

Janelle Monáe  
Speaks Out

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Around the World

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# Delivering monozukuri quality through the spirit of co-creation

Leveraging on collaboration and co-creation, Yokohama Yushi Kogyo develops superior quality chemical and oil-based products used across a wide range of industries, from automotive and electronics to functional foods and cosmetics.

Strong, agile and technology savvy, Japan's SME manufacturers form the backbone of the nation's industrial sector, working hand-in-hand with the larger auto and electronics manufacturers like Toyota and Sony to export the high-quality products for which Japan is renowned.

In fact, this culture of co-creation and co-operation has been fundamental to the business success and technological prowess of Japan's SME manufacturers. Japanese concepts such as *Kaizen* and *Monozukuri*, core Japanese manufacturing philosophies based on high-quality, innovation and customer satisfaction, were first extolled by Toyota and then incorporated by smaller firms like Yokohama Yushi Kogyo that supplied products, parts and components for the automobile industry.

"Collaboration and cooperation between small and large companies is characteristic of Japan, this relationship benefits both parties to further develop and grow," says Yokohama Yushi Kogyo president, Hideo Honda.

Established in 1929, Yokohama Yushi Kogyo started out as a refiner of fish oils, before later developing its technology and applying it to the automotive chemical sector. Since then, the company has continued its journey as a chemical R&D-oriented manufacturer, supplying environmentally friendly



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Hideo Honda, President, Yokohama Oils & Fats Industry Co., Ltd.

oil and chemical-based products to the automotive, electronics, food, cosmetics and healthcare industries.

"We absorbed, improved, and implemented the Total Quality Control (TQC) standards that came from the USA. Toyota was the pioneer in the field of TQC and then SMEs took it as an example to improve their systems always with the central mindset of achieving the best quality for customers and developing a mutually beneficial relationship," explains Mr. Honda.

"From Japan we have imported foreign elements and adapted them to elements of our own culture – for example, *Kaizen*, which focuses on striving to improve the lean manufacturing formula that was imported from the US and is now present in all the organizational structures of Japanese companies."

Yokohama Yushi Kogyo's eight core technologies – emulsification, water solubilization, oil solubilization, dispersion, solubilization, oil coating, powderization, and surface modification technology – have been developed thanks to the dedication and effort of its R&D department, which has also formed partnerships with leading Japanese universities and research institutions in the spirit of co-creation.

Moving forward, the company is leveraging on its R&D and innovation capacities to develop new products, with a focus on the functional food, cosmetics and electronics industries, while also continuing to expand its core traditional cleaning agents and automotive chemical segments.

With the growth in health-conscious consumers across the globe, the functional food and beverage market is expected to grow 8.49% CAGR through 2026, and thus offers significant opportunities for Yokohama Yushi Kogyo as it looks to expand its international presence by providing its technologies to larger manufacturers of end-user products.

"Our contribution to the food industry is vital for us; 20% of our business in the food industry is the processing of functional foods. This field is booming as we are more concerned about our health," says Mr. Honda.

"There are foods that have ingredients our body cannot absorb because they are still in an insoluble state. We process water-insoluble materials to soluble formulations by emulsification technology. We also use this technology in the field of cosmetics so that the ingredients are better absorbed by the skin, while the pharmaceutical field is also a key one for our expansion."

From the perspective of technological development, one of Yokohama Yushi Kogyo's key advantages is the fact that it does not distribute products as an ODM (original design manufacturer) to larger firms, but rather produces the technologies and the processes behind these larger companies' end products. "As such we do not focus on the sales and marketing side of the company, we invest our know-how and energy in mid-line processing," adds Mr. Honda.

"There is a co-dependent relationship in terms of distribution with these large companies because wherever they decide to produce, we will go and set up our office there as well. In that sense, the history of our company is based on our ability to leverage the *Monozukuri* process of Japan and take it with us to any market we go to."

**Linda** Yokohama Yushi Kogyo for precision cleaner products and car chemical products

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