

Monozukuri and *omotenashi*: the concepts behind Japan' s renowned manufacturing quality

Japanese manufacturers are renowned world-wide for delivering the highest quality, and that quality comes down to *monozukuri*. While it can be translated as "making things" or "manufacturing" , *monozukuri* means so much more than its humble translation. It is a manufacturing philosophy – embraced by leading companies like Toyota, right down to the legion of SME manufacturers that follow – that encompasses craftsmanship, the pursuit of perfection, innovation and the strong desire to satisfy the needs of the customer. Indeed, this last point related to the customer can also be linked to Japanese hospitality or

omotenashi, which describes the Japanese attitude of being caring and attentive toward guests.

"Everything that is made in Japan relates to the craftsmanship and the principles of *omotenashi*, serving the best needs of people who are going to use these products or services introduced by any individual or company. *Omotenashi* and craftsmanship are combined in one package, and it is the starting point of Japanese *monozukuri*," explains Kazuhito Omura, President and CEO of Fuji Kogyo, a manufacturer of original fishing tackle and rod components whose

monozukuri focuses on "making anglers' dreams come true" .

"When you talk about *monozukuri*, it isn' t just an understanding of making things in the most excellent way possible. Prior to that, you must think about your motives behind why you want to make something. The thought behind it is the genesis of our own *monozukuri*."

By combining the principles of *monozukuri* and *omotenashi*, Japanese companies continue to en-sure the high quality and standards for which the 'Made in Japan' brand is renowned worldwide.

Making anglers' dreams come true

A top manufacturer of fishing tackle and rod components, FUJI Kogyo leverages *monozukuri* to develop unique products loved by anglers and is constantly innovating to meet the ever-changing demands of the sports fishing industry.



"We listen to the voices of anglers, and develop products which match their needs, in order to bring the joy of fishing to them. It is simple, but this is the starting point of FUJI's *monozukuri*."

Kazuhito Omura, President & CEO, FUJI Kogyo Co., Ltd.

Followed by Nippon companies both big and small, *monozukuri* is the Japanese manufacturing philosophy focused on craftsmanship, attention to detail, the pursuit of perfection and constant innovation. And in the case of FUJI Kogyo, a manufacturer of original fishing tackle and rod components, the principle of the company's *monozukuri* is "making anglers' dreams come true".



FUJI hand tag

"FUJI's product development and manufacturing is to provide excitement to anglers by making original products," says president and CEO Kazuhito Omura. "We would like to be an independent, stand-alone rod component manufacturing company, a one-of-a-kind and unique enterprise. We believe that the reliability of

the company is established by continuing to serve stable and value-added quality to customers, and that enables us to distinguish ourselves from our competitors."

While to an outsider, the fishing rod market may not be seen as one which is constantly evolving, that could not be further from the truth. Indeed, the needs and demands of anglers are con-



Variety of rod components

tinuously changing. And with the evolution of materials and components, as well as changes in fishing methods and rod usage, FUJI expects that it will become even more important to meet various needs and take manufacturing one step further in the future.

"We strive to manufacture something that best fits the needs of the customers. We are a manufacturer of rod components, but rather than only trying to sell the components themselves, we tell our customers how the performance of their fishing rods is improved by using our rod components," adds Mr. Omura. "This means that we believe that it is very important to propose both the 'Hard (products)' and 'Soft (concept)' to customers. And our mission is to keep innovating products which meet various needs from customers, in harmony with new materials and new styles of fishing."

Besides its mainstream business, FUJI is also now focusing on creating a new market for "custom-made rod building" by

expanding its product range for the anglers who want to create a "one-of-a-kind" rod in a "DIY-type concept".

"We can say our business is shifting slightly from B2B to B2C where you have much more custom-made solutions, this is a transition we have been making for the past several years," states the company president.

in its Chinese factory, the company ensures the highest Japanese standards are followed to ensure the highest quality components are created. "We pursue *monozukuri* at our Chinese plant, thoroughly sticking to the quality standard of 'Made in Japan,'" says Mr. Omura. "Quality first" is the principle of our business and that is the mantra shared by all our employees. No matter where a product is manufactured, to achieve 'Japan quality' and 'FUJI quality' is the most important consideration and that is the objective of our production plant in China. We have been working and cooperating closely with our staff in China in order to achieve 'FUJI quality' there."



SiC (Silicon Carbide) guide

The needs of anglers across the globe differ from country to country, and to cater to varying needs, FUJI has built up a product catalog comprised of a staggering 10,000 types of rod components, including guides, reel seats, top cover, butt accessories, grip materials, metal parts, sinkers, and hook keepers. As Mr. Omura ensures: "All our products are developed for the needs of anglers. We listen to the voices of anglers, and develop products which match their needs, in order to bring the joy of fishing to them. It is simple, but this is the starting point of FUJI's *monozukuri*."



Product test by pro-staff

Monozukuri is firmly associated with 'Made in Japan'. And although many of FUJI's products are made

For FUJI, its commitment to society and the environment is just as important as its commitment to anglers. In 2008, the company introduced the "We Love the Earth" concept, which shares the same values as the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals. "We, of course, try to decrease the burden of our production processes and in addition we are doing some nature conservation activities in cooperation with the local community," adds Mr. Omura. "We are a manufacturing company, but want to raise the value of our existence by contributing to the environment, local society, and the fishing tackle industry, as 'a company creating culture'."



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