

Foreign Professionals Connecting Japan with Vietnam

A company engaging in precision machining has continuously been recruiting Vietnamese engineers for ten years or so. Because this company has been nurturing them as foreign professionals, not just as foreign workers, it attracts much attention for its Japan-Vietnam business model.

TAKASHI SASAKI

KOGANEI Seiki Co., Ltd., headquartered in Iruma City, Saitama Prefecture, is a company with about 270 employees. Since its foundation in 1943, Koganei has constantly been introducing technologies on the very front lines of the times and has provided many manufacturers with precision parts and components essential to automobiles, motorcycles, airplanes and motorsports, including Formula One. The company



Yusuke Kamoshita (second from left) with three Vietnamese employees
Photo: Takashi Sasaki

has attracted attention in recent years for its utilization of foreign professionals as well as its advanced technologies.

Koganei President Yusuke Kamoshita says, “Everything started in around 2007. We heard from a friend that Vietnamese science-course students had few opportunities to be recruited by companies. Our previous president [Yusuke’s father, Reiji, who is currently chairman of the company] visited a university in Vietnam and recruited Vietnamese students. At that time, the shortage of workers was not so serious as today. But because it was considered certain that we would see a shortage of young workers in the near future, we tried hiring Vietnamese students.”

According to Kamoshita, the new employees from Vietnam are honest and calm and easily blend in with the Japanese employees. In addition, they are highly motivated to work for Japanese companies and work diligently. Furthermore, word-of-mouth has spread among younger Vietnamese about the Vietnamese employees’ lives in Japan and Koganei’s corporate culture, enabling the company to continue recruiting Vietnamese students. Currently, of its 240 engineers, 40 are Vietnamese.

Kamoshita says, “In hiring foreign



Koganei Seiki’s factory in Maebashi, Gunma Prefecture
Photo: Courtesy of Koganei Seiki Co



Koganei Seiki nurtures excellent employees
Photo: Courtesy of Koganei Seiki Co

people, we do nothing special. Basically, we treat them the same as Japanese employees, in salaries and social services as well as in regards to the specifics of operation. I speculated that the Vietnamese employees would have difficulty communicating with Japanese workers in the workplace. But, as president, I am only doing things in the usual ways.”

In December 2014, Koganei established KOGANEI VIETNAM CO., LTD. in Hanoi, the Vietnamese capital, the reason for doing so being very interesting.


Kamoshita says, “Two Vietnamese employees who played a central role in the programming division had to go back home for family reasons. We established the subsidiary in Hanoi to stop them from quitting.”

Currently, seven employees including the two Vietnamese employees who had returned from Japan work in Hanoi. The subsidiary in Vietnam not only plays an important role in developing products but also plays an essential role in recruiting new Vietnamese students and educating and nurturing employees.

In May 2018, Koganei was recognized for these efforts and was introduced as an example in the Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry’s “Fifty Japanese Companies Providing Successful Careers for Highly-skilled Foreign Professionals.” Around this time, the late Vietnamese President Trần Đại Quang, when visiting Japan as a State guest, paid an inspection visit to the company’s factory in Maebashi,

Gunma Prefecture. On this visit, President Quang was impressed by Vietnamese employees working on manufacturing quality parts and components with Japanese employees and encouraged them, saying, “I sincerely hope that you will work hard and be a model for Japan-Vietnam exchange.”

Kamoshita says, “We have not hired foreign people just to make up for the shortage of workers. We have accepted and nurtured excellent Vietnamese students so that they can be truly effective assets for our company.”

Koganei’s education and nurturing of foreign professionals connects Japan with Vietnam and is a developmental model for regions and the world. 



Koganei Seiki manufactures precision parts and components for motorsports applications
Photo: Courtesy of Koganei Seiki Co