

Measuring Japanese Business Success By The Century

Japan has more companies over 100 years old than any other nation, thanks to its tradition of high quality standards.

Doing anything for more than 100 years is impressive. Running a business across several generations of stewardship, and surviving seismic social and economic changes, is nothing short of remarkable. Firms that exceed that significant milestone will all have taken different paths to get there, but often have several factors in common. From universities to electronics, textiles, transport infrastructure and industrial manufacturing, members of the “100-plus club” tend to share a strong foundation and a commitment to forward

of academia, long-term thinking means being in a constant state of evolution. “Since its founding in 1915, Yasuda Educational Foundation has consistently followed the educational principle of ‘tender yet firm spirit’ and has combined the traditions of women’s education to respond to the changes in the social environment and the needs of the local community,” said Toshio Seyama, president of Yasuda Women’s University. In addition to evolution, sometimes a little revolution can go a long way when it comes to

manufacturing. Daimei Plastic President Toru Yamaguchi enjoys the benefits of automated systems and AI, but insists that Japan’s *monozukuri* tradition of high standards and customer service must remain paramount. “I believe that we can cut out the tasks that are not necessarily dealt with by human beings, who can be responsible for more complex tasks that require thinking or management,” said Yamaguchi.

“Our company has a track record of being an innovator. I do believe that *monozukuri* is a special expertise that is irreplaceable with AI.” Takuya Iwata, president of trading house Iwata Shokai Co., Ltd., agreed that long-term success of this kind is built on standards that cannot be compromised if that is to be maintained. “High quality is the advantage of Japanese manufacturing and Japanese companies. In Japan, the level of quality demanded by users is high and strict,” he said. “We pursue not only the quality of our products, but also the quality of our processes. In our 120 years of history, we have built the trust of our customers by creating a sustainable and stable business,” Iwata said.

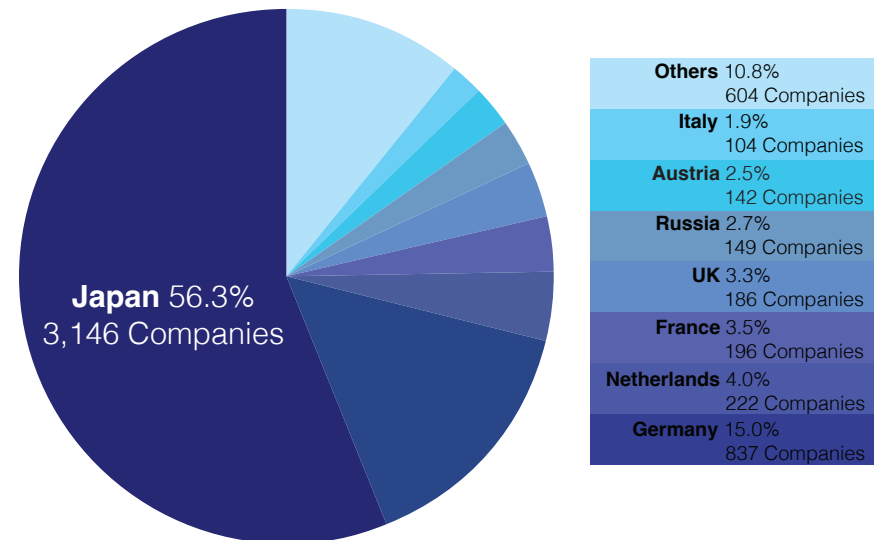
TANAX Inc. CEO Ippei Tanaka takes pride in his logistics and DX firm’s 116 year longevity. “Our endurance and style of ‘never giving up’ is one reason why we have been able to persist for so long. Our sales department, development teams, and clients all work together closely, which allows us to provide great experiences to the end consumer,” said Tanaka.

Kazuo Takahashi, the president of Japanese rail, transport, real estate and hospitality business Tokyu Corporation, said that following centenary celebrations last year, the firm is looking towards an exciting future. “We are almost out of the woods regarding the effects of the pandemic, so now it is time to rebuild our business sustainably so that we can grow in the future,” said Takahashi. “In a colloquial sense, we have currently passed the ‘hop’ and ‘step’ of our current business plan. However, now is the time for us to reach the ‘jump’ phase within the next five years.”

educating the next generation. “I am a firm believer in the liberal arts, with this school boasting a history of 100 years of this type of education,” said Tokyo Woman’s Christian University President Anri Morimoto. “One hundred years ago, our school defied typical women’s education and instead aimed to nurture independent intellectuals to stand on their own.”

Similarly, R&D is often the key to prolonged success when it comes to industry. The status quo is rarely an option. Since its founding in 1914 in Osaka, Daimei Plastic Co., Ltd. has sought to lead the way in technology innovation and cutting-edge ma-

Number and ratio of companies over 200 years old



*According to a report published by the Bank of Korea in 2008 that looked at 41 countries, there were 5,586 companies older than 200 years.

planning. While no business has one answer when it comes to the secret of their success, it’s no surprise that they are already planning for the next 100 years. That is certainly true for precision machining manufacturer Roku-Roku Sangyo Ltd.

“It is important to have a market-in mindset and also embody the product-out mindset,” said President Mitsuru Kaito. “Our company has had a long history of over 100 years because we value both these aspects in parallel. I think it is important for our company not to expand too widely, but to instead set up the strategy to survive longer, for the next 100 years.” In the world

Laying Foundations for an Innovative Type of Community

As the world changes faster than ever, a major real estate and transport developer is working to create new ways of living and socializing in Japan and beyond.



Kazuo Takahashi, President and CEO, Tokyu Corporation

A Japanese firm that specializes in creating new city spaces and transport links is helping build communities for the future with new sustainable technology. Tokyu Corporation was initially established as a major railways operator but has evolved to become a key player in the world of real estate and city development, both in Japan and abroad, and is often linked to transport hubs and connections. From ground-breaking projects in Shibuya, where the firm is based, to the stunning Kabukicho tower in Shinjuku, and the innovative plans for Binh Duong in Viet Nam, the firm’s



A wide range of entertainment options is central to Tokyu’s exciting new developments.

work over the last 100 years has been helping redefine ideas of cities and living spaces.

As Tokyu Corporation bounces back from the COVID-19 lockdowns with vigor, President Kazuo Takahashi wants his firm to keep seeking improvements and innovations to help society. The firm’s jewel in the crown is its ongoing and expansive development of the Shibuya area of Tokyo, which has been growing for decades and is currently the site of its ambitions and a successful redevelopment plan. “Our company wasn’t the first to initiate

the building of communities, however, we have been focused on tackling social problems, such as overcrowding in city centers,” said Takahashi. “We did this by expanding communities outside into the suburbs so that people can live comfortably and more peacefully.” The vast project in Shibuya has involved a mixture of housing, leisure attractions and office space all designed to create a desirable area to live, work and play.

The current work is being carried out with the environment and sustainability in mind, as well as utilizing the latest technology to improve services and facilities. “Rather than simply focusing on building large skyscrapers, we wish to focus more on human-friendly development,” said Takahashi. “Until 2030, we are set on developing this vision as part of our philosophy of making Shibuya a place to ‘live, work and play.’” In nearby Shinjuku, a similar pattern has been followed.

The stunning new 225-meter-high Kabukicho Tower is set to become a major landmark when it opens in April, featuring entertainment, hotels and retail spaces, as well

develop the Shibuya–Shinjuku area as an experiential “entertainment” area. Tokyo will grow to be a city that ranks with the world’s major entertainment cities and attract many inbound visitors. Another significant milestone in the company’s portfolio is its investment in Viet Nam, with work in Thailand and Australia also on the horizon. Tokyu Corporation is currently engaged in the 2,500-acre massive development of Viet Nam’s Binh Duong region to the north of Ho Chi Minh City. This involves effectively contributing to build a new 250-acre core city “from scratch” along with suitable transport links in due course.

Residential sales have seen great demand, with commercial plans to follow. “This January, I was able to visit Viet Nam for the first time

in four years, and I was pleasantly surprised to see the level of development within the city, which has definitely been bolstered by the strong economic growth of recent years,” said Takahashi. The firm’s projects moving forward will also have sustainability in mind. “The key to our company will be addressing social issues, such as the environment, which will come to affect our lives more and more, both within Japan and around the world,” he said. “There have been many changes over the past 100 years, and many more will occur in the future, but we will continue to carry on Tokyu’s DNA for future generations,” Takahashi said.

as proposed new transport links. “The tower is going to feature a range of different spaces; two brands of hotels, a cinema, and entertainment facilities; all areas that were especially hit hard during the pandemic,” said Takahashi. “We believe that the project will definitely add value to the area.” In order to attract inbound tourism from around the world for the future growth of the Japanese economy, Tokyo must compete with the world’s major cities, such as New York, London, and Paris. Therefore, we must maximize the lure of the city and further



Powered and Inspired by Historic Corporate Success

Japanese businesses may be forward thinking, but they benefit from a storied history.

Many successful companies in Japan take pride in the successes of the past. The very best also seek to better them. From the Industrial Revolution to the post-war resurgence and the electronics boom, the nation has long been an economic powerhouse even in the face of larger and cheaper competition. Driven by standards of quality and service designed to be second to none, that sense of historic achievement is ever-present in modern business leaders eager to play their part in maintaining them. For example, while Japan may have pioneered semiconductor development in the 1960s and 1970s, the sector then significantly shifted towards lower-cost centers such as China.

Now, producers are enjoying a return to prominence due to the quality in manufacturing at home, or supplying Japanese technology and equipment to overseas plants. Shuichi Saito, chairman of precision components manufacturer Sytecs Co., Ltd. believes agility is the key to the nation's continued trading successes through the years. "Japanese companies are skilled in thinking about ways to adapt to the ever-changing trends in the global market," he said. "In terms of cost performance, we are incapable of competing against rivals so we changed and adapted our mindset to adjust ourselves to the trends of the global market."

Training the next generation of business leaders and innovators is crucial. "In the area of semiconductor research, we are the only university in Japan that has been able to cover the entire device production process from designing and prototyping to evaluation on a single campus since it opened in 1976," said Kazuhiko Terashima, president of Toyohashi University of Technology. "Japanese companies have the *kai-zen* philosophy, the concept to always keep improving," said Isao Taniguchi, president of the National Institute of Technology (KOSEN). "Here in KOSEN, we apply this concept to create new values." The constant through line of Japanese business and economic history has always been the commitment to delivering the best results possible. From giant household name brands to

SMEs, perfection is the goal and excellence the result. "Japanese manufacturers meticulously create products that address concerns not found in other countries. This culture has over time developed into original production techniques that ensure high quality," said Naoki Hattori, president of industrial brush and cosmetics firm KOWA Inc. In such long-standing success stories,

the twin pillars of quality and tradition complement each other. "Our dedication to remain in our roots is so ingrained in our culture," said Shuji Miyamoto, president of sweets manufacturer Ginbis Co., Ltd. "Japanese companies choose to keep their tradition and products as they always have been, while never compromising quality."

Active University that Creates Innovation



Kazuhiko Terashima, President, Toyohashi University of Technology



Centuries of high standards and success do not develop accidentally or through good fortune. In Japan, this commitment to quality begins in education. All tiers of Japanese learning may be world renowned but one of the nation's most ambitious national universities is working hard to improve it further, through strong links with industry. Toyohashi University of Technology prides itself on the fact that 30% of its faculty has a solid business background, which has helped it achieve great success in terms of results, but also in the student experience.

President Kazuhiko Terashima said that despite a smaller student body compared to larger universities, Toyohashi has outperformed many such institutions. "The university is rich in diversity and the synergy effect of this makes students good researchers. In addition, our university is active in research with industry," said Terashima. "As a result, it has been ranked number one in the nation in terms of the amount of joint research per researcher, surpassing the Tokyo Institute of Technology in 2020." Renowned for its work in semiconductors and sensors, Toyohashi is also one of only 19 organizations selected for a national program of research enhancement.

It has benefitted from a government policy directing businesses to support university work, with funding doubling in the last six years. Terashima wants to build on this success, and believes education has an important role in facing the nation's twin crises of an aging population and diminishing workforce. "We must increase the number of talented international students and the number of female students," said Terashima. "We are trying to give our students a global mindset," he added "The possibilities for studying at our university are endlessly expanding."

'Our university is active in industry partnerships and steadily building collaborations.'

Kazuhiko Terashima



Change is the Only Constant for True Success



"Japanese companies are skilled in adapting to ever-changing trends in the global market."

Shuichi Saito, Chairman, Sytecs Co., Ltd.

As a manufacturer of a wide range of precision components, the very core of Sytecs Co., Ltd. is its attention to detail. On a larger scale, that same skillset and meticulous approach have powered the Ota City-based firm to great success as it adapts to evolving markets and fluctuating trends. The company supplies various sectors, including semiconductors, and has a particular focus on products to improve access to clean water in the developing world.

Chairman Shuichi Saito paid tribute to the critical thinking skills of his staff, who work tirelessly to maintain high standards and compete against lower-cost-base rivals. "Precision and accuracy are key to making our products better," said Saito.



Homes for the Future with the Unique Strength



Hidemitsu Hori, President and Representative Director, YKK AP Inc.

A Japanese architectural products firm has spent more than 65 years in the business of making people safe and warm inside homes and buildings. Now, Tokyo-based YKK AP is taking this mission right into the future by developing smart doors and windows to protect vulnerable residents from severe weather and disasters. Change and evolution have been integral to the company's success and longevity. With an international reach and a global outlook allied to high Japanese quality standards, YKK AP is a forward-facing business and has embraced IoT (the Internet of things) to meet changing customer needs.

President Hidemitsu Hori said such systems are streamlining sales and operations, while real-world applications could revolutionize the customer experience and with sustainability in mind. The firm is also working on improving thermal-insulation technology. "With the IoT, we would like to make products that are not only fun and easy to use but truly useful for the elderly and people with disabilities. Enabling people to go about their lives in comfort is an important issue," he said. "Keyless entry will be important for this, as are automated shutters and blinds. With the increase in the frequency of natural disasters, we are also considering the development of a system that will detect adverse weather and automatically close shutters," Hori added.

Central to this drive for improvement and excellence is producing components in-house, and while YKK AP has affiliates in nations like the United States, China and Indonesia, Japan is very much the headquarters. "Almost all of the technological

The 3.58 Million Stars Shining a Light on SME Success

The measure of a business isn't always in terms of payroll or square footage. Some of the most successful companies are instead rated on impact and efficiency. When it comes to powering the gross domestic product of a nation such as Japan, small is beautiful. The 3.58 million SMEs in Japan comprise an incredible 99.7 percent of the economy and include a diverse range of companies providing the kind of essential and niche B2B services and products required across a number of sectors. The secrets of these successes are agility, commitment to customer service, and strict adherence to quality standards.

"In Japan, manufacturers excel in small, niche products, as the level of expertise is high, along with strong attention to detail," said Junichi Koyano, president of gas detection specialists RIKEN KEIKI Co., Ltd. "We have zero tolerance for compromise, and we believe our clients value us for this," Koyano said. SME culture is not a new phenomenon, as some can attest. "It's been 50 years since the start of this company and we believe our strength is building on the great work done by our predecessors," said Keisuke Yamada, president of water purifiers manufacturers OSG Corporation. While Kazushige Takagi, president of the medical technology firm Takagi Seiko Co., Ltd., believes it is vital for Japanese businesses to focus on quality to take on lower-cost rivals. "It is vital for Japanese companies to produce the maximum possible value from the resources available," he said.



development is carried out in Japan, while local subsidiaries handle the management and operation of their businesses," Hori said.



www.ykkap.co.jp/company/en/

The Origin Story Still Worth its Weight in Gold

While commercial trends and trade patterns are always evolving, many modern Japanese firms are working to embrace the global economy while staying true to traditional standards and practices.



Hideaki Shimizu, Representative Director and CEO, Via Mechanics, Ltd.



Kazufumi Ishii, President and Representative Director, Kinboshi Inc.



Hidetoshi Shibuya, President and CEO, Shibuya Corporation



Iwao Fusejima, President and CEO, FREUND Corporation

Business, particularly when it comes to technology and next-gen innovation, really knows no borders or boundaries in the modern world. Globalization, instant communication and fast-moving media have created virtually open markets for information, labor and trade.

That makes a sense of origin and national pride all the rarer and more valuable, and that's exemplified especially well in Japan. The concept of "Made in Japan" is an important statement, which an increasing number of diverse and exciting firms are helping shape and mold for a new generation. Few traditions in Japanese business are as important as the cherished idea of *monozukuri*, the commitment to the highest possible standards and customer service. It's a concept that remains a key mission for today's captains of industry, and which can be found across many different industries and sectors. "Japanese *monozukuri* is based on teamwork and cooperation within a company, where each member of that company works together towards one common goal," explained Hideaki Shimizu, the CEO of electronics firm Via Mechanics, Ltd. "Through the accumulation of group achievement, we are able to gather knowledge, which helps us further our technological achievements." Hard work and effort is another key factor in the success of businesses steeped in the traditions of "Made in Japan," according to another executive in the manufacturing field.

Iwao Fusejima

"Japan was once very famous for its diligence towards its own work, and perhaps only Japan can be proud of this characteristic compared to other countries," said Yuki Odai, president of automobile components manufacturer OTICS Corp. "This is why we have seen many companies with a long history of 100 years or more and why Japanese companies and *monozukuri* are recognized so highly by the rest of the world." Following on from the success of household names and electronics giants, are the innovative and customer-focused companies working hard to anticipate trends and demand. This strategy is not easy but is a driving factor for many businesses, big and small. "It is highly challenging to meet the customers expectations when one has to provide thousands of different products. We have

the cherished idea of *monozukuri*, the commitment to the highest possible standards and customer service. It's a concept that remains a key mission for today's captains of industry, and which can be found across many different

always pushed ourselves to meet the needs and requirements of our customers depending on their nature," said Yasuhiro Kobayashi, president of catering equipment producer, Hoshizaki Corporation.

Originality is key for companies such as Kinboshi Inc., the manufacturer of a wide range of diverse products. "Our company is trying to show the strength of Japanese manufacturing to the world," said Kazufumi Ishii, president of Kinboshi Inc. "We want to focus on making original high-value products that only our company can produce." While upholding the hard-won Japanese reputation for high standards is vital to firms such as machinery manufacturer FREUND Corporation. "We believe that Japanese services and products are reliable because we always pay attention to the quality of our products," said FREUND president Iwao Fusejima. "Many companies continue to buy our products because we provide the best service." In addition to *monozukuri*, the Japanese ethos of *kaizen*, which means to continually strive to raise the level of quality and performance, is an important tenet of national business culture. Packaging and processing equipment manufacturer Shibuya Corporation president Hidetoshi Shibuya believes it is important to always work to match, and ultimately exceed this standard. "Although the advantages differ based on the industry, we follow the guiding principles of Japanese manufacturing, subtle refinement, and customization," he said.

"Although *kaizen* is a word commonly used to describe Japanese firms, we believe our uniqueness lies in the use of the three kais – *kaizen*, *kaikaku* and *kaibatsu*, which translates to improvement, innovation and development." For Hidemitsu Hori, president of architectural products firm YKK AP, the reason for Japanese success is simple, but he warned that maintaining those standards will not be easy. "A strength

of Japanese companies is their emphasis on high quality, and companies that have adopted swift decision-making processes are often successful," he said. "Finding a way to pass this on to the younger generation will certainly be a challenge looking into the future."

"Japanese *monozukuri* is based on teamwork and cooperation within a company, with one common goal."

Hideaki Shimizu

"Our company is trying to show the strength of Japanese manufacturing to the world."

Kazufumi Ishii

Digital Transformation Offers Wi-Fi Anytime, Anywhere

The Japanese firm working to connect travel abroad with high-speed web communications and its revolutionary wireless Internet rental router system.



Masayasu Tamura, CEO, Telecom Square, Inc.

When virtually all communications and business went online during the COVID-19 pandemic, the world became more digitally dependent than ever before. Now, with business traveler numbers rising post-lockdown, mobile web connectivity has become a crucial part of any business comms strategy – old-fashioned service-lagging and dropped calls are no longer acceptable. Telecom Square, a Japanese telecommunications company, pioneered the first cell phone rental stores in airports in Japan. The firm has been working to cater to the next level of this strategy with its WiFiBOX portable WiFi router system offering top quality web access while traveling. In 2019, more than one million customers around the world used Telecom Square's WiFi Rental Service during and post-pandemic, and those figures expected to rise. "These days, Internet access is as essential to life as water and electricity, and this is especially true for those who are traveling," said Masayasu Tamura. "It is no longer possible to imagine traveling without a smartphone." Launched in April 2022, WiFiBOX has already been installed at major international airports

in Japan, including Narita and Haneda, and train stations in Tokyo, with plans to launch overseas this year. The firm is racing into the future. The next stage of the system's evolution involves a fully automated, contactless service for sales and rental, while the business also hopes to expand its digital service and travel service platform while furthering the product's global appeal. Taiwan is a priority target market, as are other nations across Asia, followed by Europe and the USA. "Within the next years, we will be trying to set up this system in airports around the world so we can enrich the lives of as many travelers as possible," said Tamura. "For us, working with many reliable partners around the world will be the key to success in the future, and we look forward to connecting with them," he said.



Taking Best Practices from Japan Right Around the World

An industrial components manufacturer is exporting its business standards as well as its products.



Hiroyasu Hasegawa, President and Representative Director, Meidoh Co., Ltd.

Quality assurance is a central tenet of every successful Japanese business. It's so important to industrial parts manufacturer Meidoh Co., Ltd. that, as it works to meet rising demand for its products around the world, all its overseas facilities are being held to the same rigorous standards as those in Japan.

The firm, renowned for work in the electric vehicle (EV) automotive and transport sectors, prioritizes customer service across its network, which includes locations such as the USA, Germany and China. "By using the booklet named Meidoh's Philosophy, it is possible for our overseas

plants to produce products of the same high quality as our headquarters in Japan," said President Hiroyasu Hasegawa. Innovation is crucial to the company's growth and is being driven by a dynamic program of mergers and acquisitions adding new technologies to those developed within Meidoh. Sustainability is also a factor, with the goal of reducing the weight of components in EVs, for example, by replacing steel with aluminum. Projects also include supporting Japanese space agency JAXA's lunar vehicle, and using titanium bolts to reduce weight in high speed rail.



Delivering the Future of Business Logistics, Today

Whether it's digital platforms or "real world" shipping solutions, TANAX can provide a one-stop service for it all.



Ippei Tanaka, CEO, TANAX, Inc.

In the age of the instant and the immediate, there are no excuses for missed deadlines or lost deliveries. Moving into the future, logistics will no longer just be about shipping and "real-world" transport. To succeed tomorrow, the businesses of today must offer the same level of service online as in real life—and that's why a Japanese logistics firm is focusing on making DX (digital transformation) a priority going forward. Kyoto-based

TANAX Inc. has traditionally been renowned for its vast logistics experience and promotions work.

Now this expertise is being channeled into the emerging world of DX with systems that help clients implement digital shopfronts with new developed digital tool that can provide information tailored to each approaching customer, with less human interaction required.

The recent upheaval faced by all different kinds of businesses during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with potential impacts of climate change, has made digital services and sales more important than ever.

According to TANAX President Ippei Tanaka, the firm has always worked hard to utilize every resource at its disposal in order to maintain standards. "Our endurance and style of never giving up is one reason why we have been able to persist for so long," he said. "Our sales department, development teams and clients all work together closely, which allows us to provide 'great experiences' and we also often provide new solutions that other competitors are not able to."

The business is currently centered around delivery of items, via its packaging, logistics processing machinery and consultancy expertise, or delivery of a sales message, via its promotions planning teams. What unites these twin strands of the business is its embrace of R&D and next generation technology, such as early adoption of developments such as robotic automation and the IoT (Internet of Things). Logistics innovations have



TANAX has more than 100 years of expertise.

included the "Just Fit Box", a machine that creates and then packages custom-fit boxes around specific items, and the recycled materials WavePac cushioning product to replace bubble wrap—a key part of the firm's sustainability efforts. This has also included developing its own environmental standard, Chanto Eco, an accredited and respected labeling system to identify sustainable materials, for example.

"Regarding SDGs, the demand for sustainable packaging from our clients has increased significantly in recent times," said Tanaka. "Coupled with the increase in the price of raw materials we have been looking for ways to produce lighter, more efficient packaging."

"Always striving to improve UX and CX, and our style of never giving up is what allows us to keep providing great experience."

Ippei Tanaka

Bringing new ideas to clients and customers has been the core of TANAX for more than a hundred years, and the reason why the business has not just lasted since 1907, but still leads today. "We find the potential demands and needs of the market, then work to satisfy them as best

as possible, and this approach has allowed us to maintain our global competitive position," said president Tanaka. "Looking to the future, increasing the speed of the *monozukuri* customer-satisfaction culture will be a key concern for Japanese businesses."

Digital technology is the firm's bravest new frontier, as it strives to support DX to businesses, translating hard-won logistics and promotions skills in existing departments into the new arena. "Our DX business is still currently under development, however, we are looking to introduce products that will be pioneers within the industry," Tanaka said. "Increasing digitalization is definitely the direction for the company, and areas such as the metaverse market will also be a focus moving forward.

We will continue to strive to increase our level of technology and then pass this on to our products."



Making all logistics work for customers and clients is the number one priority.



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Innovation is central to the TANAX strategy.

Sweets for the Future

Sweets and treats firm Ginbis is using new technology to continue age-old tasty traditions.



Shuji Miyamoto, President, Ginbis Co., Ltd.

Running a firm that strives to maintain the traditions of Japanese sweets and snacks, Shuji Miyamoto enjoys being in the business of time travel. His goal is that with every bite of his delicious traditional treats, customers will be taken back in time to their childhoods. At Ginbis Co., Ltd., history comes alive through taste, with classic products including asparagus biscuits that boast the same flavor going back decades. "Our company's dedication to our philosophy of 'giving dreams to sweets' is what makes us stand out in the food and snack product industry," said President Shuji Miyamoto.

Flagship products such as the Asparagus, asparagus-shaped black sesame biscuits, Tabekko Doubutsu, animal-shaped biscuits, and Shimi-choco corn, chocolate-soaked corn puffs have been staples of the Japanese sweet tooth for generations. The firm now hopes to



Animal Shaped Biscuit Butter Flavor

share that magic with overseas markets. "I hope that our snacks will reach the point of influence that they will be integrated and become a signature part of Japanese culture and exported to people all over the world, bringing world peace through our snacks," said Miyamoto. This is in line with increasing global demand for Japanese food products. With sales figures of 1.4 trillion yen in 2021, food exports jumped 25% from the previous year.

The Japanese government aims to raise that to 2 trillion yen within three years. Adhering to tradition, however, does not mean the company ignores modern techniques. Far from it. Ginbis has embraced



Asparagus Shaped Black Sesame Biscuit

DREAMING OF SWEETS!

"The basic principle is to stick to our roots and original tastes."

Shuji Miyamoto



Chocolate Soaked Corn Contain Whole Wheat

new technology to produce egg-free products in line with growing numbers of children with allergies. "Today, many kindergartens and nursery schools give our products to students as a snack," said Miyamoto. A similar scientific approach inspired the development of chocolate with a higher melting point, offering wide-ranging commercial applications in the sector – and leading to a boost in sales.

The Classic and Cutting Edge

Japanese firm Ando combines both modern and traditional techniques for a unique fabric approach.



Hiroshi Tsubokura, President, Ando Co., Ltd.

Any firm with a product range spanning clothes to animation-character merchandise and e-commerce kimonos can certainly be proud of its diverse customer base. That diversity is just one of the reasons for Japanese textile and fabrics firm Ando Co., Ltd.'s success over the last 100 years, and why it is confidently planning for its second century. The Kyoto-based business prides itself on embracing both traditional techniques and modern styles to create the most desirable products. President Hiroshi Tsubokura is a firm believer in adopting and pioneering new technologies such as online showrooms.



"The strength of our company is our effort to combine various kinds of techniques," he said. "E-commerce provides the best way to directly promote our technology and products, while our company has also launched subscription and sharing services." Global markets are also key to the firm's plans, taking inspiration from international trends to complement traditional Japanese styles, while working to expand foreign sales.

Ando's diverse range includes fabric-based jewelry, clothing, bags, tie-ins with children's characters, such as the Moomins, and clothing for organizations such as Shinto monks. According to the president, a central part of the firm's strategy and philosophy is resisting the type of mass production favored in much of the industry. "Our company believes in doing the opposite," said Tsubokura. "When it comes to R&D, we focus on customizations to have a variety of products. It takes excellent talent from our employees to achieve this goal."