



Ichizo Yoshikawa,  
president

# Rooting success on environmental accountability

**E**nvironmental accountability was not a focus for most companies up until the past 20 years, when adverse effects started threatening the sustainability of many industries. Possessing the foresight to advocate green solutions, Suminoe Textile leveraged its technological expertise to produce environmentally friendly products as early as the 1990s, decades before other companies followed suit.

Suminoe started as a carpet manufacturer in 1883 and later expanded its product portfolio to include car seats, cushions and seat covers for public transport vehicles. It also manufactures textiles for interiors such as floors, fabrics and vinyl wall coverings.

Suminoe is the only company in Japan to provide all kinds of fabrics to the vehicle industry, from seats to carpets and car mats.

Guided by its "KKR+A" philosophy (K for *kenko* which means health, K for *kankyō* which means environment, R for

recycling, and A for amenity), Suminoe employs a more environmentally friendly production cycle. The company has leveraged its industry know-how to streamline its processes, promoting recycling and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

The production process of one of Suminoe's revolutionary products, the Eco Mark-certified SG-300 recycled carpet tile for interiors such as floors, emits 19 per cent less CO<sub>2</sub>. It also uses a special polyester fibre named SUMITRON, exclusive only to Suminoe, which is made from recycled PET bottles.

Suminoe's innovative business approach has earned the trust of major Japanese car manufacturers such as Toyota and Nissan. Aside from the vehicle segment, Suminoe also caters to hotels and theatres for their carpet needs.

"Even before our customer requests for a particular design, we already do some research and try to understand their needs," says Ichizo Yoshikawa,

Suminoe Textile president. "Because of this, many companies trust us. There are three factors that enabled us to earn client trust: we never betray the customers, we provide good quality and we give proper costing."

With subsidiaries in Thailand, the mainland and the United States, Suminoe is ready to fulfil its vision of becoming the most successful automotive supplier in the world.

Suminoe seeks to increase its international customer base in the automotive segment and is confident of the capabilities of its subsidiaries to meet imminent demand. The company is looking to expand its railway division internationally as well.

"We will aggressively market our eco-friendly products to international markets. Suminoe has invested time and money to manufacture products with such quality and we believe that it will meet the requirements of even the most meticulous international clients," Yoshikawa says.