

Sunco Industries Turns Weaknesses to Strengths

Exclusive Scoop on **Industry Leading Trade Squad** of Japanese Fastener Trader



◀ Sunco Industries' large logistics center in Higashi Osaka

2 Million Items Available. Purchase Any Fasteners You Want!

Sunco Industries prides itself as a Japanese fastener trader with top-notch sales capabilities and enjoys a high reputation in Japan. It has one of Japan's best and large-scale high-tech fastener logistics centers, with an inventory housing 2 million items— any fasteners ranging from those for aircraft to eyeglasses, all in one place. Japan is known for its thoughtful service, and that's also true with the English "3QNet" website created by Sunco Industries, which features online product search and sales management tools, allowing customers to quickly search from 2 million products. You can even purchase a single screw! Sunco Industries President, Mr. Yoshihide Okuyama, made a bold statement to **bring Japanese JIS and metric screws to every corner of the world**, opening a way for Sunco Industries to take a leap to the world.

Japan's Top Fastener Trade Squad

Sunco Industries is one of the biggest players in Japan that knows best about fastener trade. They formed a supplier league of 1,200 companies. Internally, they built their own Sunco Squad which includes managers and supervisors with high marketing creativity, a sales force of 250 people, and 800 employees. This cover story features a special interview with President Okuyama as well as the managements at multiple levels. It is divided into several topics to unravel Sunco Industries' winning strategy through the eyes of the Sunco Squad.

▼ Left to right: Tomokazu Takada (Assistant Manager of Purchasing Dept. of Intl. Trade), President Yoshihide Okuyama, Tatsuji Sakamoto (Overseas Promotion Captain), Miki Hiraoka (Purchasing Dept. Manager)



Export Target — Demand for Fasteners Used in Japanese End Products

Breakthrough — Launch of "BARA" Service

From President Okuyama's perspective, the Japanese fastener market has reached a peak (the upper limit) because the domestic industries are cutting down workforce (people who fasten up end products with fasteners) and personnel expenses, resulting in decreased use of fasteners. But he doesn't think fastener demand will disappear or be replaced because fasteners are still a stable business.





▲ **President Okuyama:** “Our export targets overseas users who use Japanese end products. Many companies are using Japanese machine tools, semiconductor manufacturing equipment, ships, automobiles, motorcycles, trains, elevators, and logistics equipment. These end products require small quantities of JIS and metric fasteners for maintenance, but these fasteners are not easy to find overseas. I think Sunco Industries as a supply source will definitely provide overseas fastener sellers with the most benefits.”

“So three years ago we started to branch out into export. We introduced 3Q Net and our dedicated English official website (<https://www.jisscrew.com>). The former specializes in providing customers with product search, sales management, and demand forecasting to improve customers' business efficiency. The latter discloses pamphlets of product features, our company introduction and press releases, and it has been well received since its launch and inquiries now keep coming in.”

“Our biggest breakthrough in recent years was the launch of 'BARA (minimum order quantity)' service. We can ship any number of screws you wish, even just a single screw. We have increasing customers using this service to reduce the risk of excess stock. Our business milestone is the establishment of a logistics center that supports our 'BARA' small-quantity shipping technology. Many overseas companies visit us to see our logistics technology.”

Another major breakthrough for Sunco Industries as a screw company is rolling out the English "Socket Boy" Magazine. You read that right, President Okuyama has stepped into the publishing world with his own editorial staff to introduce Sunco Industries' business activities and Japanese local culture. The president continues to add circulation for more people around the world to know his company. This July, he launched the “Screw Titan” TV commercial where he took a part in person. In this commercial, Japanese former professional baseball player Yuki Saito, an invited guest actor, watches President Okuyama morphing high up in mid-air into Screw Titan— as tall as Taipei 101 skyscraper— from tens of thousands of screws. The commercial is intended to attract the young generation of Japan to join this company of titans.

Introducing Overseas Brand Ambassador – Socket Boy

The Japanese are experts in mascot marketing. To catch the eyes of global customers, Sunco Industries brings its original mascot "Socket Boy" to overseas exhibitions. The president said the concept was born from exhibitions. To increase global awareness of screws, the creator put a hexagonal-socket-screw hat and a special kimono jacket on Socket Boy to promote JIS and metric screws. Fastener World had a special interview with Tatsuji Sakamoto, one of the guys behind Screw Boy, for a behind-the-scenes story of the mascot.



▶ **Tatsuji Sakamoto (Socket Boy):** “In 2023, I was chosen along with other colleagues as the visiting observers to Fastener Fair Global in Germany. It was then that I thought of the need to create Socket Boy to boost overseas popularity. While the other observers were in black suits, I wanted to create variations even if it was just one person to look different, so I put on a traditional festival kimono with screws painted on it and put on an exaggerated pose to catch their eyes and show them that I'm from Japan. That was the birth of Socket Boy. To let European and American customers feel close to Socket Boy, I made this mascot a naughty and adorable little boy who loves to eat. Now, I've been chosen as the captain of overseas promotional activities. I hope the whole world will fall in love with Socket Boy.”



As the captain, Tatsuji Sakamoto said: “In the past, Japanese customers would buy fasteners in unit of pallets or boxes and then electroplate and manage the fasteners by themselves. We noticed this and launched sales of box-packaged fasteners (with or without electroplating) to save the hassles for customers. Finally, we evolved into supporting sales of a single screw. In other words, our advantage is to change the weakness in distribution channels into our weapon, and from there we successfully transformed into Japan's largest fastener trader.”



Sunco Industries' Strengths in the Eyes of the Management



Strengthening Strategic Partnerships with Taiwanese Suppliers

President Okuyama exclusively revealed to Fastener World that he is strongly seeking collaboration with Taiwanese suppliers: "Due to the current geopolitics, many countries are diversifying and reorganizing their supply chains. We stay true to our roots and stock products that our customers want and deliver them when needed. To that end, we look into our relationships with Taiwanese suppliers and hope to strengthen collaboration with them to cope with supply chain risks. We have a large 90-people purchasing unit, each of whom is responsible for a specific product, and their daily work includes consultation with customers, registering new products, and inventory. We've had specific personnel to interact with overseas suppliers, but from now on, the entire purchasing unit will build better relationships with suppliers. **Our distinction is no participation in the markets that other overseas traders have tapped into. We stock products urgently needed by customers who cannot obtain them at the moment. We build a problem-solving system for customers, which requires collaboration and information exchange among suppliers from Taiwan as well as other countries.**"

From "Japanese" to "International" Sunco Industries

Sunco Industries is running a new campaign globally, offering free shipping on all international shipments until the end of November, 2024. This time, special gifts will be offered to customers who purchase through "3QNet". This campaign had been launched early last year and was well-acclaimed. President Okuyama hopes customers around the world will experience the convenience in purchasing Japanese products and know these products are not as expensive and far away as they imagined.

The President said: "Some of our customers have changed their businesses to specialize in JIS and metric screws. It means that Sunco Industries' sales increase has led to the expansion of customers' businesses. This convinces me that the mission statement of 'bringing Japanese JIS and metric screws to the world' is our road to success. No doubt we will provide a friendly platform so that sellers seeking JIS and metric screws will find and purchase them with ease. **The 'Japanese' Sunco Industries is going 'international'.**" ■



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