology.



www.ns-jcw.co.jp/en

The go-to partner for aerospace manufacturers



"Our three core activities are to procure items, to manufacture items, and to introduce new machines to the Japanese market."

Tadaaki Nakaji, President,
Nakano Aviation Co., Ltd.

A firm with a track record of providing customers with optimum solutions, Nakano Aviation is a specialist Japanese importer and exporter of parts, materials and equipment for aerospace manufacturers.

Founded in 1990, the Nagoya-based trading company chiefly acts as a bridge between Japanese clients and overseas sup-

A Japanese trading company specializing in importing aerospace products, Nakano Aviation offers expertise that makes its clients' lives a whole lot easier.

pliers, with a focus on imports from the United States. Indeed, Nakano's key relationship with the U.S. led it to establish an office in California shortly after launching.



Master schedule

Nakano offers its clients a comprehensive service that goes beyond simply supplying products, says President Tadaaki Nakaji. "The role of the trading company isn't just procurement," he explains. "We also need to propose the best and most efficient use of the procured items to our customers."

"For the client, it's not as easy as just purchasing the raw materials and then producing products. You need to know how to use



Rack Assy

the products you purchase. You may also need to learn about the installation and set-up of those products. When working directly with suppliers, you need to take care of all this – but if you use a trading company, it can take care of those processes for you."

Working for contractors to companies such as Boeing, Nakano also oversees the produc-

tion of aerospace parts manufactured by subcontractors, who are known in the industry as 'backshops'. The firm manages the manufacturing process – from planning, to execution, to QA – and its trusted partners produce the items.



Machining

"We procure the materials," Mr. Nakaji says, "and if we also take care of the backshops, it's so much easier for our clients."



Pioneering the future with technology and trust

MetalTech continues to provide customers with high-quality products by utilizing its unique technology, with this year marking the 100th anniversary of its founding.



Thai MetalTech Co., Ltd. (Thailand)

With a century of experience, MetalTech is one of Japan's leading manufacturers responsible for the design and manufacture of automotive parts with quality production at its core. The company's president, Ryuichi Yajima, understands the core strengths and challenges across the domestic industry, and how his organization can best contribute, driven from a positive work environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

"The basis of manufacturing lies in people," he says. "We are working together to create products of better quality and solve problems. There is unwavering trust and harmony."

"We provide our employees with a better working environment and

must show our employees a more attractive way of doing work, giving them a broader perspective and helping them feel a sense of achievement."

This sense of purpose and fulfillment in one's work is key to the president's vision.

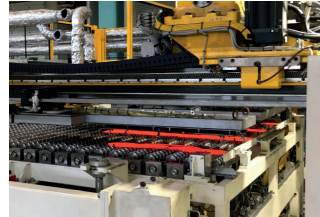


Hot stamping press in Okayama plant

"In reality, if they are motivated and have the ability to make proposals, our company will let them take on challenges."

Regarding overseas workers, MetalTech has close links to Thailand, where the company has subsidiaries.

"Our trainees from Thailand enhance their skills and become certified in Japan. Then they can



Material heat process

work in Thailand, and get involved in quality assurance, engineering and even management."

As with a number of industries, the switch to EVs and next-generation vehicles is having an impact on MetalTech, and the company sees this as an opportunity to meet the changing demands of the market.

"We have introduced new technologies, such as a hot stamping press to produce high-strength steel for lighter bodies, an ultrasonic measuring instrument to check the strength and quality of welding, and inspection automation, to achieve stable high quality."



"Our important mission is to manufacture products with equipment that can ensure quality that exceeds the expectations of our customers and to provide them at a reasonable price."

Ryuichi Yajima, President, MetalTech Co., Ltd.

"Though it will not be easy, we aspire to achieve things that are beyond what we are doing now," Mr. Yajima concludes.



<https://metaltech-ltd.jp>

Pursuing a circular society through automobile recycling

With over five decades' experience and accumulated data to match, Kaiho Industry is seeking to establish alliances in order to boost car recycling worldwide.

A company that is focused on recycling and reusing auto parts, Kaiho Industry is an established international name which has developed an enviable network of alliances since its founding in 1969.



Recycling education program

Known domestically for introducing the Japan Reuse Standard (JRS), a five-level assessment to check the quality of used engines, Kaiho has also been behind initiatives such as the RUM alliance and Recycling Education Center.

More recently, its Kaiho Recyclers Alliance (KRA) system, which encompasses some 88 companies domestically, has helped facilitate the smooth transaction of used cars. KRA was created to provide



"Right now our goal is to make used car transactions more transparent and fairer at both ends."

Takayuki Kondo, President, Kaiho Industry Co., Ltd.

greater transparency in domestic and overseas recycling services, as well as knowledge and training on recycling itself.

Recycling used car parts can be problematic, particularly in an international context.

As company president Takayuki Kondo explains: "The same Toyota Corolla model might require different parts

depending on whether it was manufactured in, say, Japan or Thailand."

Kaiho, however, knows right away what is needed by the buyer, thanks to a digital database that ensures it can provide its service to the international market.

Having recently scooped the Forbes Small Giant Award, Mr. Kondo makes no secret of what drives him. "My



Used engine warehouse

biggest goal," he says, "is to create a world that is cosmopolitan, which means that people are inhabitants of the earth, not a specific country or nation. The earth is an entity that is not owned by anyone."



Technical training for Malaysian government officers

How will he achieve his goal? By continuing to emphasize that giving to others is far more powerful than focusing on personal gain.



KAIHO
INDUSTRY CO., LTD.

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Toyo Trading: the young company with a big future

While only 12 years since its establishment, Toyo Trading is bringing the 'Made in Japan' brand to overseas markets.



Industrial machinery parts

Established in 2011, Toyo Trading has been demonstrating its know-how in conventional rubber products, providing overseas manufacturing, while striving to reshape some conventional perceptions.

"There are three things we insist on in our operations to maintain our high level of quality," explains company president Yoshie Yumoto. "Clear communication, a hands-on approach, and on-site inspection tours for our clients."

"As we've seen companies from all over the world expand into China, there has been a marked improvement in the level of expertise there and in the quality of Chinese products."

"It is important for us to continuously make efforts for improvement and develop new products with added value."

Yoshie Yumoto,
President,
Toyo Trading Co., Ltd.



With an objective to export that recognized 'Made in Japan' caliber, Ms. Yumoto focuses on the company's advantages. "Our greatest strength is providing high-quality products in small lots and in a short time. We ship using our consolidation scheme which serves as a one-stop shop for multiple customers. Despite recent price rises in raw material and transportation costs, we minimize the knock-on impact to remain competitive with no drop in quality."



Auxiliary parts for home appliances

"We are working on the development of new products with environmental issues in mind, linked to Japan's carbon neutrality goals," the president says. "We plan to exhibit various items at the IPF and aim to build new partnerships to target new markets together."

By the time we reach the company's 20th anniversary, Ms. Yumoto is confident that Toyo will have flourished as it contributes even more to society."



Home appliance parts

"We've already grown as a developer and manufacturer of key functional components that support automobiles, which are indispensable to our daily lives, as well as industrial machinery, rolling stock, ships, and home appliances," she says. "What we want to do now is to enter a new field, the EV automobile industry, and expand our production bases in Southeast Asia. With our broader client base, we want to take care of each customer and grow further."

TOYO TRADING
BEST PRICE, BEST QUALITY & SPEED DELIVERY
<https://toyotrading.co.jp>

The plating experts guided by a firm commitment to sustainability

A company that looks beyond the short term, OM Sangyo boasts state-of-the-art surface-treatment technologies that can respond to the needs of a host of industries.



Partial plating on glass

The OM Group has an 80-year history and is divided into three main business segments: first, manufacturing and sales of automotive parts; second, manufacturing and sales of office products (OA floors, free access floors, etc.) and welfare equipment, as well as metal and plastic 3D printer-based manufacturing; and third, surface treatment (mainly metal plating). OM Sangyo is responsible for the surface treatment business of the group.



"We focus on the sustainable growth of our employees and technology, and securing the continuity of the business."

Keitaro Namba, President,
OM Sangyo Co., Ltd.

OM Sangyo is engaged in "functional plating," which imparts or enhances functions such as heat resistance, wear resistance, and electrical conductivity. The company is also taking on the challenge of enabling plating on materials that are difficult to plate, such as ceramics, carbon, and glass.

The company is committed to continuous technological improvement – a drive that led it to establish

its Surface Finishing Institute, a dedicated R&D facility, in 2013.

"We can move forward as long as we keep pursuing innovation," says President Keitaro Namba.

Having opened a Thai subsidiary in 2015, OM Sangyo is also eyeing advancement in the form of international growth.

However, Mr. Namba stresses that OM Sangyo's pursuit of progress is centered on the long-term devel-



Support for employees to obtain PhDs



R&D in new technologies for surface treatment

opment of the company and its workforce, rather than chasing short-term gains: "We focus on the sustainable growth of our employees and technology, and securing the continuity of the business."

"We want our employees to be happy and enjoy working with us. We've helped some to obtain PhDs. This doesn't directly contribute to enhancing our technology, but it's a good motivator. We want to be a company where both people and technology can grow sustainably."



www.oms.co.jp/en

A multi-functional trading firm shaped by over 100 years of experience



"We coordinate and work closely with our customers, providing the engineering services and sales for their casting products."

Soichiro Kusano,
President & CEO,
Kusano Co., Ltd.

Kusano is a trading company that specializes in foundry raw materials, but its range of services has expanded during its 109-year history. "We used to just sell raw materials, but we now coordinate

Specializing in iron and steel, Kusano not only offers raw materials for the casting industry, but continues to expand its business to meet the demands of its diverse customers.

and work closely with our customers," says President and CEO Soichiro Kusano. "We offer them engineering services along with



Casting product

machinery sales to ensure optimum efficiency, as well as focusing on coordinating the sales of our customer's casting products."

Continuing to evolve its product portfolio is part of Kusano's mid-term strategy, which has several goals. "The first is to develop human resources for the next 100 years," Mr. Kusano

reveals. "The second is to focus on niche products. They're important: it's hard to compete with bigger companies on mainstream products. The third is aggressive investment. We're looking at M&As in transportation and engineering. We also want to focus on steel scrap given it's in demand and aligns with the goal of carbon neutrality."



Market map

A firm committed to the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals, Kusano has a major role to play

in a greener future. "Many companies understand they need to make changes, but don't know how. Trading companies are key to assisting them, by advising them on which sectors and markets are best for their business."

Kusano's mid-term plan also includes strengthening its presence abroad, where it has Chinese, Indonesian and Vietnamese subsidiaries. "We're focused on Asia, which has growing markets due to its growing population," Mr. Kusano says.



Rice resin file on which sectors and markets are best for their business."

 **草野産業株式会社**
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The next generation of filter paper products

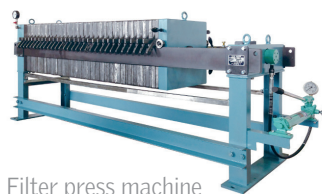


"Our company excels at high performance and making multi-layer papers."

Satoru Azumi,
President,
Azumi Filter Paper Co., Ltd.

Founded just over a century ago in 1919, Azumi Filter specializes in the manufacture of filter

With many high-quality products used in a range of industries, Azumi Filter is ensuring that filter paper is being taken to the next level.



Filter press machine

paper, as well as other filter products and functional papers.

A major sector Azumi works with is the automobile industry, which accounts for 30% of its business – but the company is keen to avoid becoming over-dependent on a single field, says president Satoru Azumi: "The automobile industry continues to be an important sector for us, but we should not fully rely on it, and our slogan for the past ten years has been that we should commit to other industries."

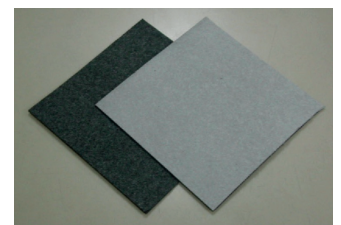
For example, the Covid-19 pandemic has led Azumi to make inroads into the medical sector.

"Our filter paper has been used in Covid test kits," Mr. Azumi reveals. "Especially in places



Heat and moisture exchanger (HME)

where there have been shortages of medical resources such as ventilators, the pandemic demonstrated Japanese society's overreliance on imports. We now realize that we need to build a solid supply chain to produce these products at home.



Two-layer filter paper

We will start the production and sales of ventilator filters soon."

Around 30% of Azumi's sales are international – and as Japan's aging population declines, continued global expansion is a chief way for the company to counteract a fall in domestic demand, Mr. Azumi says. "Europe and Asia have the most potential for us," he notes.



www.azumi-filter.co.jp/en