

# The food-processing experts out to protect Japan's culinary traditions

A company approaching its 50th anniversary, Nikko offers a fully integrated service as a supplier of leading-edge food-processing machines and robots.

Founded in 1977, the Japanese company Nikko specializes in supplying state-of-the-art food-processing machines and robots.

Based in Kushiro City, Hokkaido, Nikko provides a comprehensive service: from product planning and development, to manufacture and sale.

"To achieve the highest precision and quality, we believe it's crucial to fully understand and control every aspect of the business," says President Kazuo Sato.

Nikko's labor-saving technology offers a solution to Japanese population decline, which is leaving the country with fewer and fewer available workers.

"Our goal is to protect and support Japan's food industry, which has been eroded due to severe labor shortages," Mr. Sato says.

Indeed, Nikko is helping to combat the effects of Japan's shrinking



"What sets us apart from other companies is that we provide a wide range of services, from planning to sales, all in-house."

Kazuo Sato, President, NIKKO Co., Ltd.

workforce right across the nation's range of business sectors, having founded the Hokkaido Robot Laboratory, a robotics educational facility.

"We wanted to meet the growing demand for talent in this field," Mr. Sato explains. "The lab enables individuals to obtain licenses for operating robots."

Nikko has also been engaged in the development of



Salmon roe processing machine

salmon processing machinery since the establishment of the company. "We have mechanized processes from primary processing to filet manufacturing and even *ikura* (salmon caviar) production," adds Mr. Sato.

"Our machines are widely used overseas as well."

For instance, the 'Header-Gutter Continuous Processing System' is a machine designed



Header-Gutter Continuous Processing System

for the continuous automated processing of salmon, handling tasks from head cutting to gut removal.

Regardless of the gender or size of the fish, after head cutting in the same position, fish roe, milt, and internal organs are carefully collected intact. The bloodline behind the backbone is then cleansed through showering and brushing.

Meanwhile, for the processing of salmon roe, the company offers a comprehensive automation system that covers the separation, sorting, and cleaning of fish eggs.

"Our salmon processing machines have the potential to be well-received internationally," Mr. Sato notes. "We hope to export machines like this and have a thriving business in regions such as Europe and North America."



# Chuo Kakohki: Fostering innovation, reliability, amid global expansion

As the first company in Japan to introduce vibration mills, Chuo Kakohki pioneers advanced technology, crafting solutions and shaping manufacturing at home and abroad.



Japanese companies like Chuo Kakohki are embracing innovation to maintain a competitive edge in an ever-changing market. Known for producing vibration mills and dryers, company president Hisanori Kato believes success is rooted in the *monozukuri* spirit and a commitment to continuous improvement.

"Foreign clients seek reliable partners and we consistently meet expectations, with Japan's strong work ethic elevating our manufacturing standards," he says. There is a clear commitment to being a one-stop-shop for customers, reinforced by its



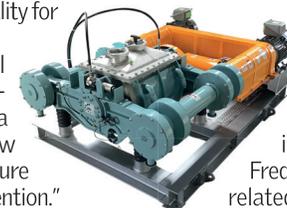
"We remain open to any expansion opportunities."

Hisanori Kato, President, Chuo Kakohki Co., Ltd.

in-house custom-made manufacturing packages.

Addressing Japan's demographic shift, Mr. Kato outlines proactive measures, including recruiting foreign workers and fostering a supportive working environment. The company's transparency serves as an appealing quality for potential recruits.

"We have small and attractive solutions such as a good logo and new uniforms that capture young people's attention."



With expertise in vibration technology, a track record dating back to 1961, the president emphasizes reliability, comprehensive after-sales services, and environmental responsibility.

"Our patented exit valve design ensures uniform drying, enhances energy efficiency, and sets us apart," he says, while also revealing that the company is working with Nippon Hi-Frequency on microwave-related research.

As Chuo Kakohki approaches its 75th anniversary, Mr. Kato's goal is clear, to nurture growth in Vietnam utilizing the cost-effective labor across Southeast Asia.



And as the company explores international markets, semiconductors and battery components in collaboration with American and Canadian companies is of particular interest, as strategic entry into the automotive industry beckons.



# Food Techno Engineering: Sustainable freezing and refrigeration engineering for the food supply chain

FTE's pioneering energy-efficient freezing and refrigeration technology allows food to be kept fresh for longer, reducing food waste.

Food Techno Engineering (FTE) provides freezers and cold equipment engineering for food processing plants and cold logistics distribution centers across Japan and globally. As a food factory specialist, its total services include layout and line design, manufacturing, delivery, installation and commissioning of equipment, as well as after-sales.

"By proposing energy-saving, manpower-saving and production line automation solutions, we provide solutions for customer sites and food processing plants," says Kenji Noda, President of FTE. "Our engineering capability is to continue to create new answers for our customers through a synergy effect of people, ideas, and technology. We continue to move forward while constantly addressing global environmental issues and responding to changes in dietary habits and lifestyles."

The FTE president highlights two facilities that demonstrate the company's unique capabilities. The first is the FTE Laboratory, which is equipped with five types of freezers. The second is the FTE Academy, where industry, government and academia share and research new technologies to solve global environmental problems.

"At the laboratory is a test room where customers can visit and bring in goods and foodstuffs for freezing and chilling tests and carry out actual freezing tests. They can also confirm at site by collecting data on temperature, freezing time and freezing quality of products. The lab is unique in the world and has been very well received by our customers. We have numerous companies visit us every week, sometimes several in one day," says Mr. Noda.

The second is the FTE Academy. "Here we developed the industry's first high-humidity refrigerator, which uses revolutionary technology that allows temperature and humidity to be controlled separately. By

"By proposing energy-saving, manpower-saving and production line automation solutions, we provide solutions for customer sites and food processing plants."

Kenji Noda,  
President, FTE Co., Ltd.



for a product with this feature, because this technology leads to solutions for social issues such as the manpower shortage in the field of Japanese logistics and the elimination of food waste," explains Mr. Noda.

With food factories today suffering from rising energy costs, one of FTE's biggest objectives going forward is to support its customers in reducing their energy consumption and carbon emissions. Its range of freezers aren't just designed to be energy-efficient upon use, they are also manufactured using renewably generated electricity at its Techceed plant in Tokushima Prefecture.

"This new plant is equipped with solar panels, and the electricity generated by the panels is stored in storage batteries for use," Mr. Noda adds.

Lastly, Mr. Noda also speaks passionately about the company's 25-year anniversary (this year), while also looking toward the future: "We will continue to contribute to a better society through high-quality food products, ensuring safety and deliciousness through full utilization of our technology, which is aimed to be the best and only one. To do so, we will continue to prioritize human resource development and training – overall, we will encourage young generations to think and act by themselves voluntarily."



Ishii factory



Academy



Tech Center



Meeting

keeping the temperature close to 0°C and the humidity above 95%, it keeps fruit, vegetables and flower petals fresh and prevents them from drying out. This makes it possible to preserve

fruit and vegetables for long periods and transport them over long distances while maintaining their seasonal taste. Many Japanese farmers and logistics companies have been waiting



## Quality food solutions

From cooling and freezing machines, with upstream and downstream equipment.

Our total integrated engineering system allows us to create the ideal production environment.



<https://foodtechno-eng.co.jp/en>

# Air-con specialists committed to sustainability and global growth

Toyo Densen offers nearly eight decades of expertise in parts, accessories and tools for air-conditioning systems.



Factory in Nara Prefecture

A Japanese firm that turns 80 in 2025, Toyo Densen specializes in manufacturing pipes, ducts and other parts for air-conditioning systems, as well as accessories and installation tools.

Customers can expect a comprehensive service; after all, Toyo Densen also operates as a trading company, allowing it to source and supply products even if it cannot make them itself.

"This flexibility has been instrumental in the growth we've

enjoyed," says President Yasunobu Okuda.

While the core product manufactured by Toyo Densen is currently its insulated copper pipe, the firm's aluminum CAT pipe is shaping up as a future best-seller.

"Our CAT pipe weighs two-thirds less than copper pipes and has a lower cost," Mr. Okuda explains.



Quality control room

"It's economical, lightweight and easy to install. Additionally, aluminum reserves are much larger than copper reserves."

As well as embracing more sustainable materials, Toyo Densen has begun recycling old air-conditioning components into new products of the same type.



Factory staff

"In the next five years, I believe there'll be a new era where companies are criticized for using virgin materials," Mr. Okuda says. "To secure our position as a leading company, it's important to implement this recycling scheme."

Toyo Densen is also working to safeguard its status in its



"Our mission is to create a stable and sustainable company, leaving it in the best possible position for the next generation."

Yasunobu Okuda, President, Toyo Densen Co., Ltd.

industry – and, indeed, boost its profile – by strengthening its international sales.

"In 2024, we'll be dedicating our resources to attending overseas exhibitions, such as events in India and Indonesia," Mr. Okuda notes. "Our jumping-off point will be Asia, and from there we hope to tackle the global market."



<https://toyo-densen.co.jp/en>

# Kobashi: The customer-first company providing premium-quality packaging you can count on

Kobashi has established itself as a trusted cardboard box supplier in Japan and beyond.



Cardboard boxes

Founded in 1955, Kobashi specializes in supplying cardboard boxes to B2B customers in a range of industries, chiefly food processing and agriculture.

The company also packs and transports goods, and has harnessed its expertise as a cardboard manufacturer to craft a range of paper insoles for shoes.

Kobashi's cardboard boxes are built to keep products safe. "Even if part of the box is damaged, the contents remain



Factory in Thailand

well protected," says President Rika Kobashi.

"Additionally, we incorporate water-resistant materials and apply a special coating to prevent liquid seepage or absorption.

"Customer satisfaction is our priority. We consistently provide samples to gather feedback from our clients, allowing us to better understand their preferences and requirements."

Such a client-centric mindset sets Japanese companies like Kobashi apart from cheaper competitors elsewhere in Asia.

"An example of this customer-first approach is our expansion into Thailand, which sought to accommodate a client's unique needs," Ms. Kobashi notes.

Established when the com-

pany's largest customer set up business in the country, Kobashi's Thai operation now also offers advice to other Japanese firms making the same move.



Paper insoles for shoes

"We faced a significant culture shock in Thailand," Ms. Kobashi says, "but this has empowered us to help other companies taking their ventures there."

Other Southeast Asian nations will be Kobashi's focus if it opts for further international expansion, as the manufacturer targets continued success beyond its 100th anniversary.



"Our approach is centered on maintaining close interactions with our clients, understanding their unique needs, and addressing their challenges effectively."

Rika Kobashi, President, Kobashi Co., Ltd.

"Our vision is to ensure the company's longevity for the next 50 or even 100 years," Ms. Kobashi concludes.



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