At the beginning of its rapid industrialization following World War II, Japan imported many concepts from the United States and United Kingdom on factory management and statistical quality control. But over the proceeding decades, Japanese manufacturers left its competitors in the U.S. and U.K. behind, thanks to their ability to produce high-quality goods at a competitive cost.

Noted for his quality management innovations, Japanese organizational theorist Kaoru Ishikawa (1915-1989) is considered a key figure in the development of quality initiatives in Japan. During the 80s he released four books on the topic of quality control.

"To practice quality control is to develop, design, produce and service a quality product (...) To meet this goal, everyone in the company must participate in and promote quality control, including top executives, all divisions within the company and all employees," he wrote in What is Total Quality Control? The Japanese Way.

Companies like Toyota became renowned for following such an approach. The world-famous Toyota Production System follows the principals of Monozukuri, which revolves around the spirit of not only producing excellent products, but also the ability to constantly improve the production system and processes. Japanese manufacturers both large and small have adopted these principals of Monozukuri, which has helped to set them apart from their competitors when it comes to quality.

"One of the main differences between Japan and competing countries such as Korea and China is that we have good teachers and leaders from companies like Toyota and Honda that have taught Japan a lot," says Mr. Jumpei, Kojima President of IMV Corporation, which, with its 350 employees, manufactures vibration testing systems and measuring systems for the automotive, electronics and construction industries.

"Because of the influence of such companies, we kept growing with repeated trial and error to meet their high requirements. They encourage and enable us to grow ourselves."

Aside from an uncompromising dedication to quality and reliability in products and production processes, Mr. Shinkichi Suzuki, President and CEO of Kawakin Holdings Group, says that another distinguishing feature which sets Japan apart from the likes of China and South Korea is the fact that "Japanese corporations make a lot of efforts in customizing their products to fit to their customers' needs."

Through its subsidiaries, Kawakin manufactures a range of high-tech products that provide safety and reliability in engineering fields for buildings, bridges, industrial machinery, energy, automobiles, ships and other sectors. These include steel, iron and wax castings, rolled steel, seismic isolation and vibration control systems for buildings and bridges, hydraulic cylinders and injection moldings.

"Our main competitive advantage is our extensive and diverse product portfolio," says Mr. Suzuki. "We can adapt to all kinds of structures, from bridges to buildings, including schools, hospitals and factories. The ability to offer to our customers so many different components makes us a one-stop shop. Instead of establishing business partnerships with separate companies, Kawakin's customers can rely on us as a sole provider for all products needed."

"Japanese people are perfectionists and as such their work ethic is to always strive for perfection"

Shuhei Toyota, President. Toyota Boshoku Corp.

"Before cars, make people" is a famous quote of former Toyota chairman, Eiji Toyoda; and "making people" is certainly a priority for Japanese companies like Toa Koki, which manufactures engine components for both cargo and passenger ships for customers around the world.

"We have the same mindset as companies like Toyota and Suzuki. We take good care of our employees, especially our highly skilled employees and those with expert knowledge," says company president, Mr. Wataru Mitsutake.

"It is extremely important that the top-level workers teach the younger generation. Under this..."
training system, twenty-year-old employees were ranked 8th at the Monozukuri Championship in Japan last year.”

Of course, for Japanese multinationals, training often involves the training of staff in factories and subsidiaries overseas. These companies ensure that the values of Monozukuri and high-quality standards are adopted by their workers abroad.

“At Sanyo Chemical, we outsource some of our productions to our overseas subsidiaries. It is essential that the high level of production and product quality is sustained regardless of where the products are made,” says Takao Ando, President of Sanyo Chemical Industries.

“We train our overseas staff members to reach the same level of education as our Japanese workforce. This is the main way we ensure our quality and technology is transferred to our overseas affiliates. As part of the training we have a special study, education and motivational program, which include experts introducing them to Japan and ensuring that they have the necessary knowledge about technology and Japanese Monozukuri.”

Japanese Monozukuri has faced stiff competition from the likes of China and South Korea in recent decades, who can offer lower cost products. In the forging manufacturing industry for example, China now controls around 40 percent of the global market share.

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“The Japanese value system takes pride in its own creation, and the meaning of Monozukuri is to differentiate oneself by reaching for uniqueness.”

Kengo Fukaya, President, Fuji Oozx

Ohmi Press Work and Forging has been involved in the metal forging business since 1951, making high-quality parts for Japan’s famous bullet trains, ships, the aerospace industry and construction machinery. The company has seen first-hand the rise of Chinese competitors offering cheaper products. As a result, Ohmi’s main goal has been to use its 67 years of experience to reduce its costs, while also maintaining and even improving the quality of its products.

“It is clear that China and Korea have a very large presence in this market. However, there is no doubt that Japan has a higher quality of steel and other materials than any of its competitors. In addition, it is not only about materials but it is also about the facilities and the factories we have here in Japan,” says Ohmi president, Koichi Sakauchi.

“Japan cannot compete in terms of price, or even quantity, but without a doubt, Japan has the advantage of the quality. Finally, there are so many companies here in Japan that are specialized in one area and have many years of experience. For me, these are the main advantages of the Japanese forging sector compared to the competition.”

Another company involved in the metal business, Okabe celebrated its 100th anniversary last year. The company began as a manufacturer of small bolts, but thanks to large investments in R&D, is now a world leader in the manufacturing of building structural products.

“Recently, we have focused on producing products which are earthquake resistant. We have developed acute expertise in technologies linked to disaster prevention. By exporting our historical knowledge, we will contribute to the creation of a safer and more prosperous world,” says president, Makoto Hirowatari.

The company has had a presence in the U.S. for 40 years through Okabe Inc., which distributes automotive parts. It expanded its presence in the U.S. in 2002 by establishing OCM, which mainly trades construction material. “The recognition of our OCM brand has been successful and rapidly growing,” says Mr. Hirowatari.

In 2005, it acquired Minneapolis-based automotive parts manufacturer, Water Gremlin, which has also been a major success for the company. Since then it has set up subsidiaries in Italy in 2007 and China in 2012.

“Japan has used the supply chain system driven by OEMs as in the Toyota, Nissan, or Honda supply chains, and this system continues to provide high-quality.”

Teruaki Nakatsuka, President, JATCO

“Our main competitive advantage is linked to the unrivalled quality of our products. At Okabe, we put quality on a pedestal, and our clients recognize us for this,” adds Mr. Hirowatari. “Secondly, we treat environmental friendliness with an acute attention to detail. Complying to environmental criteria is one of our trademarks.”

Automotive industry

Car manufacturers like Toyota and Nissan depend on local Japanese original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to supply components for their automobiles. These OEMs must comply with Toyota and Nissan high standards of quality, which means Monozukuri principals pervade the whole supply chains.

“Japan has used the supply chain system driven by OEMs as in the Toyota, Nissan, or Honda supply chains, and this system continues to work effectively and efficiently to provide high-quality,” says Mr. Teruaki Nakatsuka, President and CEO of JATCO, which produces continuously variable transmissions (CVTs, a type of automatic transmission) for Honda, Nissan and Suzuki.

“CVTs are very complicated products that require Monozukuri excellence. The beauty of the CVT is its fuel efficiency and flexibility, and it is in itself an ecofriendly product. Better fuel efficiency will provide significant value to society.

“CVT involves making the best use of power from the engine to provide smoother performance, so all car manufacturers can benefit from our new developments and the results will be very beneficial for the environment.”

“One good thing for JATCO is that Nissan is the 75-percent shareholder of our company. All transmission
companies need to work closely with OEMs and partners, including when they conduct R&D, as transmissions are long-term products. We are lucky to have Nissan with us. OEMs are front runners in adapting to new environments and new technologies.

Genchi Genbutsu means ‘Go and See’ and it is a key principle of the Toyota Production System and, indeed, the production systems of its subsidiaries like Toyota Boshoku. It suggests that in order to truly understand a situation one needs to go to genba (‘the real place’) where work is done.

“Toyota Boshoku firmly believes in doing things in the way of Genchi Genbutsu,” says Mr. Toyoda. “It is very important for everyone at Toyota Boshoku to understand and practice this philosophy. Japanese people are perfectionists and as such their work ethic is to always strive for perfection and that is why we excel in producing high-quality products.”

Another Japanese automotive supplier that strives for perfection, as well as to create eco-friendly products, is FUJI OOXZ. The company manufacturers engine valves, which are a core part of a car engine and essential to overall engine performance.

“The mass production of hollow engine valves is our current challenge,” says president, Mr. Kengo Fukaya.

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Makoto Hirowatari
President, Okabe

Elastomix remains a relatively small company, but for president Kazushi Abe, smaller means better. “Our competitive advantage lies also in the size of the company. Unlike many other very large companies in other countries which tend to increase the output by lowering down costs, we are a smaller-sized enterprise that is able to oversee every detail in the manufacturing process, thereby yielding higher quality products.”

“Its thanks to our continuous communication with clients that we ensure the highest quality of our products and we are able to customize every detail to match the clients’ requirements. This is what represents for me the Japanese seal of quality and what I think puts Japanese Monozukuri a step ahead of other global competitors.”

Kenichi Sakaguchi, President, Ohmi Press Work and Forging

#JapanTheWorldfolio
#TheWorldfolio

MATERIALS INNOVATION
We create value through materials based on the mixing technology, to enrich society, people and the environment.

The corporate mission of ELASTOMIX clearly identifies the company's raison d'etre. By supplying materials that are indispensable to human societies, ELASTOMIX aims to be trusted.

www.emix-jsr.co.jp/index-e
Historically regarded as a hardware manufacturing nation, Japanese firms are combining their Monozukuri philosophy with software advancements to create innovative products in the age of AI, IoT and cloud services.

In the early 90s, some commentators tipped Japan to become the world superpower in software development, on the back of its success in high-tech manufacturing. But ultimately, Japan was left trailing far behind the U.S. in software innovation, as Silicon Valley churned out software patents at an incredibly faster rate than Tokyo.

The reason for this is mainly attributed to Japan’s focus on Monozukuri – making things like semiconductors, televisions, hi-fis, computers and advanced machinery. Japanese companies viewed hardware as their strength and put little value or emphasis on software as a value creator. “A Samurai would never write software!” – so exclaimed a senior executive of one Japan’s largest electronics firm.

But the attitudes towards software have changed with growing internet use and the increasing importance of software, as well as the advent of fourth-industrial-revolution technologies such as AI, IoT and robotics, areas in which Japan aims to be at the forefront over the coming years. Along with advanced robotics, business software is seen as a solution to the country’s chronic labor shortage. The development of business software is growing with some of the country’s largest electronics companies buying into the sector. As a result of these changes, the Japanese software industry is set to grow stronger in the future.

“Japan used to consider software as a mere accessory to the main product; hardware. There were times when it was very difficult to charge for software applications. Today, Japanese corporations are growing increasingly aware of the significance of software, and Japan is equipped with the correct competitive technology to develop it,” says Jinya Katsube, COO and Representative Director of Zuken Inc.

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Zuken specializes in software and consulting services for a wide range of fields in the manufacturing sector, from electronics to aerospace and automotive. The company was a pioneer in the development of CAD systems in Japan when it was established in 1966. Four decades after, Zuken has become a leading electronic design automation (EDA) provider, employing 1,300 employees around the world, including in the Zuken SOZO Center in Silicon Valley, which opened in 2013.

With the emergence of IoT, Mr. Katsube foresees the use of Zuken’s software to design the smart cars of tomorrow: “IoT is having a large impact in the field of engineering. When designing a smart car, manufacturers will be required to design a system that can effectively be connected to its surroundings, and I believe that this demand for cross-device connectivity will be Zuken’s future.”

Another company aiming to gain from the emergence of IoT is Nippon Systemware (NSW). Established in 1966, NSW has expanded its business from software development to device development, system integration services, IoT and cloud services that principally focus on data center services.

“There are only a few companies in Japan that have technologies in terms of both device and application technology required for IoT, we are one of these companies and as such it is one of our strengths”

Mr. Shoji Tada, President and CEO, Nippon Systemware
Japan is seen as a hub for high-performance, cutting-edge technologies, and this is also true in the stainless steel wire and metal fiber industry, where companies are now required to make thinner, stronger and more precise materials for a range of demanding hi-tech industries such as automotive, IT, energy and healthcare.

A global leader in the manufacturing of stainless steel wires and metal fibers, Nippon Seisen is building on the technology it has developed over its 66-year history to supply high-quality, next-generation materials that support the high performance of its customer's end products.

The company's product portfolio of what it calls 'Micro & Fine Technology' includes: the world's thinnest stainless-steel super-fine wires (which the company boasts are finer than a strain of hair); high-strength, heat-resistant stainless-steel spring wires; and its 'NALSON' stainless steel metal fibers. Available in cloth, felt, knit, tape and other variations, these metal fibers have the same level of workability and flexibility as a textile fiber, but with the added strength of stainless steel.

Employing its superior stainless-steel fibers such as 'NASLON', Nippon Seisen also manufactures metal filters used in carbon-fiber manufacturing and ultra-high-purity gas filters used for semiconductor production equipment, which are characterized by superior particle removal capability and low pressure drop.

A special steel manufacturing engineer by trade, the company's president, Mr. Motoshi Shinkai is unequivocal about the competitive advantages of his company and Japanese manufacturing in general over its regional competitors such as China and Korea.

"When producing products that require compactness, lightness and high performance, it is a prerequisite to have a high level of skill and cutting-edge technology that includes material, processing technology, components performance, production machinery, tools and molds. Japanese manufacturing superiority is in the high level of communication and mutually supportive culture that exists between extremely competent, specialty-focused small to mid-sized companies specialized in material processing," he says.

The competitive strengths of Nippon Seisen in particular lies in its 'Micro & Fine Technology' and cutting-edge product development carried out in collaboration with its customers, as well as its high-quality raw materials. These materials are sourced from the best special steel and alloy suppliers in Japan, including its parent company Daido Steel.

Indeed, Nippon Seisen's cutting-edge products are the result of the painstaking work of its R&D department, which has recently developed a hydrogen separation membrane (HSM) for high-purity hydrogen gas production and purification. This innovation is already drawing interest from those in the automobile industry developing hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, and also has applications in the oil & gas and semiconductor industries.

"Our R&D is market-oriented as we develop materials required by society. Our target market is firstly the automotive sector, then the environment and IT, and finally the medical sector," says Mr. Shinkai.

"Even though stainless steel, metal fiber and Micro & Fine Technology is a limited field, the range of applications these products have is huge. We have a wide range of high-performance, exclusive products and we want to become a leader in a global niche market."

Motoshi Shinkai, President, Nippon Seisen

Since 1951, Nippon Seisen has been supplying value-added items such as stainless steel wire-based NASLON (metal fiber) and high alloy steel wires to customers all over the world. As the leading supplier of stainless steel wires, we will continue to lead the industry by developing next-generation materials based on our "Micro & Fine Technology".
Sosei Water: an answer to fracking concerns?

An environmentally minded Japanese company has developed a special water with unique properties that allow it to be used to power engines and even as a household cleaner to replace shampoos and detergents. Now its founder, Mr. Toshiharu Fukai, believes Sosei Water could also clean up the fracking business.

For years, shale gas lay dormant in rocks deep underground. Energy companies knew it was there, but because of the high mining costs, nobody could find a way to make money from extracting it. That changed however when the U.S. developed the technology to turn hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking", for shale gas into a profitable venture, and since then the industry has grown rapidly.

The past few years for the shale industry have been difficult though, mainly due to restrictions placed upon it by the administration of former President Obama and the impact of the plummet in oil prices. But shale drillers are expecting to see somewhat of a resurgence, thanks to the pro-mining and deregulation policies of President Donald Trump.

Advocates in the energy industry and political world like Mr. Trump will no doubt point to the economic benefits of fracking and how the U.S. could achieve energy security, boost tax revenues and create jobs by increasing the production of shale gas.

But of course, there are those on the other side of the argument who believe the environmental impact of fracking far outweighs the potential economic benefits.

In order to blast open rocks to release shale gas, an incredible amount of chemical-infused water is required in the fracking process. The main concerns for environmental groups and community activists is that this chemical liquid contaminates groundwater, drinking water, rivers and agricultural lands. Furthermore, methane gas emissions from fracking will spur further global warming.

But one visionary Japanese company believes it may have a solution to the water contamination issues surrounding fracking.

Founded by Mr. Toshiharu Fukai, Sosei World Co. has charged itself with coming up with innovative ways to dealing with some of the biggest environmental challenges, from CO2 emissions to chemical pollution and water contamination.

The company has developed a special type of water it calls “Sosei Water”, whose unique properties allow it to mix easily with oil and dirt. Sosei Water’s main application is as a powerful energy source. By emulsifying it with fossil fuels, like heavy oil and kerosene, without the use of chemical emulsifying agents, this “burnable water” can produce as much energy as conventional fossil fuel, but CO2 emissions are sharply reduced.

"If you burn 100ml of fossil fuel, you get 100 units of energy," explains Mr. Fukai. “You can also get 100 energy units by burning a mix of 50ml of fossil fuel and 15ml of Sosei Water, which means you are using half the amount of fossil fuel for the same amount of energy output.”

Due to its unique properties, Sosei Water can also be used as a powerful household cleaner to clean dishes, laundry, hair and skin – eliminating the need for environmentally harmful detergents, shampoos and other cleaning products.

But now the company believes this revolutionary water could clean more than pots and pans; it could also clean up the fracking business.

According to Mr. Fukai, Sosei Water could be used to replace the chemical liquid used in fracking, which would end water contamination. The added incentive for fracking companies, he adds, is the fact that Sosei Water is not just a greener option, it is also a cheaper one. No chemicals mean no chemical costs, and no time and money wasted on separating chemicals from the mined oil or gas (a process which also emits high levels of CO2). Considering this separation process accounts for about 40% of the total cost of producing shale, fracking companies using Sosei Water could potentially see massive savings.

Japan is also exploring its potential to produce shale. And following a meeting with Mr. Fukai in January 2016, Japan’s Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry is very interested in the possibility of using Sosei Water in fracking. So too is Akita Oil Company, which has been granted permission by the government to restart operations on a shale project in the Akita Prefecture. The project was postponed for several reasons, but the company is now looking at the viability of using Sosei Water to reduce costs and environmental impact. Singapore and Malaysian firms are also looking into the possibility of developing shale projects in the Akita area.

U.S. shale firms have yet to express interest in Sosei Water, but Mr. Fukai’s company has been in contact with some of them to inform them of its benefits. Perhaps if Akita Oil Company has success with it, American producers might begin to take notice.

So, is it only a matter of time before Sosei Water could completely replace the harmful fracturing fluid that has caused so many environmental concerns? Mr. Fukai certainly likes to think so.

“I’m a Buddhist, and that’s how I came up with this idea,” he says. “I’m not a scientist. It always starts with how to protect this planet.”
Taking hold of the overseas opportunities

Japanese companies facing the dilemma of decreasing domestic demand are focusing on strengthening their presence in the U.S., Europe and South East Asia.

The ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations founded in 1967, has become one of the world’s most vibrant, dynamic, and competitive regions, where GDP growth has surpassed any other region in the world consistently over the last decade and continues to do so.

The ASEAN opportunity comes at an ideal moment for Japanese companies across the board, as they look abroad for sales growth to offset the impact of decreasing domestic demand due to Japan’s shrinking and aging population.

"The negative demographic line in Japan has reduced the demand for frozen food. Therefore, the frozen food market has been evolving thanks to emerging countries such as China, South Korea, Thailand or Vietnam, where increasing income rate is coupled with clear demographic growth. In the future, it will be our objective to respond to the demands of these nations for frozen food, a market which is bound to increase in size and volume," says Mr. Toshio Yoshikawa, Chairman of Yokorei, a multinational engaged in import and export of agriculture and seafood products and refrigerated housing and transport.

To strengthen its presence in the region, Yokorei last year invested in Agrobest, a Malaysian back tiger shrimp operation. Yokorei is also targeting the U.S. and European markets and has acquired Fjordlaks Aqua and Hofseth International in Norway, through its subsidiary Alliance Seafoods.

"One of the main milestones for us was the M&A with Alliance Seafood, originally a trading company specialized in the export business. For our company to facilitate its overseas operations, it was crucial to ally with a company that had expertise in exportation," says Mr. Yoshikawa.

"Although there are areas in South East Asia that are growing, there are still many issues to be tackled within the region. One of the main milestones for us was the M&A with Alliance Seafood, originally a trading company specialized in the export business. For our company to facilitate its overseas operations, it was crucial to ally with a company that had expertise in exportation," says Mr. Toshio Yoshikawa, Chairman of Yokorei.

"There is more room for growth in Europe and in the U.S., where there is tremendous demand for Japanese culinary products. Although there are areas in South East Asia that are growing, there are still many issues to be tackled within the region. While we will be focusing on the Asian regions, I believe that the European and the American markets have the greatest potential." Principally engaged in the manufacture and sale of packaging-related materials for the food and chemical industries, Ohishi Sangyo is another company looking to expand its presence in South East Asia, where consumer demand for higher quality is increasing.

"In South East Asia, the packaging material business is developing similarly to the U.S. and to the EU. Many consumer-packaging players, such as Dai-Nippon, have therefore moved to these areas. Previously, we used newspapers and basic materials for wrapping and packaging. Today, consumers require aesthetic and high-performance products," says company president, Mr. Norio Okubo.

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"Our products have great performance unmatched by our competitors. We successfully expanded into the overseas market because of the uniqueness of our products" says Mr. Norio Okubo, President, Ohishi Sangyo.

"For the food and chemical businesses, high-quality, performance and reliability are required," says Mr. Okubo. "We specialize in creating stable, high-quality and technologically advanced products. We provide to our clients the stability required to attain a safe level of productivity."

"Japanese people are excessively sensitive to the quality and safety of their food," says Yokorei’s Mr. Yoshikawa. "It is impossible for the frozen food market to evolve without warehouses and freezers where frozen food can be stored with quality maintenance."

"One of the most important things for us when entering into the U.S. and the European markets is being able to offer a high-quality product that enjoys clear traceability. Our strength lies in having refrigerators that can maintain high quality and low temperatures."

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INOAC: a merger between innovation and action

Japan may not dominate the market for hi-tech, end-user products like it did in 80s or 90s. But Japanese-manufactured components and materials can still be found in a large number of today's tech gadgets, as well as electronic equipment and machines.

From iPhones, to automobiles and Japan's famous 'shinkansen' bullet trains, Japanese firm INOAC's materials, derived from polyurethane, rubber, plastic and composites, are used in a number of products and applications.

Celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2016, the company was established in 1926 as a manufacturer of bicycle tires and tubes. From those humble beginnings, it has grown to become a global conglomerate, producing hi-tech materials for the automotive, IT, construction, cosmetics, medical and home decoration industries across the globe.

According to a report by MarketWatch, the value of the global polyurethane foam market will grow from $46 billion in 2015 to $74 billion by 2021, propelled by increasing demand and wide application in a diverse range of industries. This is good news for INOAC, as it continues to expand its global presence, in the face of a dwindling domestic market in Japan. Japan, however, still remains the largest market for its products, where it generates 36 percent of its sales.

“The polyurethane material has many applications,” says its owner Mr. Soichi Inoue, who has been chairman of INOAC since 2000. “We began by making very simple products. Following this, we supplied furniture and went on to produce automotive parts. We also make special parts such as the SIM cushion for the iPhone, and we have gone on to make many other items. Over thirty years ago, we established a joint venture with the American company Rogers, and today we are collaboratively making special polyurethane products.”

INOAC has had a presence in North America for more than 60 years. It established its first sales office in the U.S. in 1966. In 1985, it entered into its first joint venture in North America with Canadian company Intertec Systems LLP, and a year later in 1986, established INOAC U.S.A., which was the same year it also began business in Europe. The North American market currently makes up 23 percent of its total sales revenue, making it INOAC's second largest market after Japan.

Since 1986, Mr. Inoue has seen a number of U.S. presidents come and go, but perhaps none as unorthodox as the incumbent Donald Trump. Nevertheless, he is optimistic about some of Mr. Trump's trade policies, which he believes will be beneficial for his company.

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"My personal philosophy is to get to know the local people, create mutual trust and build friendships while respecting the local community."

Soichi Inoue,
Chairman of INOAC

"His policies open up new opportunities for the INOAC Group," he says. "We have a number of bases in North America, and with President Trump's policies, we are talking with our customers and suppliers in order to work in close collaboration with them. On the one hand, they provide us with new technologies and manufacturing methods. On the other hand, we handle production from our U.S. factories and we provide them with basic materials. "We have been collaborating with BASF for years. Today, BASF focuses on basic raw materials, which gives us excellent opportunities for supplying parts to the automotive industry. We also make many components for insulation and building materials."

In times when technology moves at break-neck speed, particularly in industries such as IT and automotives, INOAC, like many of its Japanese peers, stays ahead of the curve by investing heavily in R&D and innovation, making not only state-of-the-art, but also environmentally sound, products. Focusing its R&D efforts on polymer products, INOAC performs research using the most valuable two resources in the development of high technology: creative scientists and the most sophisticated equipment.

"Supplying compound materials for the car industries is difficult because of the rate of innovation. Within a matter of years, products can become obsolete, so it is imperative to be on top of innovation," says Mr. Inoue.

"Many people say INOAC comes from my surname (Inoue), but that is not completely true. The real origin of our name comes from a merger between INNO-vation and AC-tion. I constantly ask our people to keep this in mind, every day. I was a mountain climber when I was young. To a large extent, you could say that I learnt my management philosophy from climbing mountains."

INOAC is a leading company in the field of polymer chemistry, specializing in polyurethanes, rubber, plastics, and composite materials. We have developed many high-performance materials and solutions to make people’s lives more comfortable.

www.inoac.co.jp