

Experiential programs for educational tours

Higashi-Osaka, a manufacturing town

SDGs at the Town Factory

Case Studies



Creation of an Experiential Program for Educational Tours

Higashi-Osaka, the City of Manufacturing / SDGs at Town Factories



17 SDGs icons



What does it mean that there were more than 10,000 manufacturing businesses in Higashiosaka in 1990 but less than 6,000 in 2016? The sustainability referred to in “SDGs” speaks not just to managing resources, but also to the endurance and durability that are part of the underlying strengths of local factories.

The SDGs were established in 2015, but the spirit they encapsulate has been integral to the Japanese way of life for centuries. This can be seen in many traditional Japanese sayings that speak to this mindset, such as “Hataraku wa hata o raku ni suru koto (Work is the act of striving to benefit others)” and “Jibun yoshi, aite yoshi, seken yoshi (Good for me, good for you, good for society).”

Our factory tours are at the forefront of today’s career-oriented educational travel. Not just showcases for technology, the tours also offer an in-depth look into aspirations and thought processes that drive local factories’ efforts to tackle global challenges.

Many of the 17 sustainable development goals and 169 targets correlate, directly or indirectly, with the operations and goals of local manufacturing businesses, and each factory strives to achieve them in their own way, for instance by using materials with a lower environmental impact, installing eco-friendly machinery, or improving working practices. Our tours highlight the efforts of different factories here in Higashiosaka to help meet the SDGs and address global challenges.





Our SDGs



Most presentation boxes made of recycled paper

The hardened paper “cores” we use in boxes for cosmetics sold in department stores, presentation boxes for graduation certificate, etc., are mostly made of recycled paper.



Rewarding career opportunities for female employees!

We have two female employees, both of whom are in management positions: one is president, the other department manager.



Placing a premium on communication among employees

We have a scheme (currently interrupted by Covid) for pooling funds for overseas staff trips and in-house events. We also strive to build and maintain a good working environment.



Committed to handcraft

We focus on the kind of intricate, handcrafted decorative presentation boxes that cannot be imitated by machines.



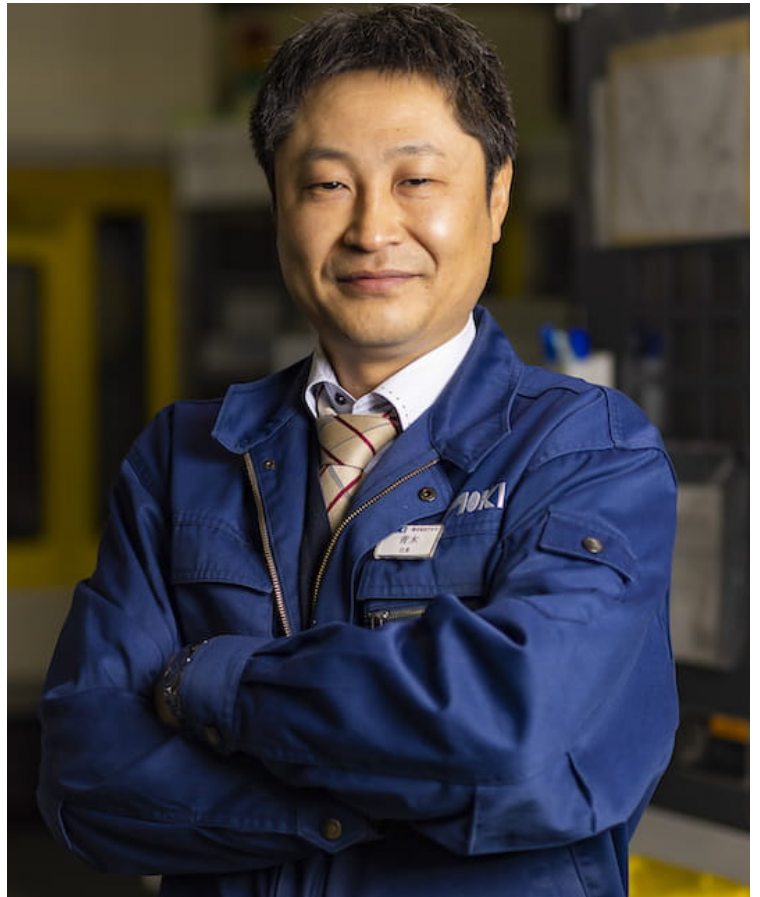
Hosting Fascinating Factory Tours

We open our factory to the public through factory tours, and our employees are always encouraged and motivated by feedback received from participants.



Aoki Inc.

This company is headed by Ex-chairman Toyohiko Aoki, a key figure in the legendary local effort to build a satellite “Maido No. 1” for launch into space by JAXA, Japan’s space agency. Aoki was founded as an agricultural machinery parts maker, but later moved into shipbuilding plant machinery, hydraulics, and robot parts, and eventually aerospace components. They also have an authorized Boeing (USA) factory. Recently, they have been expanding into the medical field, and have taken parts orders from major pharmaceutical companies.



Activity

Factory / Plant Tour

Max. Group Size: 30

Tour Duration: 60+ minutes



Address◆5-7-3 Takaidanaka, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 577-0065 Japan

Website◆aoki-maido.co.jp





Sustainability-focused business management

We pursue business from a standpoint of long-term good for the planet (i.e., 100 years, 200 years into the future) rather than short-term gain.



President sends birthday presents to employees' homes

We aim to foster pride in our company. One initiative is birthday gifts from the president sent to employees' homes.



Preserving time-honored technologies for future generations

In a location (Higashiosaka) where business numbers are declining, we seek to prevent the loss of manufacturing techniques and craftsmanship through M&A.



Promoting physical and mental health awareness

We have various initiatives in place to boost employee awareness of wellbeing, including sharing TV programs on Japan's impending work-age population shortage and other global issues, and holding mental health workshops.



The workplace as the last bastion of education

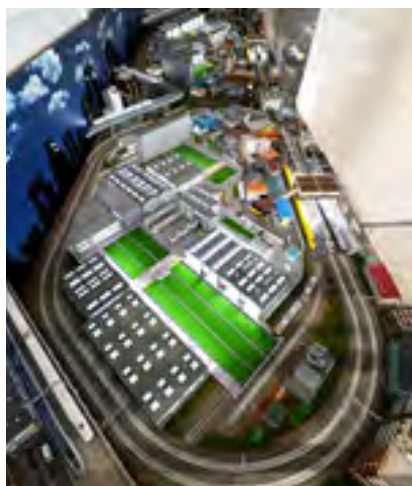
Hosting factory tours has reminded us of the important roles a company performs, and has injected renewed vigor into our efforts to train new graduate employees. After all, the workplace is the last bastion of education.



Excellent Co., Ltd.

Excellent makes, supplies, and assembles components for a major rolling stock manufacturer, including iron, stainless steel, and aluminum parts for chasses, structures, internal and external fittings used in rolling stock on JR and other railways. Major projects include manufacturing components for the Dubai Metro (first urban train network in the Arabian Peninsula), as well as the Hokuriku Shinkansen, the Rail Star, and Kintetsu Railway express trains.

Visitors to Excellent are struck by the relative youth of the president and employees, which underlines the company's position as a vital player in Japan's manufacturing future. Another highlight is the intricate diorama of the local town, including buildings, railways, and other infrastructure.



Factory / Plant Tour

◆Max. Group Size: 20 students, 1 teacher

After watching a video presentation by the president, the party splits into groups to see the design department and factory before reconvening for a Q&A session.

Address◆2-5-6 Inada Shin-machi Higashiosaka City, Osaka 577-0004 Japan
Website◆kk-excellent.co.jp



Our SDGs



A builder of trains, the eco-friendly transport

We manufacture various train components, including interiors. Rail travel is increasingly seen as a low-emission, eco-friendly mode of transport, and we are convinced that companies involved in train manufacture are part of the effort to solve environmental problems.



A workplace that's female-friendly and rewarding for all

Employees' views were taken into account when renovating the company's break room and women's locker room. We also strive to maintain a workplace where employees can take pride in their work, such as by planning staff trips to use trains we helped manufacture.



Using waste materials

Waste materials are an inevitable part of manufacturing, but we strive to develop unique products that use such waste materials as a resource.



Partnering with universities to create better work environments

We enlisted the help of Kindai University research labs and students on projects such as the break room renovation, staff uniform redesign, and the development of in-house products using scrap wood.





Our SDGs



Company logo shows steadfast commitment to the community

Being based in a manufacturing stronghold such as Higashiosaka is a blessing, and we strive to repay that favor by giving back to the community, e.g., through donations to local elementary schools. Our company logo is also a tribute to our town, being shaped like a rugby ball to signify our connection with Japan's most famous rugby location.



Encouraging employees to discover the fun of free thinking

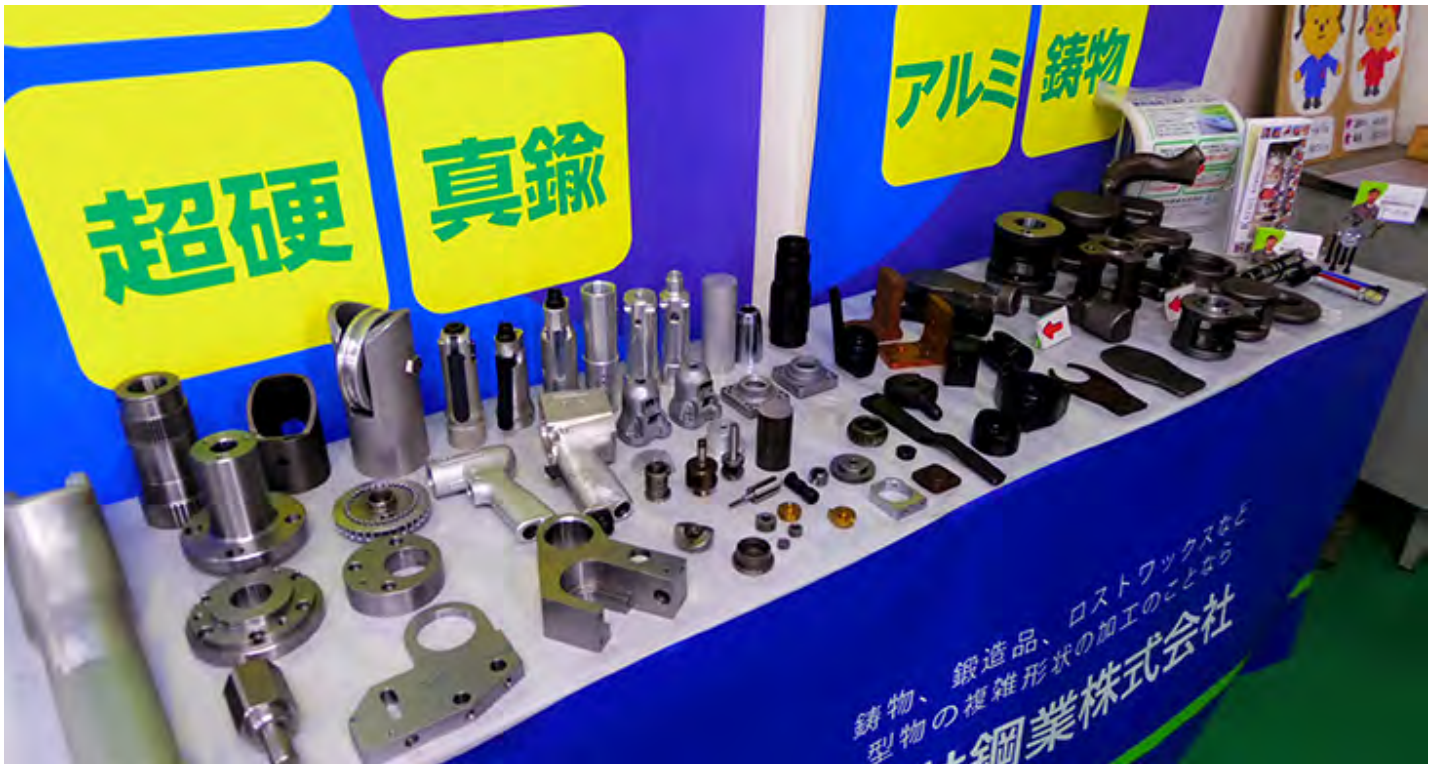
We hold meetings (during work hours) where employees can throw around ideas about whatever they like. Currently, some motorcycling enthusiasts among our workforce are discussing the kinds of parking facilities and tools that would be convenient for motorbikes. These meetings grew from a request by an employee to use company materials for personal use, and we continue with them in the hope that employees will discover the fun of free thinking.



Boosting interest in manufacturing among youths

We are striving to address the increasing industry-wide shortage of new talent by raising interest in manufacturing among children through factory tours and manufacturing-related tourism. The tours have a positive effect, including employees giving more day-to-day thought to how their work would look to tour participants, as well as a much tidier factory





Our SDGs



Recreation Committee and growth sheets: Making work a rewarding experience

We launched a Recreation Committee in 2022, and we look forward to seeing its projects and outcomes. We also introduced “growth sheets,” which employees use to plot their progress in learning work processes and becoming fully fledged experts. In this way, we are making a conscious effort to make work a rewarding experience for employees.



Teaming up with universities on new initiatives

We have teamed up with Hannan University on a class that involves performing an objective evaluation of our company. We value the perspective of the younger generation.



Active recruitment of female employees

Where once we had only one female employee, now women make up 30% of our workforce, and our workplace is much brighter and more welcoming as a result. Other initiatives contributing to a cycle of positivity at work include opening up the design and name of the company mascot to employee ideas.



Hosting Fascinating Factory Tours

Factory tours are an ideal way to make manufacturing more accessible. We strive to ensure participants discover the joy of making things and develop an interest in the manufacturing industry.





Our SDGs



Going fabless results in new strengths

We have pursued fabless manufacturing* since 1984, and have been able to discontinue the molding and tooling sections of our plant. The resulting nimbleness and flexibility of operations enables us to provide clients with precise solutions that scratch their itch.



A business model that major corporations cannot hope to emulate

We identified the "young mums" segment as an ideal niche market for a company like ours, small and nimble with a flexibility that the lumbering giant corporations cannot match. We swiftly established a Young Mums Product Development Department, enlisted the help of various partners, and began creating a variety of new products. Today, that mindset continues to inspire out in-house brands Norn and Daccolino.



Making non-working time as enriching and working hours are rewarding

We have been serious about helping employees achieve a good work-life balance since long before it became fashionable in the corporate world. The establishment of our Work-Life Balance Committee around 2009 led to reforms to make non-working time as enriching and working hours are rewarding. We have systems in place to make coordinating time on and time off as smooth as possible, including by-the-hour leave in addition to basics such as maternity and childcare leave.

*Fabless manufacturing is the design and sale of products while outsourcing their fabrication to a specialized manufacturer, thus the company does not have its own in-house fabrication facilities. Specifically, the company plans, designs, and develops products, but outsources all or most of the manufacturing itself, procures products on an OEM basis, and sells them as its own brand products. (Source: Wikipedia)

Hataori Workshop

Kawachi cotton was shaped by the landscape. Hataori strives to help that legacy flourish, and fosters deeper care and interest among local residents by involving them in gathering cotton seeds, cultivating the plants, and processing the harvest. Even complete beginners can try weaving.



Activity

Weaving / Spinning Thread / Cotton Ginning

Max. Group Size: 20

Tour Duration: 60-90 minutes



Address◆3-2-13 Higashiishikiri-cho, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 579-8011 Japan

Website◆kawachi-hataori-kobo.jimdofree.com





Preserving the Kawachi region's cotton-weaving tradition

Through trial, error, and expert advice from university professors, we have re-established a dying local industry, and we are now able to perform all the cotton production processes (except dyeing) right here at our workshop using cotton grown in Higashiosaka, first city of the Kawachi region.



An enjoyable, unhurried working environment

We began with just a few people, and our team has grown to 25 members ranging in age from 20s to 80s. That growth has been underpinned by a working style that focuses on enjoyment, in which staff can work on their skills at their own pace rather than being forced.



Eliminating waste from production

All cotton produced here is used, right down to the offcuts, which are used to make coasters, straps, and other small items. This spirit of waste-not-want-not and not taking anything for granted is deeply rooted in local tradition.



An eager host of study tours, participants in local expos

As part of our mission to reach as many people as possible, we host a variety of tours, including manufacturing study tours and hands-on workshop tours. Interestingly, there is a difference between those two kinds of tours in the demographics of the participants.





Our SDGs



Our quest for better products by focusing on the human touch

Amid swift technological innovation and an increasingly mechanized manufacturing industry, we choose to focus on work that requires a human touch. And we place particular importance on communication among employees and with customers.



Maintaining a high level of awareness

Our manufacturing processes are divided across multiple companies; if one person isn't pulling their weight, the whole operation suffers, so everyone bears a responsibility to play their part. We instill and reinforce awareness of this through adherence to the "five Ss" of workplace organization (sort, set in order, shine, standardize, sustain) plus one additional S: safety. We also hold periodic report sessions to raise awareness.



Boosting interest and involvement in the manufacturing industry

In addition to our long-standing practice of hosting groups of local schoolchildren, we have also begun hosting factory tours. We hope to spark an interest in a manufacturing career in as many people as possible, and thereby help alleviate the lack of new talent entering the industry. We even gave thought to ideal routing for tour groups when designing our new company premises.



Recycling manufacturing waste

We always separate and recycle offcuts and other byproducts from manufacturing processes. Sure, it means additional work, but it's worth it for the sake of the environment.

Kyowakogyo Co., Ltd.

■Founded: 1968

■Business: Manufacture of chain-link wire netting

Kyowakogyo offers a huge variety of chain-link wire netting made from many different kinds of wire ideal for huge public projects and home handywork alike.

■The company has acquired patents for a variety of items, including snow fencing and “knit” fencing.

■Typical wire netting for fences has a mesh size of 50mm, but Kyowakogyo has special technologies that allow for mesh as fine as 10mm.

■The company's president, Koji Morinaga, is a constant source of youthful ideas for expanding the potential uses of chain-link wire netting. This innovative thinking is combined with the long experience of the company's craftspeople to develop new items, including furniture such as benches and stools, and even bags and pencil cases.



Factory / Plant Tour

- ◆Hours Available: 10:00-16:00 (a.m. bookings preferred)
- ◆Max. Group Size: 20
- ◆Tour Duration: 60 minutes

①Overview of the company and its products (10+ mins.)



②Factory tour (30+ mins.)



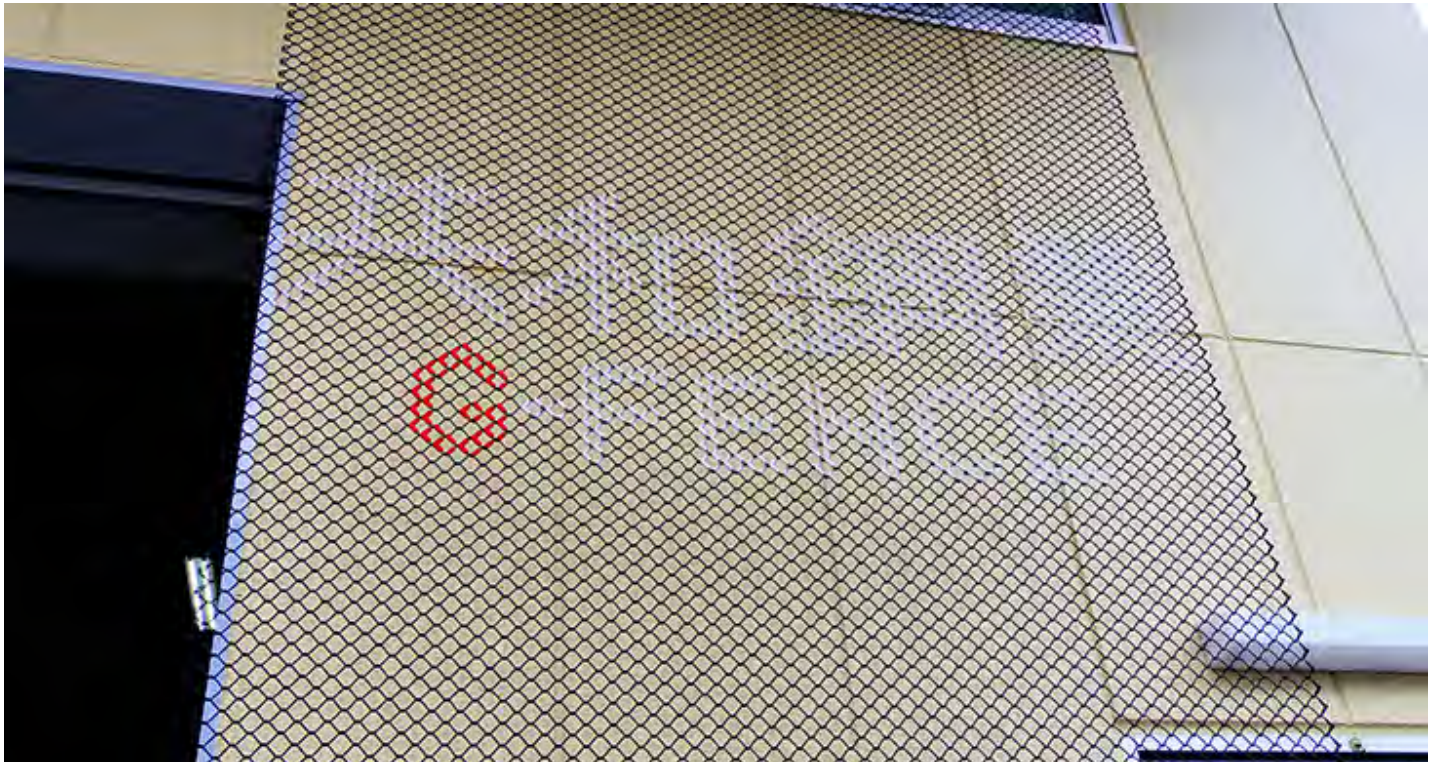
③Q&A (15+ mins.)



Address: 5-8-10 Mizuhai, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 578-0921 Japan

Website◆<https://www.kyowakogyo.net/>





Our SDGs



More than just fencing: Exploring new applications for wire mesh

Wire mesh is one of those things that are ubiquitous but you don't really notice. Our partnership with Kindai University to invent new uses for wire mesh beyond the obvious (e.g., fencing) has led to new has expanded the scope of our manufacturing operations. This is just one example of multiple initiatives aimed at harnessing our strength in producing fine mesh.



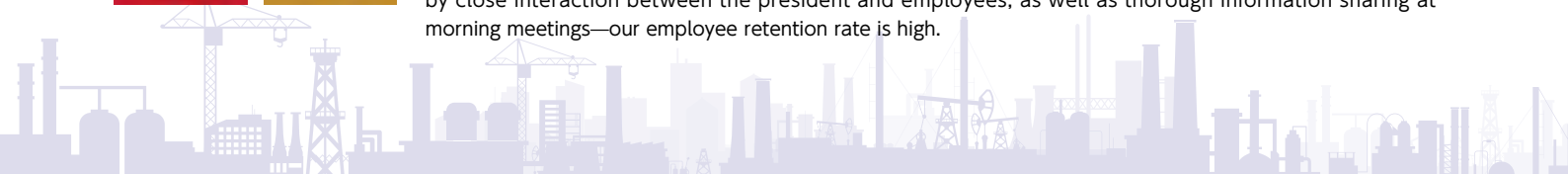
Employees are a core part of the deciding on company policy

When revamping our company management policies, we enlisted the help of experts in design management, which enabled us to incorporate views from across our whole workforce into policy design. Employees, who typically dislike these kinds of meetings, participated eagerly and provided many concepts and views that became key facets of the new policies. The outcomes were laid out in a booklet and distributed companywide to ensure everyone was pulling in the same direction.



Workforce rejuvenation and close communication

An effort to rejuvenate our workforce over the past several years has brought down the average age, and 40-somethings are now the largest age group. Thanks to our commitment to communication—as illustrated by close interaction between the president and employees, as well as thorough information sharing at morning meetings—our employee retention rate is high.



Kinki Kogyo Inc.

■Founded: 1951

■Business: Manufacture of hydraulic cylinders and related parts (for barber and beauty salon chairs, dentist's chairs and medical examination tables); clutches and conveyor rollers (for lawn mowers and tea pickers); and hydraulic pipe fittings, attachments, and other components (for construction equipment and heavy machinery)

■Certifications: ISO 9001 (for quality management), received in 1999. ISO 14001 (for environmental management), received in 2012

■Awards: Higashiosaka City "Excellent Company" Award (2011). "Excellent Company of Osaka" Award (2013)

■Company Philosophy: "Attentive service, delivered with heart"

■President Soichi Tanaka's Motto

We are a people-focused company. We value close communication, we put our customers first, and we believe that if we focus on getting the basics right then greater things will follow.



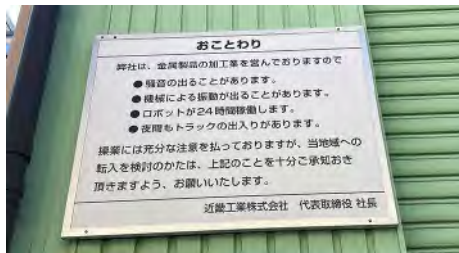
Factory / Plant Tour

- ◆Hours Available: 10:00-17:00
- ◆Max. Group Size: 20
- ◆Tour Duration: 60 minutes
- ① Factory tour (20 mins.)
↓
- ② Overview of company by President Soichi Tanaka (20 mins.)
↓
- ③ Q&A session, feedback survey (20 mins.)

Address: 2-1-25 Honjyou, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 578-0953 Japan

Website◆<http://www.kinki-ind.co.jp/>





Our SDGs



Proactive adoption of IoT

We pride ourselves on our factory automation, and have adopted IoT technology over the past several years. We previously aspired to have a subsidiary factory overseas (e.g., in Vietnam), but adopting IoT has enabled us to do the work ourselves. In this way, we use IT to optimize manufacturing operations: we perform the main tasks in-house while connecting with manufacturing facilities around the world to call on when required.



Change in management style from top-down management to team effort

In the past, a company's proprietor was expected to know all and do everything, and decision-making was a top-down affair; now, though, company management is a team effort. We think together, and if we fail as a result of our thinking, we dust ourselves off and try something else. Our management style encourages people to try without fear of failure.



Signage to boost understanding among our new neighbors

Noise and odors are an inevitable part of manufacturing. Since the area surrounding our factory has been developed into residential housing, we have striven to promote understanding among our neighbors by posting signs about noise, truck traffic, etc.



Accepting visits from overseas managers

We host study tours (organized by the Japan International Cooperation Agency) of overseas SME proprietors. These tours are a good way to promote one of Japan's better qualities.



Shigehara Inc.

Shigehara produces parts for car and motorcycle engines and transmissions. It has the technology to mill a part from a single lump of metal based on 3D models. The company's strength is its ability to manufacture one-off pieces with short lead times since there is no need for molds. It specializes in taking on prototype pieces and small part lots. Customers know they are getting higher-value solutions for their money, backed by Shigehara's unrivalled technological capabilities. It is no wonder Shigehara is attracting attention as a model of the future of craftsmanship. Currently, the company is focusing its strength on developing multi-stage reduction gears for electric cars, and its own experimental car won the All Japan EV -GP Series. And since Shigehara provides racing parts to major auto-makers as well, its technological capabilities are in demand.



Factory / Plant Tour

Max. Group Size: 20 people

Tour Duration: 60 minutes

Address◆5-2-7 Higashikonoike-cho, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 578-0973 Japan

Website◆shigehara.co.jp





Expanding our energy-related businesses

Shigehara provides unique technology and expertise based on our ethos, "Achieving the seemingly impossible." In recent years, we have been working with major companies to develop new technologies that convert waste heat into power that can drive vehicles. Our plan is to expand our new energy business further in future with a focus on electric vehicles.



Maximizing the benefits of our unique location in Higashiosaka

There are around 6,000 factories in Higashiosaka. This high concentration of talent is a unique feature of the area. Our ability to "achieve the seemingly impossible" reflects the benefits of our location in Higashiosaka.



Fascinating Factory Tours

Since 2021 we have hosted Fascinating Factory Tours. We know company employees don't often get the chance to bring their families into work, so the emphasis of this event is on welcoming families to the factory rather than the general public. We leave it up to the employees to plan out the program of activities. We want them to feel a sense of pride in working at Shigehara.



Creating a rewarding work environment

We have been recognized as a Health & Productivity Management Outstanding Organization since 2020 and have been nominated as one of the "Bright 500" enterprises in this category. We are also working with the Bank of Kyoto on formulating our SDGs Declaration.



Our SDGs



Separating recyclables since before it was popular

Our product, "Hokkaru" (a paper container with a separable plastic film to help sort waste) debuted in 2000 at the Nakanoshima Festival. We were ahead of the curve here since this was in the days before things like separate bins for different kinds of garbage were common. Naturally, we use FSC certified paper. Our "Hokkaru" initiative has been featured in elementary school social studies textbooks.



Correcting the gender imbalance

We now have a much larger proportion of female employees than we used to. This has led us to upgrade the workplace environment, for instance by providing gender-separate break areas and restrooms as standard.



Boosting community spirit through sports collaboration initiatives

High-school baseball players who make the national championship tournament at Koshien Stadium (Japanese baseball's Mecca) are allowed to take home a bit of soil as a memento, but rugby players are not allowed to do this at the rugby equivalent, Hanazono Stadium here in Higashiosaka. Our solution is to make colored paper by kneading grass mown from the pitch that would otherwise be incinerated. The players can write on this to make souvenirs of playing in the national rugby tournament. We also have a similar initiative with FC Osaka, a soccer club in Higashiosaka.



Seiko SCM Corporation

Strengths

Seiko SCM has been a mainstay of local manufacturing for around 60 years, producing light fittings, die-casting dies, and die-cast components. Originally a manufacturer for other brands, Seiko SCM now produces a variety of items under its own brand, offering discerning customers worldwide interior decorations that highlight the intricate skill and boundless creativity of Japanese craftsmanship.

Factory Tours

We want you to see what goes on in local factories! In order to spread the word about the fun of manufacturing work and the awesome craftsmen and women in this industry, we hold “Come and see a factory!” tours. We love these events because they’re fun for participants, beneficial for us, and contribute to the broader development of Higashiosaka.

The Local Community

We are eager to join other local factories and play our part in helping Higashiosaka, with its proud tradition of manufacturing and craftsmanship, continue to thrive at a time when local cities are in decline.



Tour Content

The die-casting workshop, where the design office is located amid the production line to facilitate smooth teamwork between designers and shop staff. See the machining, NC EDM, wire EDM, and polishing stations→Spinning process and the versatile welding station→Three light fixture assembly workshops. Also, our testing facility, where products are checked for constant temperature and humidity and aging→Well-equipped staff relaxation facility.

Address◆2-8-25 Kishidado-nishi, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 577-0848 Japan

Website◆<https://www.seiko-scm.co.jp/>



Our SDGs



Creating an environment that encourages long-term employment

To improve employee retention believe it is important to offer a fulfilling work environment as well as sufficient time for private relaxation to support mental and physical wellbeing. Why not, for example, four-day work weeks, allow staff to bring their pets into work?



Eliminating borders, not just on a gender basis

Equality more than just a gender issue; we seek to eliminate other types of borders, too, such as those between departments and businesses. Our premises have been renovated so that the office area and the factory floor are on the same level in an open-plan environment with no doors separating them. We also hope to establish a shared factory space to encourage stronger ties with manufacturing businesses.



In-house entrepreneur system

Mindful of the impending shortage of leadership talent, we launched an in-house entrepreneur system, based on the principle that business succession planning and the nurturing of entrepreneurs are part of the same process. One of our employees has already recently begun to take steps toward starting their own business.



"The Five Crop Factory"

In our industry, collaboration between businesses is vital. We use an agricultural analogy to describe our approach: The Five Crop Factory. Our five "crops" are: 1) Products; 2) Knowledge; 3) People; 4) Art and technique; and 5) Shops. The Fascinating Factory Tour and Co-Bar initiative (when factory workers and local people share a drink together at the factory) are examples of this approach in action.



Our SDGs



Everything begins with monozukuri (manufacturing craftsmanship)

When schoolkids visit our factory, we tell them that without monozukuri, there would be no goods to buy and no roads to travel on. Since everything originates with monozukuri, we want them to appreciate how important and wonderful it is, and to understand that anything is possible if they know how. By hosting factory tours, we hope they can see for themselves the joy that manufacturing can bring.



Workforce development that enables us to provide high value and avoid competing on cost alone

We are dedicated to workmanship that is unique to our company and not affected by pricing trends. We are committed to nurturing young employees and keeping them close as if they were our own family. We are grateful to have employees who have stayed with us over many years.



We know the importance of a proper work-life balance

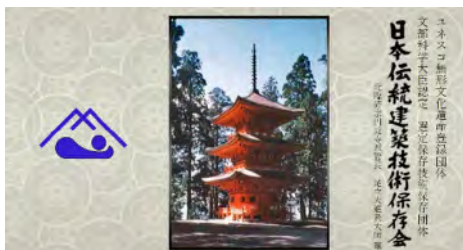
In the manufacturing industry, longer operating hours mean more sales, but that's hardly conducive to a proper work-life balance! We understand that improving productivity will help maintain work-life balance for our employees and we aim to be early adopters in this respect.



New business challenges

During the Global Financial Crisis, we leveraged our technology to pivot to manufacturing little capsule containers for pets, which were mainly sold online. Direct selling to customers is valuable for our business overall, so we plan to develop this activity side by side with our core business.

Tobase Shrine and Temple Architecture Co., Ltd.



Our SDGs



Wooden buildings to last 1,000 years: Carpentry techniques handed down over the generations

Japanese temples and shrines demonstrate that traditional wooden structures can last for 1,000 years. This longevity reflects the benefits of traditional architectural techniques. The Society for the Preservation of the Skills Associated with Traditional Japanese Architecture was established in response to concerns that wooden buildings these days tend not to be built to these standards. It strives to preserve the tradition of original carpentry techniques and pass these on for the future. The Society is a UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage Registered Organization.



Nurturing new talent

In traditional architecture, students who can master a comprehensive range of skills from planning and design to carpentry will be better craftsmen. We encourage them to read widely as well as gaining practical experience. Building skills like this is hard, but this is the kind of talent that we are aiming to develop.



Putting waste wood and scraps to good use

In the past, scrap wood from our sites usually became firewood, but we want to expand the scope of our business and have been sounding out our employees for new ideas. Now, scrap wood is used for new initiatives like carpentry workshops for kids.

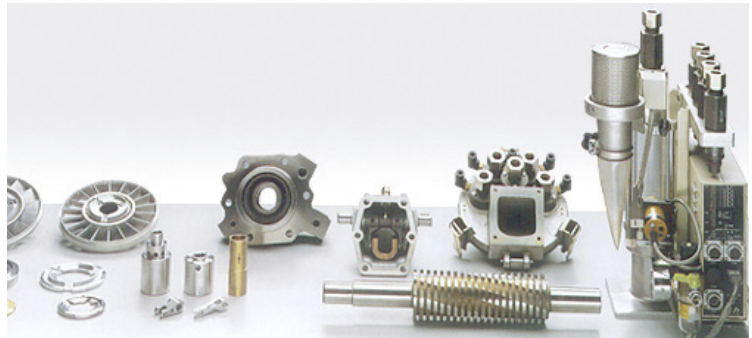
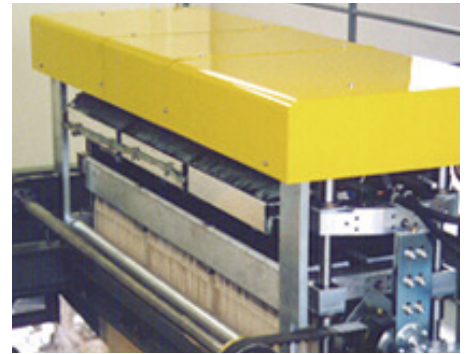


Development of forests to ensure our cultural assets endure into the future

Depletion of material resources used to build temples, shrines, and traditional Japanese houses, is serious. Not just lumber, but also cypress bark and thatch for roofs. We serve on the board of directors of the Association to Develop Forests to Connect our Cultural Heritage to the Future, a cross-industry organization dedicated to preserving forests for centuries to come.

Nakano Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

Nakano Manufacturing are machining experts, offering precision to the last micrometer on even the most challenging materials. Being located in Higashiosaka City, Japan's creative manufacturing capital, means the company is able to offer end-to-end services, from sourcing materials to machining, heat treatment, surface treatment, and even assembly. When the Japanese government's Small and Medium Enterprise Agency compiled a list of 300 outstanding manufacturing SMEs in 2007, Nakano Manufacturing was on the list. No wonder, given that the company has the ingenuity to develop a method for processing waste oil emitted during work. Today, the company is building an international production framework, with facilities in Japan and Vietnam so far.



Activity

Factory / Plant Tour

See products being made in the factory and experience the cutting edge of Japanese manufacturing.

Max. Group Size: 35

Tour Duration: 60-90 minutes

Address ♦ 21-26 Shin-machi, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 579-8037 Japan

Website ♦ <https://www.nakanos-s.co.jp/>



Our SDGs



Innovating with the OKR management approach

Since 2020, the company has adopted a new management approach called OKR (Objectives and Key Results) in which employees are required to take on new challenges for themselves, rather than just tracking sales and other performance indicators. We hope you will follow the progress of the changes that we implement!



Creating an environment where staff can expand their core expertise

The OKR approach described above is one of these initiatives, but we are keen to create an environment where employees are open to trying new initiatives even if they are not directly related to their work.



Partnership with Zojirushi

We are working with Zojirushi, the thermos manufacturer, on development of a washing machine for our reusable drinks bottle product, "My Bottle." Knowing that people are discouraged from carrying reusable drink containers by the lack of convenient ways to wash them on the go, we are convinced that providing those washing options would make people more amenable to the idea. We are a registered "My Bottle Partner" in Osaka and support "My Bottle" events and activities.



Vietnam collaboration

We have a subsidiary in Vietnam, as well as around 30 Vietnamese staff working in Japan. All employees, Japanese and Vietnamese alike, are employed on the same terms and are assessed according to their own individual skills and merits.

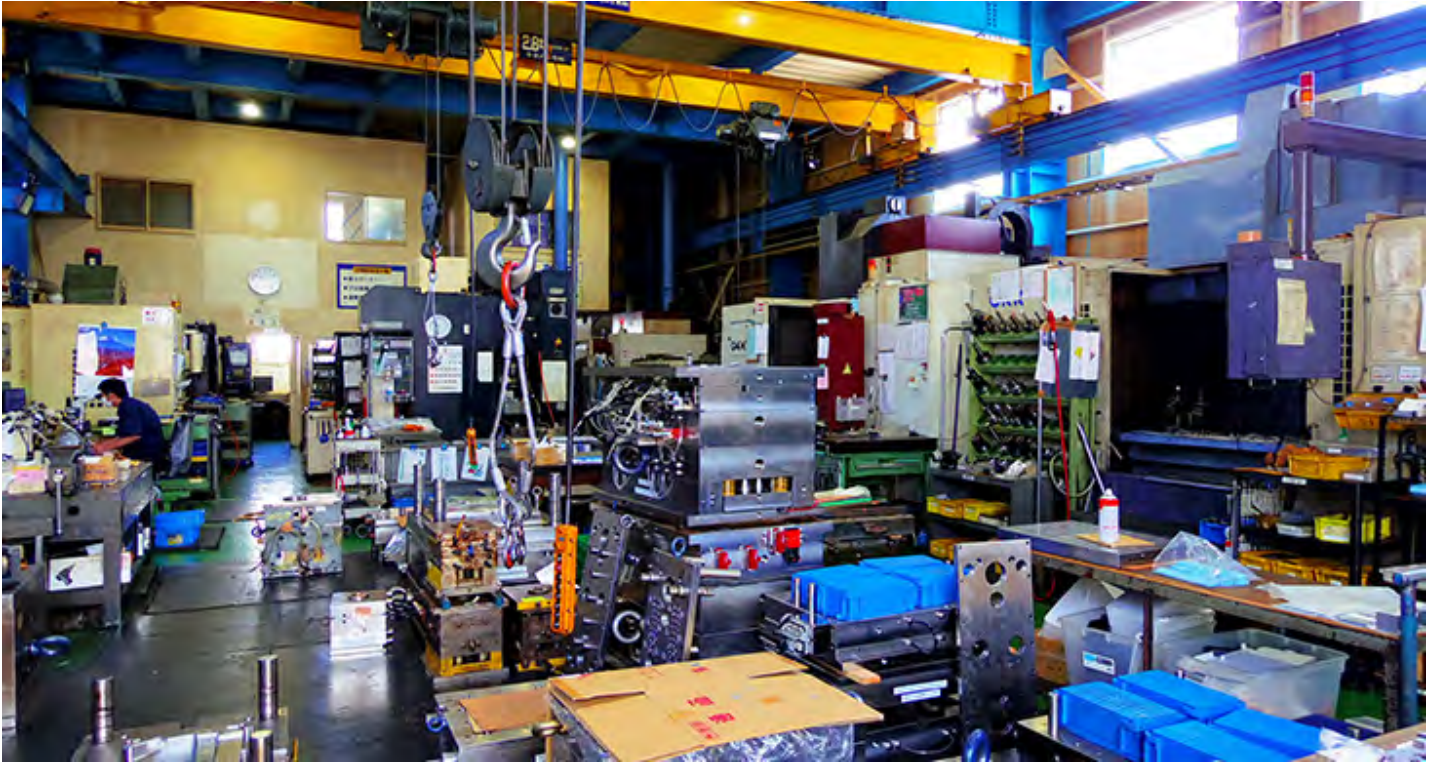


World Walking Map event shows that healthy living can be fun!

For this event, employees are divided into teams and compete against each other to complete the total number of steps within a certain period of time. The idea is to travel around the world, based on converting the number of steps into distances, and seeing where in the world they can theoretically get to by walking. We launched this event a few years ago: people love doing it because it's a fun approach to a healthy activity.



Nissin Seiko Corporation



Our SDGs



Preserving technologies

We manufacture molds for plastic products. Environmental concerns around plastic are more urgent these days and there is a tendency to try to cut down on plastic use. But plastic won't disappear entirely, and we are committed to the preservation of our technology as long as there is demand.



Supporting the Local Youth Support Station initiative

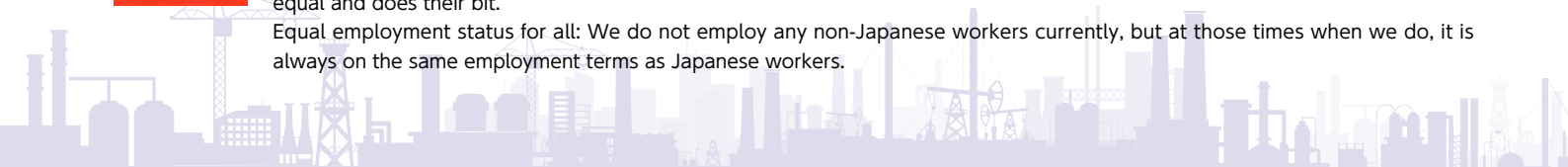
We are a registered Local Youth Support Station partner, offering work experience opportunities to people who find it hard to get a job. When we host factory tours recently, some of those youths served as guides, and the experience brought about great change in them. We were impressed by the way they spoke, loudly and clearly, and by how much effort they put into learning about our business. We could see the enthusiasm in their eyes! This showed us how doing tasks outside the scope of our everyday jobs can sometimes yield unexpected knock-on benefits for the core business.



Committed to equality

Cleaning rota: We believe in collectively responsibility for keeping everything clean and tidy. That's why we have a staff rota for cleaning the factory, starting with the toilets. There is no distinction between the president and the employees - everyone is equal and does their bit.

Equal employment status for all: We do not employ any non-Japanese workers currently, but at those times when we do, it is always on the same employment terms as Japanese workers.



Nihon Kasen Co., Ltd.

In addition to color wire for the manufacturing industry, we have developed colored wire for home crafting and helped create a new market for the imaginative Color Wire-Craft hobby. Our company philosophy is "Creation and innovation in the materials market." Even as the IT industry drives digitalization, the popular appeal of analog-culture handicrafts is spreading, and we foresee lots of growth in the color wire-craft field. Factory tours and color wire crafting classes are available



Activity

Color wire crafting

Max. Group Size: 15

Tour Duration: 60-90 minutes

Details: Crafting with color wire, a certified Higashiosaka Brand product

Address◆3-9-25 Takaidanishi, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 577-0067 Japan

Website◆nippoly.com

Our SDGs



Conducting guest lessons at elementary schools

In collaboration with other manufacturing companies, we visit local elementary schools and conduct guest lessons. In total, 17 companies offer in-school lessons annually to around 5,000 students at 53 elementary schools in the region. The objective is to introduce schoolchildren to the wonders of manufacturing craftsmanship!



Carrying on the tradition of handcrafted wire art

We sell colored craft wire under the brand name Jiyu-Jizai, and have a 90% share of the national hobby craft wire market. Our wire is also used as a teaching aid in elementary schools. Since the teachers need to learn how to use the wire, we run instruction courses ("Meister courses") for them. We aim to educate teachers who can excite children with the joys of handicraft.



A growing number of younger employees

In recent years, we have reinvigorated our employee base with a gradually increasing proportion of younger workers. Our company is registered as a "Higashiosaka brand". We strive to create an environment that encourages employees to feel a strong sense of pride in working here.



North Hillz Welding Industry

North Hillz was founded in January 2012. It offers high-precision welding techniques geared for semiconductor industry vacuum equipment, and those special skills lead to inquiries from all over Japan. The primary business is welding, but North Hillz also offers vacuum equipment planning, production, and assembly services. Its goal is to become a company with a worldwide reputation.

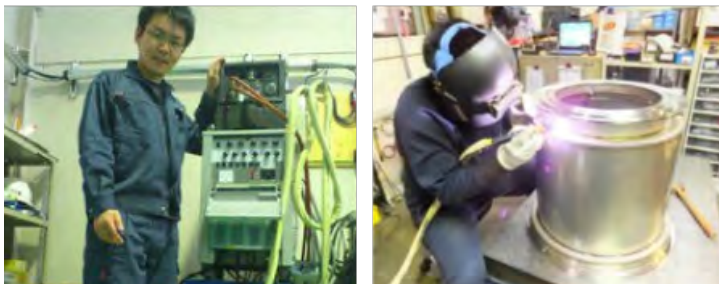


Factory / Plant Tour

See the History and Technological Skills of Welding with Your Own Eyes!

Max. Group Size: Approx. 20

Tour Duration: around 60 minutes



Address◆2-1-23 Hishie, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 578-0984 Japan
Website◆nhillz.jp



Our SDGs



Using automation to deal with staff shortages

TIG welding is specialty skill which typically takes 5-10 years to master. We have developed a machine that can do this by using a laser welding device. Our goal is to make a positive contribution to the manufacturing industry in an age of increasing labor shortages.



Building relationships with all our employees through one-on-one meetings

All our staff are assessed according to standardized performance metrics. At appraisal time, we always meet our staff one-on-one to listen to their opinions and any concerns they may have in order to build our relationship with them. We want all our employees to be assessed on equal terms to ensure they feel motivated to do their jobs.



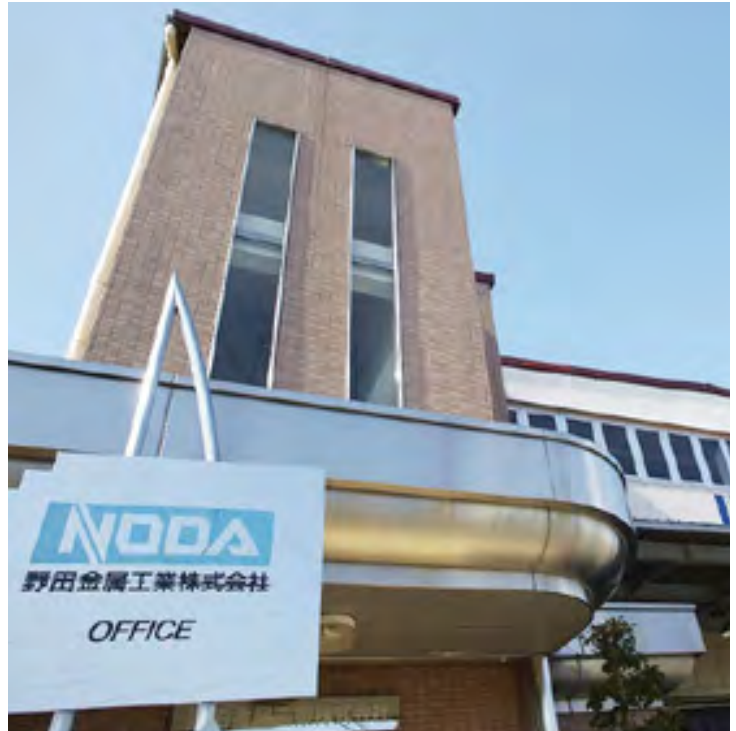
Growing the company by contributing to the community

We can't think of anywhere else that has such a high concentration of factories as Higashiosaka. We believe that giving back and contributing to the region is a way of helping our company to grow, so we also host factory tours. We try to avoid making these tours feel like just another boring lesson, and adapt the program based on our own accumulated knowledge and experience of running these events.



Noda Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

From humble cooking pots to high-tech components, the story of Noda Manufacturing's growth is truly fascinating, and more than a little moving. Its primary business is making products like metal construction parts, metal art installations, and stainless steel gifts and art, and the company is particularly strong in making high-specification one of a kind pieces, each one hand-crafted with care by skilled craftspeople.



Activity

Factory / Plant Tour

Observing metalworking processes including cutting, punching, bending and fabrication.

Max. Group Size: 30

Tour Duration: 60+ minutes

Address◆4-8 Konoiketokuan-cho, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 578- 0977 Japan

Website◆art-noda.jp



Our SDGs



Not “Sorry, we can’t do that,” but “Yes, we’ll find a way to do that.”

We don’t have a sales department; our business is based on customer requests. It’s important that our employees have the communication skills to identify and understand each customer’s unique requirements. This is not something you learn from a manual. By putting the customer first, our staff can unearth valuable customer data which they share with each other as part of the business process.



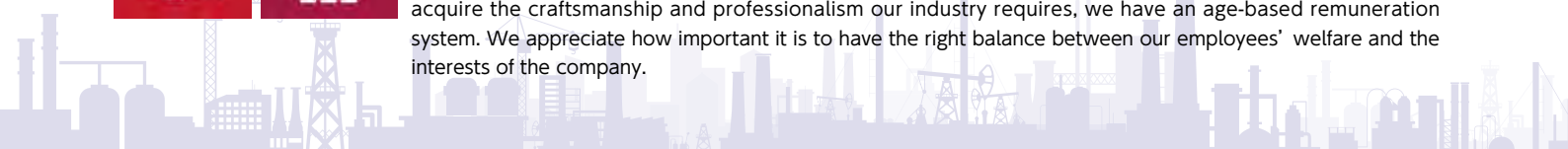
Creating a healthy environment for our employees

We care about our employees just as much as our customers. Every morning, we all do exercises together. To save employees having to visit the hospital for their health check-ups, a mobile medical unit comes to the company instead. This is more convenient for staff. We also run other health management initiatives, such as a help line for health concerns (including mental health).



A conducive environment for long-term employment

We have employees of all ages. To encourage people to work hard but still avail themselves of paid leave and other benefits, we now offer paid leave in hourly increments. In addition, recognizing that it takes time to acquire the craftsmanship and professionalism our industry requires, we have an age-based remuneration system. We appreciate how important it is to have the right balance between our employees’ welfare and the interests of the company.



Fuji Seisakusyo Co., Ltd.

We can handle all manner of customer requirements flawlessly through our large inventory of steel stock and our seasoned workers' ability to conduct all processes in-house, from cutting through finishing. We have an impeccable management and inspection system, utilizing manufacturing instruction, quickly check charts, and material charge numbers.

We are engaged in activities promoting the 5S's (Sort, Straighten, Shine, Standardize, Sustain) and improvement in this field.



Factory / Plant Tour

Max. Group Size: Approx.30

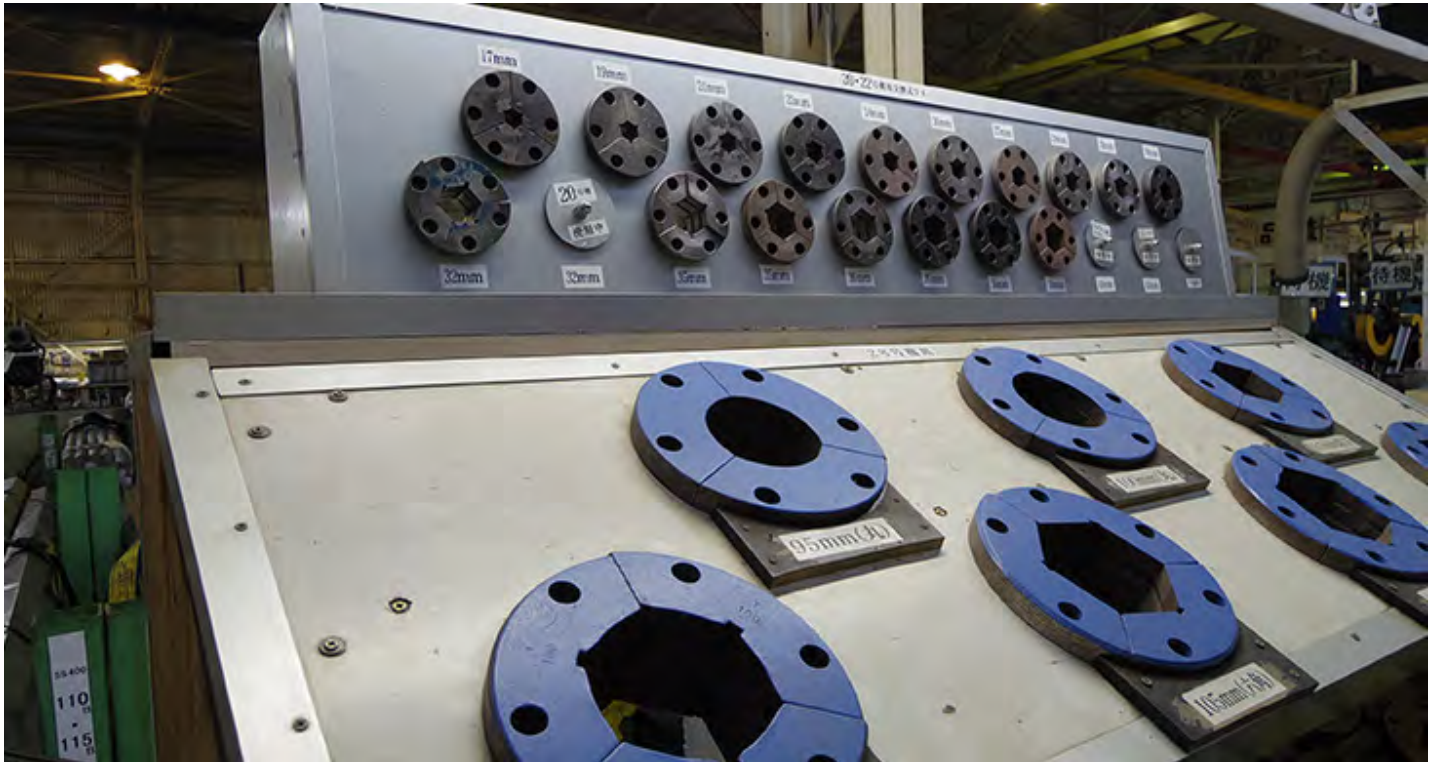
Tour Duration: around 60 minutes

Address◆6-4-28 Hishie, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 578-0984 Osaka Japan

Website◆fujiseisakusho.com



Our SDGs



Embracing the Five Ss



We originally adopted the 5S approach on the basis of our mantra “Decide what your principles are and remain steadfast in what you decide.” Many schools and companies come to visit us to observe our business methods. Each tool has its own allocated space, and the rules for re-ordering when stock is running low are readily available on file and employees can easily look them. The principle is that these things can be done immediately by any member of staff. Its introduction has led to a dramatic improvement in efficiency as employees can work autonomously without needing instruction in every little task.



Practical approach to accreditation

We have obtained various certifications such as Eco Action, “Higashiosaka brand” and ISO9001. We don’t want to put our on-site workers under additional stress if we can help it, so rather than using external consultants to handle certification applications, we keep everything in-house. We set objectives and apply for certification as it suits our business activities and conduct our reviews according to these parameters. In this way we can obtain certification without putting undue stress on the workers on-site.



Birthday cake for employees

Good relations with employees are vital. One well-established at our company is celebrating employees’ birthdays with cake. We hope that our employees – and their families – appreciate how much we value them, and that this will strengthen the bond between the company and staff and their families.

Matsuda Paper Industry Co., Ltd.

Matsuda produces and sells a full range of retail paper products. The company makes both outer boxes and inner cartons. President Matsuda says, "Creativity and craftsmanship enable us to offer innovative ideas based on our founder's ethos: 'Solve problems for the customer.'" This philosophy inspired the company to help with recovery efforts after the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 by donating cardboard partitions, women's changing rooms, clothes dressers, and children's desk sets for those forced to stay in emergency shelters. In December 2011, Matsuda Paper Industry received the Higashiosaka Mayor's Award, Higashiosaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry Award, and the Daily Industrial News Award. Then, in January 2012 it was awarded the Osaka Monodukuri Spirits Excellent Company of Osaka 2011 Takumi award. Matsuda continues to push forward in that spirit with its new offering of pet goods for animal lovers, like a cat house shaped like a gymnastics vaulting box.



Lecture

Factory / Plant Tour

Max. Group Size: 15 people

Tour Duration: 60-90 minutes (Including activity program)

NB: Video tour is 15-20 minutes.

Activity

Cardboard Sumo / Assembling

Cardboard Products

NB: Included in tour program

Address◆5-14-24 Kizuri, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 577-0827 Japan

Website◆matsuda-siko.com



Our SDGs



We thrive on making a positive contribution to the world!

The whole company volunteered to help in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake. That experience affected both management and the employees and had a tremendous impact on how we run our business. Price competition in the cardboard industry is tough - just one or two yen can make all the difference. Even in the terrible circumstances of the disaster, we felt that doing something for the benefit of society would also provide a positive focus for us as a company. Since then, we have worked on developing emergency survival products.



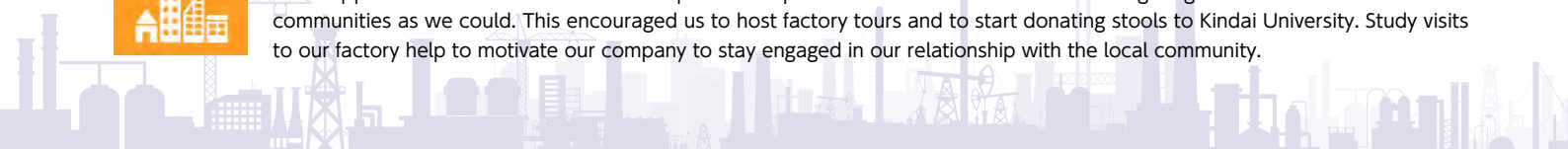
Children's activities provide an insight into staff talent

Our company regularly runs children's activities like workshops or mazes at shopping malls and other locations, with the president and the employees all taking part. It's a way to find out where employees' particular skills lie as well as areas they may need to improve in. Now we have employees whose specific role is organizing these events. We are keen to create an environment that brings out our employees' skills as effectively as possible.



Opening the factory to the community motivates us to try harder!

Our support effort for the Great East Japan Earthquake made us realize we weren't giving as much back to our local communities as we could. This encouraged us to host factory tours and to start donating stools to Kindai University. Study visits to our factory help to motivate our company to stay engaged in our relationship with the local community.



Matsuyoshi Ningyou Co., Ltd.

We aim to create a great variety of dolls, from traditional to modern, with a focus on Hina dolls. We are one of the rare workshops that cuts cloth, sews, and produces completed Hina dolls. We focus on tradition yet employ young staff, and add original ideas to traditional dressing techniques like using Swarovski crystals. You can enjoy so many Japanese traditional dolls and how to make them. They come with explanations of Japan's traditional events and helping you learn the meaning of the celebrated festivals. Also give you the opportunity to make a small gift using pieces of cloth for dolls.



Activity

Max. Group Size: Approx.20

Tour Duration: around 60 minute

Address◆1-10-4 Arakawa, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 577-0843 Japan

Website◆matsuyoshi-doll.co.jp

Our SDGs



Passing on the tradition of festival celebration

Japan's traditional Girls' Festival and Boys' Festival dolls embody the joy of celebrating festivals. Although fewer households display such dolls than in times past, the sentiment remains. Our business is based on our desire to help pass on this tradition for the future.



Customers can find out who has made their product

Our former president asked the question, "You often see a picture of the producer on vegetable packaging. Why don't other manufacturers do the same?" This prompted us to add a QR code to each of our dolls with a link to information on the person who made it and a picture of them. We're keen for our employees to be appreciated for what they do: this approach seems to be working because we have a high staff retention rate. We also have a large proportion of female staff.



Regular workshops

These days it's harder and harder to find items that are truly Japanese, so we like to create accessories that can be used in everyday life such as earrings, which the younger generation will find attractive. Our creations were featured at Paris Fashion Week in collaboration with fashion designer Kei Hirabayashi. We also hold regular tsumami-zaiku* workshops and other events to teach people about traditional Japanese products.

*Traditional craftwork to create shapes, such as flowers or butterflies, from cloth.



Our SDGs



Finding alternatives to oil: Wetsuits made from plant-derived and even stone-derived material

Our company was founded by Keiichi Yamamoto, a scientist, who developed a wetsuit made from limestone. His aim was to develop a product derived from natural materials during the 1970s, a time when environmental consciousness was still nascent. Our wetsuits appeal to environmentally conscious users.



We hope some of the pupils who visit may one day work here

Factory tours by schoolchildren and others are often equally illuminating for us, the hosts, as they are for the pupils. These visits also have a constructive effect on our staff, as they give them a sense of satisfaction and positive feeling of nervous energy. We would love it if, in future, these pupils kept Yamamoto Corporation in mind when they look for a job and come to work with us.



Innovative color-coding system is simple and easy to understand

We export a lot of materials overseas, and sometimes people can't read the numbers on the packaging. The tags stating the thickness of the material have color coding as well as serial numbers to make identification easier. We aim to cover all the bases in our approach!



You can find out more about our activities on our official website.

<https://yamamoto-bio.com/sdgs.html>



Our SDGs



Using innovative new materials in product development

We have developed a toothbrush using Rice Resin®, a Japanese biomass plastic derived from rice. It will be incorporated in all our products in future. We are also working on initiatives to eliminate plastic usage, such as cutting back on individual packaging.



A world-class working environment that has passed the SMETA audit

In order to work with Amazon, we needed to have a SMETA audit. Having this qualification makes us an attractive commercial partner and shows we are trusted to provide a safe working environment that complies with worldwide standards.



90% of our employees are women

We've always had a lot of female employees, but now 90% of the workforce are women. The company culture prioritizes children's wellbeing and school activities, and staff coordinate with each other in managing their duties. We run various initiatives to get staff to bond with each other, such as family barbecues.

* SMETA stands for Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit and is owned by Sedex (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange). It is one of the most widely used social audit standards worldwide. SMETA audits cover ① labor standards, ② health and safety (H&S), ③ environment and ④ ethics, and are designed to monitor all aspects of responsible business practices.



Washo Metalworking

Washo Metal Crafts are masters of metal spinning, where a metal sheet or tube is spun on a lathe and pressed into shape with a metal rod. Here, skilled craftsman achieve a level of precision unrivaled by other techniques. Washo Metal Crafts has pursued this technique for over 50 years, and can meet needs other companies can't in creating new commercial products. This skill was even recognized on NHK's Sugowaza program. Common product orders include airplane parts, medical equipment, lighting and more, and recently it has received orders for cat beds. The curve of its products fit cat bodies perfectly, making them very popular.



Activity

Factory / Plant Tour

The workshop is on the 2nd floor of the company building. The tour begins with an explanation of metal spinning and the company. Then, visitors will get a chance to try metal spinning for themselves. Each person will get 5 minutes to try, so be sure to give it a go! Time is limited—hesitate and you may miss your chance. Don't waste this truly rare opportunity! The tour will end with a talk from the president, a deeply skilled craftsman.

Address◆5-6-26 Ohasuminami, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 577-0065 Japan

Website◆washometal.jp





Spreading the word about metal spinning

Our metal spinning capabilities enable us to create components out of any metal currently in existence. This is a word-class technology in which we take great pride. We are highly regarded for our working practices: our business approach incorporates post-processing considerations and we collaborate with all parties involved to optimize our output. We want our technology to endure and be passed onto others in the future.



Experiencing the craft of manufacturing is fun for all ages

A shortage of new talent is an urgent problem for the skilled manufacturing industry. We organize factory tours so young people can appreciate the joys of being involved in this industry. We also have visits from local elementary and junior high schools.



We get the balance right because we are a family business

We are a family-run business. In the past, as family owners, we were perhaps guilty of spoiling our staff in terms of how we treated them. However, we realized this wasn't necessarily in the best interests of the company and we adopted more of a "them and us" approach - but only during working hours. This attitude is now so well-established, we don't really think about it anymore. This balance helps us work better in terms of our craftsmanship.



Running our business in an environmentally friendly way

Our staff always wear masks when working with hazardous materials such as aluminum and other light materials that can produce harmful dust. We arrange for lubricants and left-over oil to be collected in order to save electricity. We always pay close attention to employee health and to protecting the environment in the way we run the business.