

Iwatani Materials brings 'Made in Japan' quality products to a wider international customer base

With a deft combination of functional material and film manufacturing, and home goods that strike the perfect balance between function and beauty, Iwatani Materials is eyeing the international market.

As Japanese companies – faced with a dwindling domestic market due to Japan's aging population – continue to expand overseas, many leverage their reputation for high-quality, high-end products and the 'Made in Japan' brand when competing on global markets. A renowned manufacturer of household wares, films for the agricultural industry, resin molded parts, metal products and functional materials, Iwatani Materials Corporation is one such company doing just that.



Cover for outdoor air conditioners

A subsidiary of Iwatani Corporation, which was established in 1930, Iwatani Materials was founded in 1967 and has since grown to become a leading manufacturer of plastic and metal products, with 300 employees working across three divisions and 13 units. Aside from its manufacturing base in Japan, the company has factories in Thailand and China, where products are made to the same 'Made-in-Japan' standards as those manufactured domestically. There are about 1000 staff members working in our Thai and Chinese factories."

"Iwatani Materials manufactures various items, and we play a key role in interfacing with customers all over the world," says president Masayoshi Masuda, before highlighting the competitive edge of Japanese firms. "Japanese

companies are particularly good at production control



GOURLAB



I-Wrap

so we have a very high level of quality and stability that enables us to manufacture very high-quality products; and we can deliver quickly to customers."

Iwatani Materials' commitment to high-quality and unique products has led to the development of its 'I'm D' brand concept for household wares. "It's basically about creating beautiful and highly functional designed products. The brand concept is for the customer to say, 'Oh, this is exactly what I was looking for!,'" says Mr. Masuda. "In these kinds of industries in general, manufacturers make something that is easier for them to make, easier to deliver, or easier to display in stores. For the 'I'm D' products, we consider what the customers are actually looking for, rather than what's easiest for us to produce."



kud

Among the other high-quality company products highlighted by the president are I-Wrap, a heat-resistant plastic bag for kitchen use that has been a popular seller since 1976, and ECOWARMER, a new type of yutampo (a product that has been used in Japan since ancient times) that provides users with extra heat when sleeping.

"The ECOWARMER is our latest, and most high-end version. It was released this winter. The outside cover

of the ECOWARMER is made from a composite material of Washi and fiber, and the container is actually different from existing products, using special raw materials. If you touch it, you can feel the strength and quality of the material, and if



ECOWARMER

you put hot water on it, it gets softer," explains Mr. Masuda. "By using this product you can minimize the heating that you use in your home, particularly while asleep. The product itself is also environmentally friendly, so it contributes to a sustainable society."

Another popular Iwatani Materials household product, GOURLAB is a type of cooking ware for microwaves and ovens, which offers very high temperature resistance of up to 230 degrees Celsius (446 degrees Fahrenheit). An invention of Iwatani Materials employees, GOURLAB is already selling well in the U.S and China via the Internet, and the company is considering developing new sizes.

As part of the Iwatani Materials' sustainability drive, the company has also launched an initiative focused on environmentally-friendly resin products in collaboration with the Iwatani Group. "We procure materials from the Iwatani Group, which is



"We aim to become a creative company through our uniqueness, originality, and our own sustainable products."

Masayoshi Masuda,
President,
Iwatani Materials Corporation

expanding globally, and manufacture products using plant-derived bio-resin, which is attracting attention as an environmental material," adds Mr. Masuda. "As we continue to sell plastic products in the future, we will also work on product development using environmentally-friendly materials."



Functional polyethylene film "High Barrier" for agro industry

As Iwatani Materials looks to reach more customers worldwide with its wide range of products, Mr. Masuda stresses that the company will continue to follow its mission and vision focused on sustainability. "Iwatani Materials should continuously develop, so our goal is to achieve sustainable innovation. We aim to become a creative company through our uniqueness, originality, and our own sustainable products."

Iwatani
Iwatani Materials Corp.
www.imcjp.co.jp