



Sankyosha

HIGH-TECH SOLUTIONS, HIGH-QUALITY SUPPORT

For businesses and foreign professionals, Japan serves as one of the most accessible gateways to Asia. More than 100 cities support direct air services to Tokyo alone, whilst the country's 20-plus ports and world-leading transportation system, including its advanced high-speed rail network, guarantee reliability for regional supply chains. Japan has also promoted itself as a hub for foreign talent by easing its visa issuance rules; subsequently, between 2013-2019, the number of high-skilled foreign professionals working in Japan increased by 15 times to 21,347.

According to the International Trade Administration (ITA), Japan is the world's fourth-largest semiconductor manufacturing equipment market, with sales growing fourfold in the past decade. Almost half of the world's top 15 semiconductor equipment manufacturers are based in Japan, and the government is investing heavily to triple chip sales to JPY 15 trillion in 2030 and encourage international partnerships and joint ventures. The government's FY22 budget allocated USD 2.8 billion in subsidies for domestic and overseas chipmakers investing in Japan – which later made up one-third of capital investment in power chips that regulate currents in electric vehicles (EVs) and analog semiconductors, which are widely used in automation technologies – whilst USD 4.5 billion was announced to incentivise the development of production facilities.

Founded in 1958, Sankyosha is a second-generation family business specialising in advanced analog semiconductor solutions, technical support, and distribution for medium and small electronics manufacturers.

Sankyosha was initially focused on electric cable sales before its current president, Mr. Toshiaki Kawanabe, became enamoured with the endless applications for liquid crystal and semiconductors. In 1986, when Seiko Instruments debuted a watch containing a niche semiconductor and decided to sell the ICs externally as well, Mr. Kawanabe saw the opportunity and approached the company about becoming its distributor. "The performance of their semiconductor was excellent. I was persistent about what we could offer and in 1997, we became their distributor."

Another turning point came when Mr. Kawanabe decided to invest in Japan's analog future, with the applications of semiconductor devices, mainly Analog ICs, for emerging technologies like robotics and factory automation equipment. "I looked around and found a company called Linear Technology. I thought combining a successful American company with our Japanese monozukuri spirit – our attention to detail, craftsmanship, and integrated procurement – would be the perfect path to growth. Our technical consulting and support with Japanese style Suriawase which means exchanging detailed views could be effective and practical for Analog circuit design particularly. Linear was eventually bought by another company called Analog Devices, but I knew it was the direction we needed to pursue." In the following years, Sankyosha partnered with multinationals like Epson, Kyocera, and Molex before coming



Toshiaki Kawanabe
President

full circle in 2018 when it entered a distributor agreement with Analog Devices.

Today, as a distributor of the USD 12 billion analog semiconductor company, Sankyosha continues to add to its thousands of client-customisable analog solutions. "By introducing these technologies to Japan, we're supporting the growth of Japanese SMEs, helping them succeed in a world dominated by semiconductors," explains Mr. Kawanabe.

Going forward, Sankyosha is interested in partnering with larger companies and SMEs to help them develop and launch their unique technologies, whether in IT, digitalisation, robotics, healthcare and medicine, telecommunications

(5G and 6G), or security. For Mr. Kawanabe, partnerships are the key to Sankyosha's success and represent everything the company stands for: mutual growth, constant improvement, and client-centricity.

Indeed, it is for these reasons that many are drawn to Sankyosha in the first place – to leverage its rich human resources and unique, technical-support distribution model. For example, all Sankyosha partners and clients utilize its highly experienced field application engineers (FAEs), equipped with unparalleled knowledge of analog circuitry to answer all queries swiftly and correctly. Attention to detail is perhaps the company's greatest asset, and Sankyosha has even earned an award for supporting monozukuri in manufacturing, despite not being a manufacturing company. "It is very rare that a distributor like ours get such an award," says Mr. Kawanabe.

Meanwhile, Sankyosha's close contact with its suppliers means it can provide retail support for unique requests, like small-quantity, large-variety orders of industrial equipment. The company also offers adaptive delivery management services to integrate with its clients' supply chains seamlessly.

As progress in AI and IoT continues at breakneck speed, Sankyosha will be key for many companies to stay competitive, and its commitment to their future represents its inner 'Sanpo Yoshi' culture – ensuring the three-way satisfaction of its clients, society, and it as a company – of 'winning together.' "Japanese companies will need a huge number of semiconductors over the coming years, and we're committed to their success. We'll support it in the spirit of Japanese culture; we want to perfect our work, make our contribution, and reap the rewards," says Mr. Kawanabe.

With this in mind, Sankyosha pays attention to recent strengthen Japan's overall investment environment, and Mr. Kawanabe believes that now is the perfect time to partner with major Japanese companies. "We have new robotics technologies emerging on the market, for example, which are gaining more and more attention; it's a huge opportunity for Japan."

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