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TRUMP'S WORLD TIME



THE GAZA DEAL

by ERIC CORTELLESSA

THE FIGHT FOR TAIWAN

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PUTIN'S POWER PLAY

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Teaching Long-Term Lessons

From papermakers and logistics firms to shrine builders and hot-spring hotels, Japan is home to many of the world's oldest companies. No other country comes close in terms of the number of long-standing firms, with Japan home to over 45,000 companies that are more than 100 years old, surpassing contenders such as Italy and Germany.

While Japanese business practices are often viewed as mysterious or stereotyped, the longevity of these firms stems from several key factors: long-term customer relationships, strong local community ties and, in many cases, leadership passed down through generations.

Sponsoring local festivals and upholding *kaisha no rinen*—the time-honored company philosophy proudly displayed in boardrooms—shows that Japanese companies embrace values that foster long-term resilience. Though sometimes mistaken for rigidity, this mindset has helped overcome countless challenges. As the modern business landscape evolves and presents new hurdles, these traditions remain a valuable strength for the future.

100 YEARS

Nippon Hume Corporation

Tomoyuki Masubuchi

“Over the past century, we’ve played a key role in building Japan’s infrastructure. Now that much of it is aging, we see the next 100 years as an opportunity to renew and repurpose what already exists. Since acquiring our first patents in the 1950s, we have consistently aspired to provide new value to society and solve social issues through cutting-edge technology.”

118 YEARS

Nodaki

Noritsugu Noda

“In the 118 years since our founding, Nodaki has evolved as a cutting tool trading company that supports the forefront of manufacturing. Rather than simply handing out catalogs, our primary focus is to find answers to questions such as ‘Why do we need this product?’ and ‘How can we improve safety?’ We want to be a good partner who can satisfy our clients’ needs.”

143 YEARS

Waseda University

Aiji Tanaka

“Throughout the university’s history, we have attracted people from many different backgrounds, with a culture of respect for students regardless of which country they come from or which religion they follow. Overall, I think that this provides the best environment for international students to pursue an education, with many then looking to stay on in Japan.”

109 YEARS

Nippon Notebook Corporation

Sohei Imaizumi

“We always strive to maintain a high level of service, quality and product design. I believe it ultimately comes down to Japanese culture, or more specifically, the spirit of *omotenashi*. At its core, *omotenashi* means hospitality and acting selflessly for the benefit of others, even if it requires personal sacrifice.”

106 YEARS

Senba Denki Kazai

Tatsuo Inoue

“Our company was established in 1919, marking 106 years since its establishment. We can proudly say that we are the oldest electronics trading house and manufacturer in Osaka. We have an ever-growing footprint overseas, notably subsidiaries in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Suzhou, as well as a small office in Malaysia. I think we are well-equipped for the future.”

120 YEARS

Okuno Chemical Industries

Naoki Okuno

“Okuno’s corporate motto is: ‘Create truly loved products and strive to be truly loved people.’ I believe this same spirit has been carried on by successive presidents, who have treated employees like family across generations. Providing attentive, tailored responses to customer needs and ensuring strong after-sales service are also key factors for long-lasting companies.”

102 YEARS

Taiyo Cabletec Corporation

Akihiro Taniguchi

“Personally, I feel that many long-lived companies in Tokyo are influenced by larger firms, while in Kansai, we have a more independent mindset. Many Japanese companies try to take cues from both traditional methods and Western business culture, blending them to create new business opportunities. I think that in the future we will take this a step further, becoming true global businesses.”

132 YEARS

Kubara Honke

Tetsuji Kawabe

“We have built trust and strong relationships with our suppliers over the years—over a century, in fact. That means a great deal to our business, because I believe business should never be one-sided. It has to be mutual so that both sides can thrive. We’ve developed trustworthy partnerships and secured high-quality ingredients, allowing us to deliver top-tier products to consumers.”

Supporting the Communities of the Future

Nippon Hume has built a 100-year legacy that goes beyond concrete, creating durable infrastructure solutions that are ready to meet the world's growing sustainability demands.



Tomoyuki Masubuchi
President, Nippon Hume Corporation

Japan's civil engineering story is one of resilience. Floods, earthquakes and typhoons have not only brought catastrophe but also innovation in durable building materials. Following the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake, which spurred strong reconstruction efforts in the region, Nippon Hume, a precast concrete manufacturer, was founded with a vision to build long-lasting

infrastructure. Now with 100 years of expertise, President Tomoyuki Masubuchi remains committed to the company's mission to "support social infrastructure." Nippon Hume built its reputation by supporting public works, such as sewer systems. "Japan now faces complex issues, including infrastructure maintenance," said Masubuchi. "Our technology continues to support a more disaster-resilient society." Innovations include Bicrete, a concrete that prevents corrosive deterioration caused by hydrogen sulfide, and e-CON, a sustainable mix with high resistance to acid and salt damage. "e-CON cuts CO2 emissions and extends infrastructure service life, reducing environmental impact across its lifecycle." Looking ahead, the first 100 years were just the start. He said: "No matter how society changes, we hope to support society with our feet on the ground."



The Smart Choice for Energy Solutions

Senba Denki Kazai is bringing home energy management into the next generation with its future-ready smart sensor technology.



Tatsuo Inoue
President, Senba Denki Kazai Co., Ltd.

The term "smart home" often conjures images of robotic assistants and futuristic gadgets. While that vision holds some truth, the greatest advancements are happening behind the scenes—making homes more energy-efficient and sustainable. In Japan, Senba Denki Kazai is a key player in the Home Energy Management Systems (HEMS) market, trusted for its reliable components for smart gas meters. The global push towards smart gas meters has provided a strong boost for the company, with President Tatsuo Inoue seeing future growth potential based on his firm's unique technology. "We supply feedthroughs for ultrasonic smart gas meters. Our special gas-sealing structure allows wires to be stably connected to other components, ensuring that gas is unable to leak out," said Inoue. With local governments targeting environmental goals, including Tokyo's plan to replace all analog water meters with smart versions by 2030, demand for Senba Denki's solutions is growing in Japan and the wider APAC region. "We set up our Malaysia office as our sales hub, allowing us to independently seek out clients in the local area. I believe our future comes down to collaboration with our partners," said Inoue.



The Strongest Link

Osaka's Taiyo Cabletec is dedicated to connecting people, ideas and generations domestically and overseas.



Akihiro Taniguchi
President
Taiyo Cabletec Corporation

Stability, longevity and long-termism are key attributes of many Japanese companies, particularly family-run businesses. Japan has clearly mastered the art of business longevity. The island nation has more than 33,000 companies with over 100 years of history, accounting for over 40% of the global total. Akihiro Taniguchi, president of the 102-year-old wire manufacturer Taiyo Cabletec, takes pride not only in Japan's reputation for enduring enterprises, but also in the distinct entrepreneurial spirit of the Kansai region. "In Osaka, we have a relatively 'free' culture that follows its own independent rules. Also, there are generally more businesses that are owned and run by families in the Kansai region, compared to Kanto," he said.

The company was founded in the early 1900s as Taniguchi Densen Works, when Taniguchi's great-grandfather recognized a growing demand for electric wire production, crucial to Japan's rapid industrialization at the time. Looking back, Taniguchi said, "There were many visionaries at that time who sought to meet this demand, including the Furukawa and Tsuda families, as well as of course, our great-grandfather." Since those early days, Taiyo has gone on to become Japan's premier manufacturer of high-performance cables for varying use cases. And while today's cables must be thinner, stronger and more durable, Taniguchi emphasizes that some fundamentals remain unchanged. "We are still reliant on craftsmanship

in the industry. Although robotics and factory automation help somewhat, we are still a human-centric field. Particularly when it comes to quality control and small-lot production, we need the skills of craftsmen who understand the capabilities of each machine," he said.

One of the company's key focus points is the robotics sector, a field in which Japan excels, exporting over 160,000 industrial robots annually. Taiyo's patented robot cables are made using a special copper-forming process that produces strands as thin as 0.05 mm in diameter, finer than a human hair. This, Taniguchi believes, is essential as robots increasingly need to make complex, repetitive movements. "We need to work toward thinner cables that can be used in lightweight

products.

Durability

is a key concern

in the industry, ensuring that cables do not break from bending or twisting," he said. In recent years, Taiyo Cabletec has expanded its global footprint, connecting its Osaka headquarters with facilities in China and Thailand. With ambitious goals for the future, Taniguchi is focused on attracting top talent by offering competitive wages and improved working conditions. When entering new markets, he emphasizes the importance of building long-term, trust-based partnerships. "In Southeast Asia, we plan to expand our facilities further, working from our current production base in Thailand. Of course, this cannot be done by only us; we need strong relationships with local partners in each market," he said.

Despite a wealth of change and new opportunities on the horizon, Taniguchi remains grounded in the legacy built over the past 100 years. "There is always a push to preserve heritage in the long run," he said, reflecting on the nature of a family-run business. "Similar to the confectionery makers and craft workshops of Kyoto, we are committed to keeping tradition alive over the generations."



Keep Moving Parts Moving



“We have widened our portfolio along with new original items that we produce to meet demand.”

Noritsugu Noda
President
Nodaki Co., Ltd.

A Japanese cutting tool trading company is helping support a wide range of clients by combining new technology with traditional quality service. Nodaki has more than a century of experience supplying the automotive and manufacturing industries, and today enjoys strong shares in sectors such as aerospace. President Noritsugu Noda believes trading companies are vital in modern business and said the firm is committed to driving sales by remaining agile, innovative and customer-focused. Nodaki's recent product advances include environmental and disaster prevention-related items, as well as AI-enabled inspection devices. “Amid changes in the business environment, Nodaki will continue to respond to diverse customer needs, maintaining a broad product lineup and meeting requests with our rich expertise,” said Noda.



Better Together

Far from being an insular island nation, Japan has been quick to create value overseas, from neighboring Southeast Asia to regions further afield. Here, several Japanese business leaders share their thoughts on responsible international expansion.

Tatsuyoshi Yabashi, chairman of industrial materials firm Yabashi Holdings: “I made the decision to invest in Vietnam by sending over our Japanese engineers. I felt that with our support, the workers could benefit from a safer, lower-risk working environment.”

Ayako Fujiwara, president of steam system manufacturer TLV: “I frequently visit our overseas locations in person. While it would be easier to send a representative, we prioritize face-to-face meetings, investing time and resources to build direct relationships with our staff.”

Akitaka Miyamoto, CEO of automobile exporter TAU Corporation: “We partnered with a university in the Philippines and invested significantly in helping establish a new curriculum focused on metalworking, responding to the country's growing demand for these skills. I believe this approach benefits both local businesses in the Philippines and Japanese manufacturers.”

Chemicals That Power Progress

Osaka's Okuno Chemical Industries is dedicated to advancing essential industrial processes, enabling many of the products that we rely on today.



Naoki Okuno
President and CEO
Okuno Chemical Industries Co., Ltd.

Japanese companies often thrive for generations thanks to their personal approach to business. As Naoki Okuno, president of Osaka-based Okuno Chemical Industries, puts it, “Building trust with customers is essential, while continuously developing employees is crucial.” Founded over a century ago, Okuno has continually adapted—shifting from Japan's first domestic baking powder producer to a key player in modern electronics. Their “TORYZA EL Process” chemical system (a play on *oryza*, the Latin term for rice, a staple food) is now widely used in the semiconductor industry. “We hope this will now become a staple of our future,” said Okuno. To support local and global clients, the company has expanded overseas, launching Okuno India this year. “We'll open a sales office in Vietnam by 2026 and then soon look to establish a surface treatment R&D facility in Thailand,” Okuno added. Sustainability is also a growing focus. In 2024, Okuno opened its eco-friendly iCUBE plant, designed to foster collaboration, promote green initiatives and support digital transformation. “It's been a turning point, helping employees feel a stronger sense of ownership,” said Okuno.



Moving Ahead With a Strong Ethos

Expanding beyond the automotive sector, Japan's TAU Corporation is taking on critical issues in sustainability and disaster resilience.



Akitaka Miyamoto
CEO
TAU Corporation

Reliability, efficiency and durability are common words associated with Japanese cars, and a big reason why they are beloved around the world. Japan's global popularity in the auto market, combined with a steady supply of new models driven by strict *shaken* (vehicle inspection) regulations, has led to a thriving used vehicle export industry. From high-performance sports cars and compact *kei* trucks to heavy-duty agricultural equipment, Japan exports over 1.5 million vehicles annually. This business model not only meets the needs of buyers across the globe but also delivers environmental benefits back home.

Akitaka Miyamoto, CEO of TAU Corporation, is a firm believer in this. Raised around cars and determined to make his place in the automotive industry, Miyamoto has grown TAU into Japan's leading exporter of used vehicles. He sees this system as a win-win for all involved. "Depreciation encourages car owners to trade in older vehicles for newer ones, and as a result, many well-maintained Japanese used cars are exported overseas," he said. "Japanese cars are especially popular in developing markets because of their affordability and reliability. That makes access to high-quality Japanese vehicles even more valuable overseas, creating ideal conditions for used car exporters such as us."

TAU has built a robust network over the years, handling all aspects of transportation, customs and licens-

ing—an essential task given its presence in over 120 countries. "We deal with all types of vehicles from virtually every manufacturer. In the early days of our business, we focused primarily on the Oceania region, including Australia, exporting popular pickups such as the Toyota Hilux. But today, our reach is much broader," said Miyamoto. Essential to TAU's future expansion is their 'Super Cartender' complex. Based in the northern area of Kyushu, the center works on dismantling and repairing used vehicles, which Miyamoto believes is essential to reducing the industry's environmental impact. "I believe the foundation of business is not only about increasing the financial value of a vehicle, but also about how much we

can contribute to preserving the planet's ecosystem," he said. The sprawling Super Cartender plant creates value by pooling recycled car parts, providing cost savings for consumers and environmental benefits for the planet. In the future, Miyamoto has dreams of expanding this model further afield. "We're working to grow this initiative nationwide and beyond Japan's borders to the Philippines, Malaysia and other parts of Southeast Asia," he said. "As we work to accelerate our global business in the coming years, we know that simply sending Japanese employees abroad isn't enough. We cannot achieve our goals alone. We need strong local partners—people with different backgrounds, values, business customs and religious perspectives."

Thinking outside the box has been a constant for Miyamoto throughout his career. With the threat of natural disasters constantly looming over Japan, he launched the Ethos Cooperative Union in collaboration with local municipalities across the country and construction machinery providers. "Of course, we cannot stop unexpected climate emergencies. However, we aim to accelerate the pace of reconstruction after events like hurricanes and typhoons. The current generation, myself included, must ensure we do not leave a negative legacy for the next," he said.

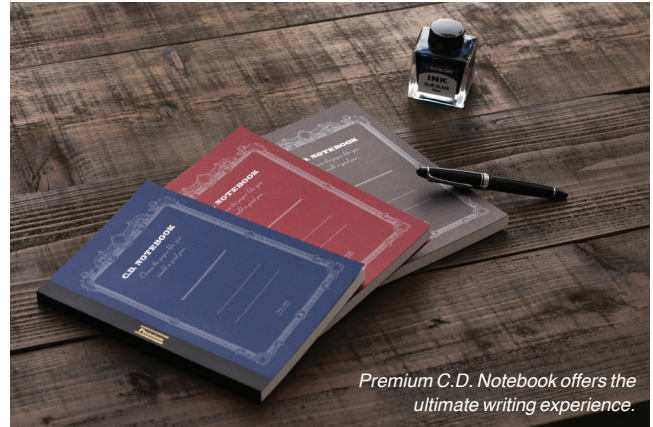


Making Something Noteworthy

Japan's Nippon Notebook Corporation is championing the paper-based approach, offering high-quality tools for writing, drawing and creative expression.

Sohei Imaizumi

President
Nippon Notebook Corporation



Premium C.D. Notebook offers the ultimate writing experience.

As digital tools increasingly become the norm, it's easy to assume the traditional paper notebook is on the decline. However, paper remains the tool of choice for many discerning tasks and professions. From a child's first scribbles to a student's notes, a professional's planner or even an author's memoirs, paper remains a time-honored medium. In Japan, the market for paper notebooks is more than just surviving—it is thriving. The tactile appeal of physical stationery resonates with those who value aesthetics, fueling a robust and innovative stationery industry. New products are regularly introduced to the market, blending classic designs with modern technology.

From modular *techo* notebooks favored by urban professionals to *genkō yōshi*, the traditional squared paper used by students for essay writing, writing paper remains big business. For Nippon Notebook Corporation, a company formed through an alliance of three historic stationery brands—Kyokuto, Apica and Okina—with a combined legacy of over 100 years, it has never been a better time to be in the paper business. Led by company President Sohei Imaizumi, a committed champion of paper, Nippon Notebook has seen strong demand as customers turn away from screens and seek out more tangible goods. “As digital tools evolve at a rapid pace, there is a growing appreciation for analog products. In some ways, they are increasing in value due to the progress of the digital world,” said

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Imaizumi. “Writing by hand allows for freedom of movement, activating different parts of the brain in a more dynamic way. In that sense, it's incredibly important to use analog tools that support our cognitive health and keep our brains engaged,” he added.

Apica is now expanding into overseas markets as a global brand. C.D. Notebook, its flagship product, was launched in 1987 and has become a top seller. Celebrating the product's 25th anniversary, the new Premium C.D. Notebook was launched in 2012, with a special focus on each of its components, including the paper and binding method. Based on the concept of “choose paper like you would a good pen,” writers feel the “smoothness of

silk” with this notebook. Staying true to its customer-first philosophy, Nippon Notebook continues to expand its wide range of products tailored to different needs and preferences. “Whenever we develop something new, we put ourselves in the user's shoes and ask how we can improve their experience—not just in the product itself, but also in its longevity and support,” said Imaizumi. “Ultimately, I believe this mindset is what makes ‘Made in Japan’ products so highly regarded around the world.” To this end, he sees strong growth potential in the overseas consumer base. “Our priority is now on distribution channels, which are key to effectively penetrating local markets,” said Imaizumi.



APICA

C.D. NOTEBOOK

Most advanced quality
Gives best writing features



Technology Titans

Japan is entering a new technological era, powered by rapid advances in artificial intelligence and digital tools. Key industry leaders, from chemicals to software development, share their perspectives on how these changes are shaping the nation's future:

Yoichi Imamura, president of Three R Corporation, believes that Japan is at the threshold of “a new industrial revolution,” noting that “we are seeing a surge in emerging technologies like AI.”

Kenji Tsuge, president of Nippon Paint Surf Chemicals, says that “advancements in surface treatment methods are expected to play a crucial role in the processing of electronic boards that enable high-speed data processing and communications.”

Yasuhiro Nakajima, president of ARK Information Systems, says: “I think that Japanese people are basically craftspeople, always trying to improve the status quo using a variety of tools, including IT. In this sense, we see IT as a means to optimize systems, which is why we are skilled at creating better hardware and advanced technology.”

Empowered Education

For nearly 150 years, Waseda University has been at the forefront of forward-thinking education.

Aiji Tanaka
President
Waseda University



President Aiji Tanaka is on a mission. As the leader of Waseda University, one of Japan's top academic institutions, he is working to further revamp education. Founded in 1882, Waseda has long been at the forefront of progressive thought, with distinguished alumni spanning business, politics and science, as well as sports and the arts. Today, it continues to equip students with the skills for success in a rapidly changing world.

“Now is the time to start a new educational system, one through which students can learn to overcome problems that are yet unknown. While this is ambitious, it is an important task for future students to learn to think in this way,” said Tanaka, as he works to build a curriculum that prepares students for an increasingly uncertain world. Over 47,000 students attend Waseda, including over 8,000 international students, supported by a wide range of language-learning opportunities. “This cohort faces problems related to language and cultural barriers. As such, we offer courses in English in many of our schools, both for Japanese and international students,” said Tanaka. “And by providing Japanese language education, international students can manage daily social interactions and live here comfortably.” As part of Waseda's ‘Vision 150’—a strategic plan to establish Waseda University as a leading global university by its 150th anniversary in 2032—several key changes are already in place. Alongside new facilities and a vigorous focus on digital literacy, Tanaka has imparted a strong vision of Waseda as an institution of inclusivity. “At Waseda University, people are respected equally. This has been the case since our inception as an institution, and continues to this day,” he said.



Growing Global



“I hope to build more partnerships, particularly with countries sharing cultural ties with Japan.”

Tatsuyoshi Yabashi
Chairman
Yabashi Holdings Co., Ltd.

Japanese business Yabashi Holdings has enjoyed generations of success through its work with a range of essential manufacturing materials. Its mission of “exploring humankind” has led the group to establish a total of 17 subsidiaries working with a diverse range of wood, metals and limestone. By maintaining both domestic and international bases, Yabashi is committed to creating a “multinational harmonious environment” through international hiring. “Yabashi already has recruited talent from across East and Southeast Asia, as well as Africa. Looking ahead, we see strong potential in other regions as well,” said Chairman Tatsuyoshi Yabashi. “My goal is to support communities in these regions while fostering mutual growth. Expanding our team to include more diverse and multicultural voices is something I care deeply about,” added Yabashi.

