

TIME 100

THE
WORLD'S
MOST
INFLUENTIAL
PEOPLE
DUA
LIPA

BY PATTI SMITH

A Commitment to Quality

Japan's Takayama Reed channels a century of business expertise into every product.



— **Toru Takayama**
President & CEO,
Takayama Reed Co., Ltd.

One of the great strengths of the Japanese economy is the army of unsung hero SMEs powering businesses with essential equipment and components. As a supplier to the loom and textiles sector, Takayama Reed Co., Ltd. has been proudly playing a vital role in the industry for more than a century. This longevity has been achieved by consistently delivering the best quality standards and customer service, in line with the

Japanese business philosophy of *monozukuri* (craftmanship). The firm's president, Toru Takayama, believes this is best exemplified by the company's system of bespoke solutions for clients. "In terms of *monozukuri*, we make sure that we provide 100% customization. Every customer has a unique specification for their order, so we carefully make products by hand based on their demands to facilitate their needs," said Takayama. A commitment to standards is so ingrained in the corporate culture that the most important production skills and knowledge are



Takayama Reed supplies quality components for textile firms.

passed down between generations of artisan workers within the firm through the company's successful Takayama Academy training scheme. Thanks to this highly skilled workforce, the president revealed that even though the company embraces new technology, manufacturing will never be fully automated because they believe delicate, handcrafted reed quality is crucial for weaving. The Takayama quality assurance strategy is clearly working. The world-renowned firm and the TAKAYAMA brand command 70% of the domestic market and 20% of the overseas market. The president said that the entire workforce is immensely proud of their work supplying such important products to other businesses around the world. "Part of our mission here at Takayama is to pre-empt the needs of clients with innovative solutions. If you see any new fabrics or textiles with

unique weave patterns, you can likely count on the loom behind it having used one of our reeds," said Takayama.

Scan to learn more

TAKAYAMA REED



Island Living and Learning

The Okinawa-based University of the Ryukyus prides itself on a sense of community.



— **Mutsumi Nishida**
President,
University of the Ryukyus

The Japanese island chain of Okinawa has a proud history stretching back thousands of years, with a local population closely connected to land and sea. These traditions are alive and well at the University of the Ryukyus, which works to maintain a close bond known locally as *yui* between the faculty, student body and wider community. The university is known for its work

in marine biology and medical science, which according to President Mutsumi Nishida, is an integral part of island life. "Nurturing students with science education is important, and improving labor productivity directly impacts the entire prefecture. Students who learn here will contribute and help with regional revitalization," said Nishida. Key work includes research into oceans and coral reefs and conservation studies of the unique environment. Medical research involves regenerative medicine, T-cell leukemia treatments and improving



The University of the Ryukyus is known for marine and medical research.

life expectancy. The university also has strong international connections, with more than 100 partnerships around the world and close ties to Hawaii in particular. As part of its modernizing and global outlook, it is working to transform its operations with a unique version of digital transformation (DX) called Ryudai transformation (RX). At the heart of everything is the Okinawan sense of *yui*. "This is the lynchpin of our culture and we will always strive to maintain a truly harmonious relationship between all stakeholders here in Okinawa and beyond," said Nishida.

