

NAGAOKA's Precision Engineering Journey: From Vinyl to Semiconductors and Beyond



"I remain committed to running NAGAOKA and creating products that resonate with people."

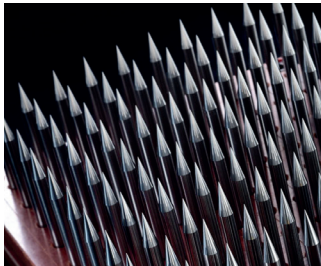
Kae Nagaoka, President, NAGAOKA Co., Ltd.

Founded in 1940, NAGAOKA has established itself as one of Japanese industry's hidden champions, harnessing its expertise in precision manufacturing to create small parts and components that are nevertheless indispensable to a range of everyday technologies.

A trusted supplier to the vinyl record industry since the late 1940s – specializing in world-class turntable needles and cartridges – NAGAOKA has successfully branched out in recent decades, applying its know-how to new fields.



Diamond and Gemstone Machining



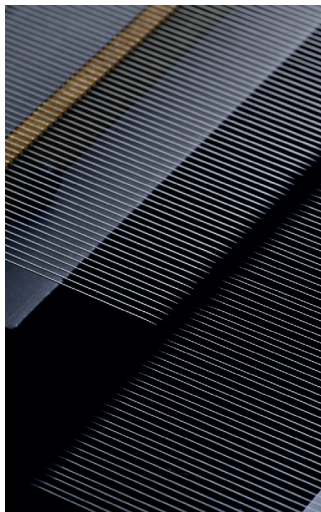
Ultrahard Alloy Machining

The firm began life as a partner to watchmakers, manufacturing bearings out of precious stones such as rubies and sapphires. It then moved into record needle production, achieving a landmark feat

Since it was founded 83 years ago, the Japanese company has found success by allying best-in-class manufacturing technology with an ability to adapt to an evolving market.

when it created the technology required to craft diamond-bonded styli – a first for Japan.

Following the emergence of CDs in the early 1980s, demand for vinyl fell; however, it has experienced a resurgence in recent



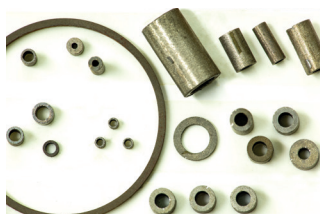
Probe Stylus

years. Although such products no longer account for 90% of NAGAOKA's sales, the company maintains an extensive line-up of record needles and cartridges, led by its flagship MP series.

Under NAGAOKA's growing variety of brand names – including the product lines NAGAOKA, Jeweltone, Movio, and Lusvy – the manufacturer also sells high-quality vinyl accessories such as stylus cleaning products and record stabilizers. What's more, it supplies state-of-the-art headphones and speakers.

While NAGAOKA remains committed to vinyl, the medium's departure as music's dominant listening format 40 years ago left the company in no doubt: it needed to diversify. Since 1990, the firm has set about applying the knowledge it has gained throughout its long history to new, in-demand fields.

Capitalizing on its experience as a specialist record needle producer, for example, NAGAOKA has become a go-to maker of probe needles for inspecting silicone wafers, a key part of the semi-



Magnetic Parts Machining

conductor manufacturing process. Given semiconductors' importance to today's society – they are found in a wide range of electronic devices, such as smartphones, tablets, computers and EVs – demand for NAGAOKA's probe needles is proving stronger than ever.

In addition, the company now applies its precision-machining expertise to producing the small magnetic parts that, like semiconductors, are crucial, sought-after components of widely-bought electronics. NAGAOKA's magnets, which come in a number of shapes and sizes, are also used by various manufacturers.

NAGAOKA not only boasts a product portfolio that is testament to the company's ability to keep pace with a changing market; it also ensures that its manufacturing technology is constantly evolving. The firm's innovative in-house machining equipment yields leading-edge products which, rightly, are acclaimed by its customers. For instance, NAGAOKA is now capable of making semiconductor probe needles whose diameter is as small as 0.07mm.

Furthermore, an exacting inspection process carried out at every stage of manufacturing leads to a product defect rate that is less than 1%.



Record Cartridge MP-Series

As the success of NAGAOKA's expansion into niche industrial products grows, the company's international ambitions are also on

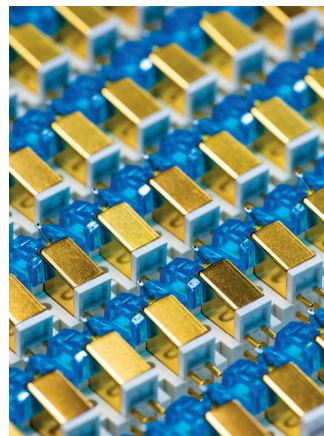
the rise. While the manufacturer already sells products outside of Japan – for example, the MP series and their new JT-80 series have a healthy global market share – it is out to increase its overseas presence across its business areas.

Indeed, NAGAOKA is currently working to promote its products in over 50 countries around the planet, focusing on regions such as Europe, including Germany, France, and the United Kingdom, as well as



Record Cartridge JT-80 Series

the Americas. "Our goal is to contribute to the world," the company president Kae Nagaoka says. "We will continue to refine our technology and create products that are useful in daily life."



DJ Cartridges

"For many years, NAGAOKA has supported the record culture by continuing to supply needles even when vinyl records saw a decrease in popularity. As we aim to celebrate our 100th anniversary, we will continue to be a company that is beloved by the world."

NAGAOKA

www.nagaoka.co.jp



Innovative approaches to manufacturing and aerospace



"Our patented technology solutions support our customers to reduce manpower and material waste, helping to significantly improve their manufacturing, securing uniformity in quality."

Osamu Mizoguchi,
President, Kaga Sangyo Ltd.

Founded half a century ago, Kaga Sangyo has had to take an innovative approach to achieve success.

"Japanese firms struggle to penetrate other markets because of cost-reduction from other local companies," President Osamu Mizoguchi says, highlighting their unique strategy.

From helmets to aerospace, Kaga Sangyo has been recognized at the local, national and international level for its relentless pursuit of excellence to provide for its customers.



Aerospace sample products

"We devised a quality, cost, and delivery (QCD) formula, and continuously implement kaizen actions," Mr. Mizoguchi explains. "By combining our manufacturing and engineering skills with the suppliers on our platform, we created a winning solution for customers."

Take the award-winning helmet called "Osamet" with its compact and collapsible design for efficient storage. Used for emergency situations and disasters, it complies with Japanese National Standards. The company also acquired SBT

certification and is planning and promoting strategic initiatives to realize a carbon-neutral society.

Then there's the opportunity of the aerospace industry, and a readiness to adapt to new energy sources like hydrogen or electricity.

"When this change happens, there will be a need for a revised supply chain," Mr. Mizoguchi explains, "with new suppliers needing better matched solutions."

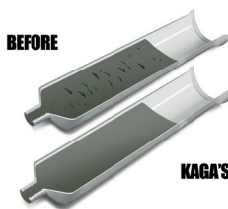
pany's supplier chain network is its unique manufacturing strategy reaching across different parts/products and various industries.

With this outlook, growth abroad is a natural next step and the president makes future plans clear.



Disaster prevention helmet Osamet

"Global expansion is crucial and we want our company to be an indispensable part of the global supply chain," he says. "Kaga Sangyo's coverage provides solutions for domestic and overseas customers alike."



Agitating & defoaming technology

To achieve this, proactivity, continual improvement and exceeding customer expectations is key, while the com-



3D SHIM



www.kagasangyo.co.jp/en

Hatsuta Kakusanki: Steering through challenges with time-honored expertise

From supply chain disruptions to an aging workforce, the President of Hatsuta Kakusanki discusses the company's innovative strategies and long-standing commitment to quality in the ever-evolving manufacturing landscape.



HDS1

It's sometimes said that in Japanese manufacturing, tradition meets innovation, and Hatsuta Kakusanki, part of the Hatsuta Group, has been crafting excellence for over a century, and acknowledges how supply diversification is vital.

"Once we can acquire the engine parts and related components, we



"As part of the 120-year-old Hatsuta Group, we're committed to passing on our traditions, technology, and spirit of embracing challenges to future generations."

Minoru Hatsuda, President, Hatsuta Kakusanki Co., Ltd.

can promptly resume production and fulfill numerous orders," company president Minoru Hatsuda explains, highlighting how the COVID pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in procurement, both for Japanese and U.S. companies.

Given that it is heavily reliant on overseas parts, currency fluctuations impact the business, with a weakened Japanese yen presenting unique opportunities but also challenges. Another influencing factor is Japan's demo-

graphic shift prompting the integration of Vietnamese workers and special programs for younger generations.

From now on, we believe that by leveraging the group's synergies, including product collaboration, information exchange, and worker fulfillment, we can develop new products and solve other problems that are difficult for us to cut through on our own.

Eyes are now on Southeast Asia, Europe, and Australia



HS806U

for global growth opportunities. And innovative products like the HDS1, showcase commitment to R&D. Mr. Hatsuda envisions a future focused on these overseas markets but adapting products to local standards. To enhance this growth, partnerships with local companies offering technical support is sought.

As Hatsuta Kakusanki continues its legacy, the president shares his ultimate goal. "Given our extensive history, we believe it's important to pass on our traditions, technology, and spirit of embracing challenges to the generations that will follow."



<https://hatsuta-ksk.co.jp/en>



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Nagata: innovation through human connection

Placing emphasis on human relationships, D.Nagata believes that has been the core of its success.

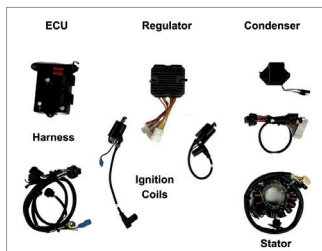


"I believe the key to successful international business lies in finding reliable partners in overseas markets. You need to find a person to work with that you can trust."

Yosuke Nagata, President,
D.Nagata Co., Ltd.

D.Nagata has defied the trends of corporate consolidation, preserving the company's independence while achieving remarkable success in the international market.

"In the 1980s, our company handled between 100 and 200 items," explains company president



Special engine components

Yosuke Nagata. "I then decided to concentrate on specific areas and discontinue our business in others."

This bold move led to specialization in the engine industry, manufacturing key components and engaging in joint development with American companies. And this niche focus has been pivotal to the success.

The company's long-standing partnership with American firms is a standout feature and the collaboration began during a business trip by Mr. Nagata focused on setting up dealers for their products. Over the years, this partnership has grown, anchored in trust and shared values.

While electric vehicles dominate headlines, D.Nagata remains committed to traditional engine technology, with the U.S. continuing to develop new engines, catering to American preferences.

"I respect this approach which aligns with their culture and preferences," says Mr. Nagata, who is a firm believer in hard work and reliability also being the cornerstones of their international collaborations in European and Middle Eastern markets.



Nagata Technology Inc.,
(Chicago, ILL, USA)

The defense industry is another area where D.Nagata plays a crucial role, supplying components for equipment. And considering the current macroeconomic situation, Mr. Nagata agrees that Japan has a unique opportunity due to supply



Defense business

chain disruptions and geopolitical tensions, reorganizing and strengthening ties with the U.S. and Europe.

Taking advantage of being a smaller firm, the company's teams are dedicated to providing customer-oriented products, and employees are encouraged to continuously develop unique products.

"My goal is for our company to preserve the same philosophy we hold today," says Mr. Nagata. "My aim is for us to remain something different and innovative."



D. NAGATA CO., LTD.

www.d-nagata.co.jp

Shoko Tech: Quality, collaboration and growth

Shoko Tech's global mindset is focused on sustaining quality through skilled employees and a resolute commitment to customer satisfaction.

With numerous regional challenges and a tumultuous period following the Lehman shock in 2008 when global markets faced pricing pressures, Shoko Tech kept its eyes open.

"The only way to sustain business and get out of this situation was to localize production overseas," company president Hiroshi Okamoto explains, a decision that enabled it to maintain high-quality standards while staying competitive.

Shoko Tech's success in China, with 220 employees, showcases the company's unique perspective and ability to retain human capital.



Shoko Tech Products

"Without people, we would not be able to maintain these high levels of quality," the president says, highlighting the importance of skilled employees for competitiveness, while acknowledging the changing dynamics, with SMEs now facing challenges in overseas production due to logistical complexities, costs, and geopolitical risks. The broader trend has seen companies reconsidering their manufacturing locations with a focus on domestic production.

A core principle of Shoko Tech has been its unwavering commitment to its customers, and sometimes it's not what you say but what's behind it that counts.

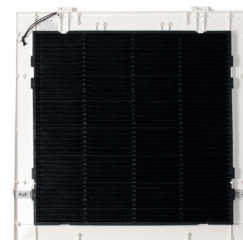
"We don't actually need to use our words, rather the scientific data is able to persuade our customers,"

Mr. Okamoto says, reflecting on Nara University research that supported the Smart Nanofilter's credibility. Collaboration with medical institutions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic ensured various rigorous safety hurdles were overcome.

The electric vehicle (EV) battery market has also been a significant opportunity, providing cables and harnesses, with partnerships already in place to supply Tesla's Gigafactory. And further collaboration with overseas companies, particularly in the field of cables and wires, is being looked at, aligning the company's direction towards the EV battery market and battery storage units.

While Shoko Tech has strong distribution channels, via a trading company in Japan, India remains a

promising market in the short term, with the president pointing to a potential link-up with Mitsubishi Denki, further indicating the company's global expansion ambitions.



Smart Nano Filter

In five years, Mr. Okamoto's goal is clear: to ensure employees understand their role in the company's 20% year-on-year profit growth, suggesting a bright future ahead.

"We really treasure our human capital and we treasure the performance of our employees."

SK 昭興テック 株式会社
www.shoko-k.co.jp



Wire Harness



Suntech: Bridging boundaries, innovating and driving sustainable global solutions

Suntech has gained valuable insights into the ever-evolving industrial landscape of Japan and further afield over recent decades. The company's focus on technology resonates well with its customer base, which includes governmental entities.

"Coordinating production processes overseas presents intricate challenges," says Suntech president Hiromi Aoki, "prompting us to employ an innovative real-time monitoring solution known as Smart Glass."

Suntech remains committed to international growth. And the president's vision for the company's role in sustainability and innovation is evident with its involvement in the Course 50 project, which aims to revolutionize the steel industry.

"Our collaboration with major Japanese iron steel makers, has resulted in the development of the world's first facility capable of raising hydrogen to tempera-

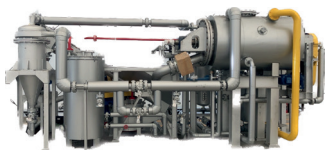
"Successful implementation of our technology would lead to a transformation in the Carbon Neutral Era."

Hiromi Aoki,
President, Suntech Co., Ltd.
<https://suntech.link>



tures to 1100°C," he explains, adding that this technology could reduce CO₂ emissions significantly.

A mini-plant machine which turns food waste into eco-feed for livestock or organic fertilizer, implemented through RE-SOUXIA, a joint venture between Suntech and ECO Stage Engineering, the D-Cocotte is also part of the company's commitment to working against food



D-Cocotte

waste, which is of huge importance to the future of Suntech.

Mr. Aoki expresses his excitement about the upcoming launch of several of his projects in ASEAN countries on the 50th anniversary of the ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. "I aim to forge a path that harmonizes business

growth with environmental stewardship by implementing innovative solutions for the significant



Suntech members inside the factory challenges in Asia and Africa," he adds. "As chairman of the international business committee of the Young Entrepreneurs Group (YEG) of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, I want to establish collaboration with young entrepreneur groups in other countries."



Suntech learning center

Supplying essential products and services with dedication: Nissho Sangyo's remarkable journey

Starting from medical paper cups to KFC Japan take-out packaging, Nissho Sangyo has proven itself to be an 'Essential Supplier' throughout its history.

Established in 1966, Nissho Sangyo initially introduced single-use urine test paper cups to medical institutions across Japan. Subsequently, following the Osaka Expo in 1970, the company expanded its scope by providing one-way packaging materials to facilitate the launch of KFC in Japan. Both the medical and KFC segments adopted niche strategies, concentrating on disposable items such as single-use medical equipment and one-way food packaging.

"The KFC venture gradually transformed us into a 'Total Supplier', managing essential materials for KFC outlets and ensuring meticulous store deliveries to keep pace with the rapid expansion of the chain," says Akihiko Sakata, President & CEO of Nissho Sangyo Co., Ltd.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Nissho's successful model was applied to other restaurant chains, further fueling its growth. Then, at



"Our core strengths stem from being an 'Essential Supplier', integral to the needs of both our customers and society."

Akihiko Sakata,
President & CEO,
Nissho Sangyo Co., Ltd.

the turn of the millennium, Nissho embarked on a revitalization of its medical business by venturing into the production of its own brand of disposable products through a fab-less approach.

"Following this, we leveraged our extensive delivery network to cater to the bulk purchasing and store delivery needs of a prominent pachinko chain in Japan," explains Mr. Sakata. "Throughout

our extensive history, Nissho has fostered unique growth across a diverse range of businesses, positioning ourselves as one of Japan's most accomplished mid-sized enterprises. Rooted in the company's founding philosophy, we have also now shifted Nissho to become an 'Essential Supplier' thanks to significant support from all stakeholders."

Mr. Sakata links the company's long-standing success to dispos-

ables, strong supply capabilities and reliable logistics. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, he also identified the need to wholeheartedly aid essential workers. Looking ahead, he envisions Nissho's role as that of an environmentally conscious entity.

"It's important for organizations such as ours to learn from like-minded organizations that develop cutting-edge technologies for environmentally friendly products, particularly in the realm of disposable products, such as those that are renewable, (bio)degradable, and compostable," Mr. Sakata says. "As Nissho Sangyo embarks on this mission, we strive to combine our dedication to essential services with an unwavering commitment to a more sustainable world."



ALTECO: Global expansion through adhesive solutions

In the world of adhesives, ALTECO emerges as a global force, pioneering innovation and expanding horizons.



"ALTECO's success can be attributed to our frontier spirit and our ability to overcome challenges."

Reo Tanaka,
President, ALTECO Inc.

As it navigates new challenges and opportunities, adhesive company ALTECO is focused on expanding its presence overseas and also targeting products tailored for the electric vehicle (EV) market.

"Despite being an SME, ALTECO Group has vast experience in establishing physical operations in many countries, including Japan, the

U.S.A., Singapore, China, Indonesia, Korea and Ghana. ALTECO Chemical Pte. Ltd. in Singapore has been instrumental in our success in Asia,



the Middle East and Africa. Their natural unique expertise has facilitated our expansion and networking efforts in those regions," says Reo Tanaka, President of ALTECO.

"Having a physical presence in these regions enhances our knowledge of their business and culture. It gives us direct access to end-users and allows us to speedily adjust to their needs – hence, opening up more business opportunities."

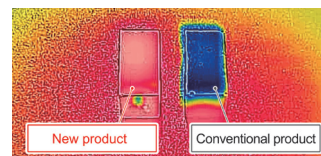
"None of our products contain volatile organic compounds that contrib-

ute to air pollution or have harmful effects on human health," adds Mr. Tanaka, explaining that the adhesives utilize natural elements for curing, eliminating the need for additional heat or energy. Almost all of the products are customized, especially when it comes to automotive applications that have stringent performance requirements.

ALTECO is on track to deepen its hold in the automotive industry. Automotive industry applications are not new to the company, having served many big names for decades, and the brand is well recognized and trusted in this industry. As the automotive industry shifts towards EVs, ALTECO has developed innovative adhesive solutions. "We can provide suitable anaerobic adhesives for motor shafts, motor cores, and so on. We believe these products will be of interest to EV manufacturers," says the president.

Additionally, ALTECO launched a new instant glue

with high heat and water resistance and light-curable instant glue which cures rapidly with UV light. "One of our new products, which is two-part epoxy resin adhesive, is a heat radiation adhesive without the need for additional production equipment. It can mitigate the damage of heat, as thermography shows," adds Mr. Tanaka.



Mr. Tanaka envisions ALTECO's future as a versatile adhesive company catering to both consumer and industrial applications. "To achieve our goal, we must consider all options and adopt effective measures," he concludes.

ALTECO
www.alteco.co.jp/en

Sanshin Manufacturing's balanced journey to excellence

Adding technical expertise to a management philosophy of togetherness, trust and collaboration between employees, moves all aspects in the right direction, and a hidden champion emerges.



In the era of globalization, Japanese firms face fierce competition from regional rivals, with the likes of China, Taiwan, and Korea mirroring production methods at a fraction of the cost. But some Japanese manufacturers continue to thrive in niche B2B sectors.

"We learned from our regional competitors who understand that 'good enough' can sometimes be superior," says Motohiro Yaji, the President of Sanshin Manufacturing. Once dominating the cathode-ray tube market, shifting



"We always aim to maintain a good balance between the QCD elements; those being quality, cost, and delivery."

Motohiro Yaji, President, Sanshin Manufacturing Co. Ltd.

global dynamics forced a reevaluation of the approach.

With supply chain disruptions, Sanshin sees an opportunity where reliability, trustworthiness, and short lead times can address the demands of today's macro-

economic landscape. However, he remains cautious about a resurgence of manufacturing within Japan.



Mr. Yaji is, however, optimistic about overseas expansion, particularly in Southeast Asia, with quality management the linchpin of success in Thailand. Fostering teamwork and a culture of continuous improvement aligns with local values, enhancing both quality and morale.

Sanshin's future plans include moving further into sheet metal



work, capitalizing on urban development trends in Thailand, and gearing up for final product assembly.

"We are willing to consider a third contribution if they are willing to cooperate with us in our overseas business," says Mr. Yaji, highlighting India, Mexico and Africa as examples. And despite expansion, a commitment to local business remains steadfast.

As the company's 80th anniversary approaches, the president is already looking forward to celebrating 100 years, guided by the principles of "happy employees, growing and succeeding."

Sanshin
Quick & Flexible
www.sanshin-mtg.co.jp/english



Since 1891 - Yukawa Iron Casting Works Co., Ltd. (Wakayama - City, Japan)
 Since 1995 - Xinxiang Yukawa Precision Machine & Metal Co., Ltd. (China)



"Our company has attained such impressive longevity because we've stayed small and successfully transformed our business according to the current demands."

Yoshiharu Yukawa,
 President, Yukawa Iron Casting Works Co., Ltd.

Yukawa Iron Casting Works: Crafting quality, embracing evolution

A century-old company that specializes in first-class cast-iron products, Yukawa has flourished thanks to its ability to move with the times.

A Japanese company boasting over 130 years of history, Yukawa Iron Casting Works specializes in crafting premium-quality cast-iron products used by manufacturers in a variety of industries. Following a high-mix-low-volume business model, the Wakayama-based firm provides a bespoke service to every customer.

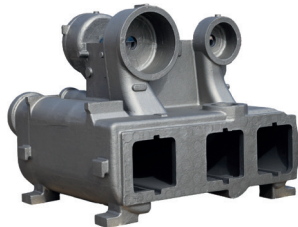
"All our products are customized to the specific needs of our clients," says Yukawa's president, Yoshiharu Yukawa. "This means that casting products designed for one company cannot be sold to another. Given the unique requirements and preferences of different customers, our strategy revolves around serving a diverse range of companies with varying needs."

Yukawa's shift to niche products was a crucial point in the company's evolution. "About 50 years ago, our competitors had garnered a majority share of the casting industry, prompting us to contemplate how to differentiate ourselves," Mr. Yukawa recalls. "This led us to focus on specialized casting products, often produced in smaller lots.

Yukawa's exceptional longevity is also a testament to the firm's ability to consistently meet the best-in-class quality demands of its portfolio of prestigious customers – a line-up that includes titans of industry such as MAZAK, FANUC, IHI, KOBELCO, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, and Toshiba Mitsubishi-Electric Industrial Systems Corp.

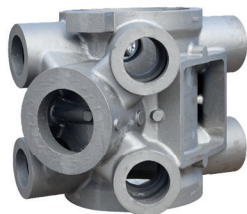
"Many of our business partners are larger companies that impose rigorous standards and requests," Mr. Yukawa says. "Overcoming these challenges has been a valuable learning experience. We've managed to advance our technological capabilities to not only meet our clients' demands, but go beyond them. Interacting solely with companies that have lenient standards wouldn't have spurred us on to grow and develop our expertise. We've achieved significant improvements by relentlessly chasing excellence in our efforts to overcome these demands."

ing sectors in Japan," Mr. Yukawa says. "Only six of the 25 workers at our Wakayama plant are Japanese; the rest are from countries such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Brazil and China. The factory's manager is Indonesian. About 30 years ago, we began turning to foreign employees, all of whom exhibit remarkable dedication. It's very hard to continue operating unless we become global."



Gear Box 3000Kg

"One remarkable example is our polisher for bearing balls. Manufacturing bearing balls involves an initial pressing step. The original shape formed through a pressing machine then has to be polished as a final step, using a grinding plate made from a special alloy. We embarked on a three-year journey to develop our polisher when one of our customers told us of their need for the product. This pursuit pushed us to venture into new industries, allowing us to thrive in unexpected ways."



Cylinder Body 3500Kg

Founded in 1891, Yukawa has successfully stayed the course for over a century for two chief reasons, Mr. Yukawa says. "Firstly, by keeping our company small, we've navigated economic challenges by having the management team make individual investments in the business," he explains. "Secondly, we've managed to adapt to the evolving needs of different times. We no longer make casting products that we initially had at the time of our foundation."



Bed Body 4800Kg

As Japanese population decline forces companies in the country to contend with a shrinking domestic workforce, Yukawa's increasing international focus has led the manufacturer to look for talent beyond Japan's borders.

"I believe securing human resources presents a substantial obstacle across diverse manufactur-



Robot Body 220-450Kg

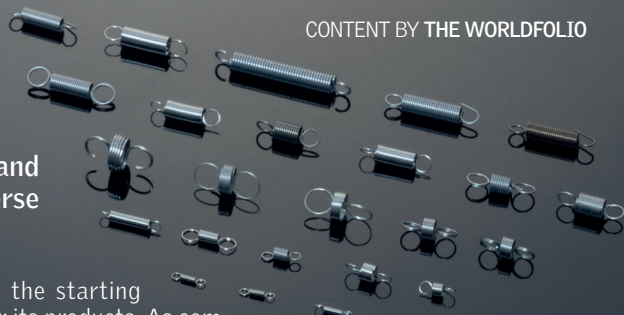
This goes for the scope of Yukawa's business, too; after all, a falling population has also left Japan's companies with a shrinking pool of domestic customers. In 1995, the firm opened an international production site in Xinxiang, China – a plant that has not only helped Yukawa to support other Japanese manufacturers' overseas expansion, but also has a key future role to play in catering to international clients.

"One of the reasons we went to China was because we believe in the Chinese people's deeply-rooted DNA for *monozukuri* – the dogged pursuit of innovation and perfection in manufacturing" Mr. Yukawa reveals. "My goal is to expand into the global market through the efforts of our factories in both Japan and China."



Motor Frame 2000Kg

MATEX: spring into action



Japanese spring manufacturer MATEX combines the quality and customer centricity of Japanese production with a truly diverse approach to management.



“Our business is customer-driven; customers ask us to do something and then we think about how we can achieve it.”

Atsushi Matsuzawa,
President, MATEX CO., LTD.

The culture of a company comes from the top down, so it is key for those in management posi-

tions to come from a diverse range of backgrounds. Japanese spring manufacturer MATEX has enabled its growth through its international management structure and dedication to customer centricity.



MATEX (Vietnam) LTD.

Originating in Japan’s Ina City, MATEX produces springs ranging from those as small as 0.06 millimeters in diameter to larger springs for industrial use. This wide range of products stems from MATEX’s dedication to taking its customers’ prob-

lems as the starting point for its products. As company president Atsushi Matsuzawa says: “Our clients sometimes come to us with drawings. We can then propose better solutions to help them turn out fewer defects.”

MATEX is a truly international company, with bases in Japan, Hong Kong, China, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Unlike many Japanese companies, MATEX excels in working with local talent to run its operations, increasing its agility in international markets and giving the company a global feel.

In addition, the company’s senior management are all technical engineers, which ensures quality remains their priority. Mr. Matsuzawa reveals the company demands the highest base materials for its



INATEC Corporation

springs, as “if there is a defect in that base material then the defect will be extended further and further”.

The company is always on the lookout for M&A partners in similar fields with which it can work to expand into new markets through local knowledge.



Puequ: The water-treatment specialists



“We’re actively pursuing opportunities to expand our reach and introduce our products to international markets.”

Toshihiro Matsumura,
President, Puequ Co., Ltd.

Founded in 1989, Puequ specializes in industrial environmental equipment and disaster-prevention systems.

Particular areas of expertise are water treatment and environmental technology – where the company has recently bolstered its capabilities with the acquisition of its latest subsidiary, Marine River.

Puequ has become a go-to supplier of leading-edge environmental equipment. The company also offers pioneering disaster-prevention technology.



NIADS 13t

“We have extensive experience in water-purifying systems, a critical aspect for aquaculture,” says Puequ’s president, Toshihiro Matsumura. “Marine River specializes in water-heating and cooling units that are also essential for aquaculture – so our businesses aligned seamlessly.”

Meanwhile, Puequ’s outstanding disaster-prevention product is the Naias fire-extinguishing system, whose ground-breaking nitrogen-pressurized tank continues to supply water to sprinklers even if the electricity cuts out.

“Naias operates solely on a compact battery,” Mr. Matsumura says. “We have 800 units operational in various industrial sites, nursing homes and hospitals throughout Japan. Notably, we’ve also installed ten units at research facilities in Antarctica.”

As the company looks to grow internationally, Puequ’s sights are chiefly set on Southeast Asia. “Our concentration is directed toward countries in the region that require our expertise in water-treatment solutions,” Mr. Matsumura explains.



NIADS 24t

Puequ’s Southeast Asian strategy could also focus on state-of-the-art waste-management systems. “We are developing this type of technology for the collective disposal of garbage of any nature, and we plan to bring it

to the domestic market,” Mr. Matsumura notes. “If it’s successful, we may expand it to other countries.



Submersible agitator

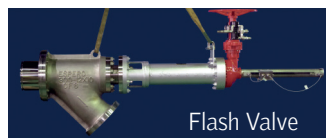
“It’s a world-class subcritical waste-treatment system – revolutionary technology that can solve the problem of pollution, which is particularly troublesome in chemical disposal. With this technology, even waste that’s in a mixed state of various substances can be disposed of collectively, without the need to separate it.”



High-quality valves for the most demanding conditions

Ichinose specializes in the manufacture of high-quality, high-performing valves built to operate in the most demanding conditions, ensuring no leakages and a lifespan of 40-50 years.

Japanese manufacturing is still renowned for churning out high-quality, specialized products, while neighboring competitors in China and Taiwan have focused on the production of mass-produced, lower-quality goods. A case in point: the valve manufacturing industry, where valve production encompasses varying levels of quality, from high- and mid-quality, to low-quality, general-purpose valves.



Flash Valve

With labor costs much lower than Japan, regional competitors lead the market when it comes to low-cost, general-purpose valves. "The difference in labor costs significantly impacts valve production expenses, especially the low-cost general-purpose valves, giving countries like China, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Indonesia a competitive advantage," says Satoshi Isse, representative

director of Japanese valve manufacturer Ichinose. "However, various industries demand valves of varying quality levels. Our primary aim is to specialize in selling high-quality valves in the overseas market, which can only be manufactured using technology exclusive to Japan."

Established in 1949, Ichinose specializes in the manufacture of high-quality, high-performing valves created using the company's unique technology cultivated over 70 years. Designed and built to operate safely and securely even in the harshest circumstances, including high temperature and high pressure environments, Ichinose's valves are used in all industries and fields, with the company's clients aware that paying the extra price for a Japanese-made valve is worth the investment. While the initial cost of an Ichinose valve may be higher than those from China or Taiwan, the investment pays off in the long run, as explained by Mr. Isse.

"The primary distinguishing feature of all our products lies

in the longevity of the valve's main body, which is crafted from stainless steel or iron, ensuring a lifespan of approximately 40-50 years. Even if you need to replace the seal or other internal components, the valve remains in service. While the initial cost may be higher, in the long run, you reduce operational expenses due to its extended lifespan and ease of maintenance," he says.



Discharge Valve 1

"In contrast, valves manufactured in China and Taiwan, while more affordable upfront, typically require replacement after just a year or two, especially under high-temperature or high-pressure conditions. We believe that the long-term usability of our valves will make them highly valued and sought-after in the overseas market."

And another distinguishing factor of Ichinose valves is that they guarantee no costly leakages, as is the case with its flagship product, Espero. "In the past, many trading companies in Osaka used to manufacture their own valves. However, these valves were of inferior quality and prone to leaks," adds Mr. Isse. "This was the driving force behind our decision to develop the Espero. While the price of the Espero is relatively high, its quality surpasses that of conventional valves significantly."

Having built its reputation in Japan over decades serving the petrochemical and construction industries, among others, Ichinose now aims to expand its global presence, embarking on its international endeavors confi-



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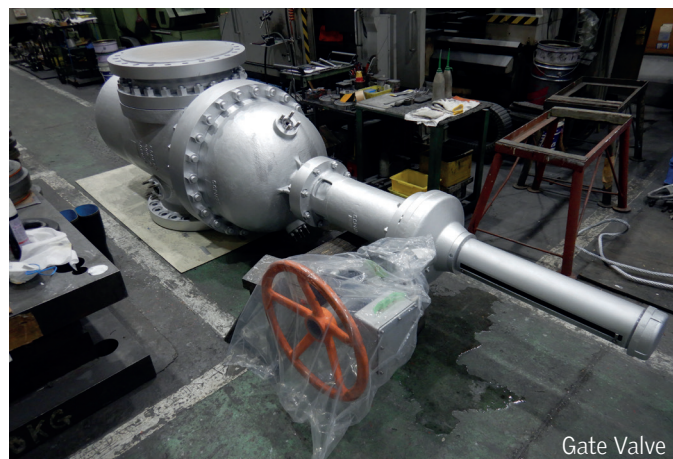
Satoshi Isse, CEO,
Ichinose Co., Ltd.

dent in the fact that its valves are cut above the competition. The Japanese firm's initial focus is on entering the U.S. market, where it recently took part in a valve exhibition held in Houston, Texas, with the objective of identifying potential local distributors. "We have identified promising candidates for local distributors and are currently in the process of reaching out to them," reveals the presidents.



Discharge Valve 2

"Because our goal is to market high-quality specialized valves, our marketing efforts are highly targeted," he adds. "Our branding strategy centers on showcasing our technology, reliability, and superior performance."



Gate Valve



Gate Valve 1



Gate Valve 2