

MIYUKI KEORI PUSHES For New Markets

EXCITING TIMES ARE AHEAD FOR A COMPANY THAT HAS STRIVED TO PRODUCE THE FINEST QUALITY PRODUCTS FOR WELL OVER 100 YEARS. *By Sasha Lauture and Sean McBride*

Established in 1905 as a weaving and dyeing business, Miyuki Keori has evolved considerably in the intervening years, developing a reputation as a company that pursues innovation and excellence.

President Hiroshi Watanabe explains why the firm is so unique: “We bring together the whole process, from choosing yarns, through weaving, finishing, cutting and sewing. Miyuki Keori is the only company of its type with this kind of end-to-end design integration.”

All this comes, of course, with a painstaking manufacturing process where attention to detail and craftsmanship are vital.

Watanabe again: “First we collect water from the Suzuka Mountains, which is absolutely key to production. We still use wooden parts in the scouring process machines, something that is increasingly rare these days. Our use of natural soap, meanwhile, allows the retention of natural oils which are critical for developing the properties of the material. These unique processes are designed to take advantage of our carefully selected wool.”

The global apparel market is booming, having been valued at USD 1.7 trillion in 2023, and Watanabe has clear plans for the company as the market continues to grow and expand.

“A key future approach for us,” Watanabe concludes, “will be through collaborations with global brands. By combining our wealth of manufacturing expertise with a global brand’s image and profile, we can continue to offer inimitable products for years to come.”

The firm is also well poised for international expansion, targeting Korean and Chinese markets as well as those further afield in the U.S., Europe and Australia.

“We are already preparing to directly import premium raw wool, which cannot be purchased on the general market, from farms in Tasmania, Australia,” Watanabe says. “This wool will be processed into fabric at our domestic factories and sold. Additionally, this fabric will be tailored into custom-made suits at our factory in Hokkaido and shipped to customers in Australia, establishing a fully circular relationship.”

Elsewhere, exciting times are ahead with the launch of the company’s “MIYUKI femme” brand, a development that Watanabe hopes will serve as an incentive for Japanese women to move more freely in the traditionally male-dominated business world.



“We deliver products straight to the hearts of individual customers.”

Hiroshi Watanabe
President, Miyuki Keori Co., Ltd.



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CLEAN AND GREEN

Beauty by b-ex



LEADING IN CLEAN BEAUTY, B-EX INC. FOCUSES ON SUSTAINABLE, ECO-FRIENDLY HAIR CARE, AND PLANS INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION TO COUNTERACT JAPAN'S SHRINKING MARKET.

By Sasha Lauture and Cian O'Neill



Toshihiro Fukui
President, B-EX INC.
www.b-ex.inc/en

As clean beauty becomes a mainstream trend, b-ex Inc. stands at the forefront, championing sustainable and eco-friendly hair care products. Founded 49 years ago, the company has consistently prioritized healthy and beautiful hair, underscoring the importance of safe ingredients in its products. "The importance of ingredients is part of the whole philosophy of our company," says Toshihiro Fukui, president of b-ex Inc.

In line with the growing emphasis on sustainability, b-ex Inc. entered a capital and business alliance with O'right, the world's first zero-carbon beauty company, in 2021. This partnership aims to promote clean beauty and reduce environmental impact in Japan. "Together, we will promote clean beauty and decrease the burden on the environment," Fukui notes.

Feedback from salon professionals plays a crucial role in product development at b-ex Inc. "We involve influential top salons from the early stages of development and consider everything together," Fukui explains. This collaborative approach ensures that products meet the highest standards of quality and innovation.

Looking ahead, b-ex Inc. plans to expand into international markets to counteract Japan's shrinking demographics. With established exporting channels in South Korea, Thailand, Singapore and Hong Kong, the company is now eyeing China and India. Additionally, the recent launch of Kiratera, a hair color brand featuring powerful, vibrant pigments to redefine the underlying shade and designed to meet diverse hair color needs, exemplifies b-ex Inc.'s commitment to innovation and market adaptability.

As b-ex Inc. approaches its 50th anniversary, its dedication to sustainability, quality and customer satisfaction continues to set it apart in the competitive beauty industry.



Tamurakoma: Sustainable Global Market Expansion

The Japanese textile manufacturer and trader is on a mission to create a comfortable and sustainable society while expanding its business into the construction and electronics fields. By Sean McBride



"Our strength is understanding evolving market needs and the ability to respond readily."

Kiyohito Hori, President,
Tamurakoma & Co., Ltd.



Founded 130 years ago as a textile manufacturer, Tamurakoma has been steadily diversifying its business by branching out into various industries. Company President Kiyohito Hori puts this diversification down to the pioneering spirit that is embedded within its employees. In the 2000s, the company expanded into the construction materials division, focusing on industrial and housing materials. Today, it has multiple divi-

sions ranging from construction to textiles and electrical appliances, with an array of products that can be sold in each segment.

Hori explains that "as a trading firm, we have an advantage over our competitors due to our strong communication with clients. This tight-knit relationship with our clients allows us to respond to the specific needs of the market and create products accordingly." An example of this is the development of a sustainable materials line to integrate into the production process. The Creation to Circulation brand is a recycled polyester made from PET bottles and textile waste, and the recycled cotton brand, Re:RISE, is a mix of pure cotton re-spun with cotton fabric cuttings that would normally be discarded.

The company currently has operations in China, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Bangladesh and Germany and is looking to expand and strengthen its overseas bases. Hori believes that "establishing manufacturing and sales partnerships is important to achieve this. We are also open to mergers and acquisitions if an opportunity to establish our own base arises, and we are now actively starting to invest in strengthening our overseas presence."



C2C circulation polyester fabric



<https://tamurakoma.co.jp>

Global Vision with TRADITION AND INNOVATION

NAVIGATING GLOBAL SUCCESS, KITAO COSMETICS' MINIMALIST APPROACH BLENDS TRADITIONAL JAPANESE INGREDIENTS WITH INNOVATIVE SKIN CARE TECHNOLOGY, MAKING A GLOBAL IMPACT.

By Sasha Lauture and Bernard Thompson



Kitao Cosmetics, a company deeply rooted in Japanese tradition, is making waves globally with its innovative skincare products. Led by President and CEO Kazuhiro Kawabata, Kitao emphasizes minimalism and quality, using fewer, highly effective ingredients. This philosophy contrasts with the more elaborate routines popularized by Korean beauty brands, highlighting the unique appeal of J-Beauty.

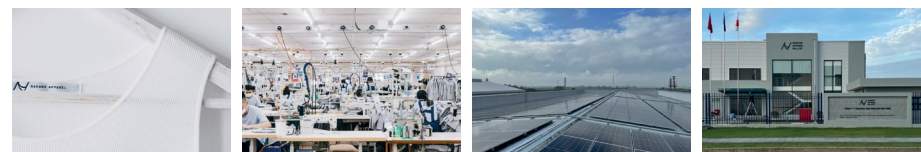
Kitao's commitment to quality is exemplified in its use of matcha, a traditional Japanese ingredient known for its health benefits. "We follow a meticulous process to ensure our matcha is of the highest quality, preparing the soil for three years without chemicals," says Kawabata. This dedication to sustainability and natural ingredients resonates with today's eco-conscious consumers, enhancing the brand's reputation.

Globally, Kitao Cosmetics has successfully penetrated U.S. and European markets, leveraging the growing popularity of matcha. The company's approach includes collaborations with influencers and marketing agencies to introduce Japanese culture alongside its products. This strategy has earned the firm a strong online presence, boasting more than 12,000 Instagram followers and numerous influencer partnerships.

Looking forward, Kawabata emphasizes the importance of collective efforts among Japanese firms to compete with Korean brands, particularly in the U.S. and European markets. By combining traditional Japanese values with modern marketing strategies, Kitao Cosmetics is poised to continue its global growth.

Nakano Apparel Aims for Global Market

With its recycling initiatives, the pioneering apparel firm offers an antidote to the world of fast fashion. By Cian O'Neill



World's thinnest binder Yamagata factory

Solar panels in Vietnam Vietnam factory



Kazunori Nakano, President (left); Akihiro Nakano, Executive Vice President (right), Nakano Apparel Inc.

An apparel OEM company founded in 1986, Nakano Apparel produces high-quality cut and sewn products, assisting in all stages from planning and material procurement to development and sewing.

Recently, the company has made headlines for its pioneering recycling practices. President Kazunori Nakano explains: "After being approached by a paper manufacturing company one day, I resolved to do something about industrial waste, and we decided as a company that we could recycle our scraps into water-proof sheets. Now we are able to recycle 100 percent of our scrap, thus producing no waste."

Such initiatives have resulted in the firm receiving a prestigious sustainability award and being named as one of 100 textile companies for the next generation in 2023.

For Nakano, environmental measures at the company's factory in Vietnam are just as significant: "We have installed solar panels and a biomass boiler in Vietnam. With the

former, we can generate about 70 percent of the annual electricity needed for our plant, and with the boiler, we no longer need to use oil."

Staff at the plant, meanwhile, have both developed their own in-house rubbish sorting system and taken it upon themselves to contract a lunch catering company on the condition that it provided sustainable, multiuse items.

Perhaps it is the scale of the firm's factories that enables employees to take responsibility in this way. Nakano again: "In the apparel manufacturing industry, a big factory with a large number of workers is wonderful. However, we believe that small factories that are ultra-efficiently run have a greater advantage in terms of cost and quality and lead ultimately to business stability and an improved standard of living for our employees."

In an age of domestic labor shortages, Nakano is open about the need for digital transformation in the sewing industry, which still relies heavily on human endeavor: "We believe we can



combine the human element with automation in order to increase productivity and efficiency."

With increased productivity and efficiency, of course, come opportunities for global expansion, and beyond the firm's existing activities in Vietnam, Nakano confirms that he is looking to places such as South Korea, North America and Europe as potential sites for new sales activities.

"I have high expectations for the future," he concludes. "And I would like to see our turnover increase fivefold by 2036 to coincide with our fiftieth anniversary."

*This report has been provided by The Worldfolio and carefully edited by Newsweek staff.
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