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sustainable japan

Nomura Holdings builds a vision for uniting global staff

Unraveling Japanese companies

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To mark its 100th anniversary in 2025, Nomura Holdings Inc. established a corporate purpose for the entire Nomura Group: “We aspire to create a better world by harnessing the power of financial markets.”

A clear corporate purpose may be especially important for Japan’s largest brokerage group, which expanded rapidly worldwide after acquiring parts of Lehman Brothers’ operations in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe, the Middle East and Africa in 2008. To bring employees together globally, Nomura has needed shared goals and strengthened motivation.

Today, the group has about 29,000 employees worldwide, including 15,000 in Japan. For the latest business year, which ended in March, it posted a record net profit of ¥362.1 billion (\$2.2 billion), up 6% from the previous year, on total revenue of ¥2.17 trillion, up 15%.

“As we looked toward the next 100 years, we decided to put into words what we should strive to achieve as a group,” said Yukiko Ozaki, Nomura’s chief human resources officer, in a recent interview, part of a monthly series by Naonori Kimura, a partner at the consulting firm Industrial Growth

Platform Inc. “But articulating it was not our goal. What we wanted was to define a corporate purpose from a global perspective and, through discussions that crossed departments and divisions, connect it with each employee’s personal purpose.” She added that the discussions with more than 10,000 workers at home and abroad took three years to complete.

Since creating the corporate purpose, Nomura executives and employees around the world have continued to hold discussions. They are encouraged to recognize how their personal purpose connects with the group’s and are putting that understanding into practice, she said.

Ozaki said the Lehman acquisition in 2008 was a milestone in Nomura’s corporate history, as it dramatically changed the organization and enabled the financial group to strengthen its global presence, although Nomura’s fundamental task of circulating capital in society to enrich stakeholders’ lives has not changed.

Strengthening corporate ethics

It is also essential for Nomura to reflect on what matters most in its business, following incidents of misconduct.

“We have designated Aug. 3 as Nomura Founding Principles and Corporate Ethics Day. Every year, we reaffirm our commitment to preventing such incidents from happening again,” Ozaki said. On that day, group executives and employees pledge to comply



“We aspire to create a better world by harnessing the power of financial markets,” Ozaki said.



Yukiko Ozaki, Nomura’s chief human resources officer and chief health officer

with the Nomura Group Code of Conduct and discuss how to understand and follow it in practice.

Since Nomura Securities Co. was established in 1925, the brokerage group has expanded its business, driven by its sales capabilities. During Japan’s economic boom in the late 1980s, Nomura and other domestic brokerages benefited from inflated stock prices, although the long downturn since then has undermined their financial health. In 2008, the collapse of Lehman Brothers at the climax of the subprime mortgage crisis in the United States sent shock waves through the world economy, with the financial industry continuing to suffer until recent years.

Supporting social well-being

Ozaki said the group’s sustainability management has two aspects: One is to support its customers and stakeholders, and the other is to make its own activities sustainable.

As part of the first aspect, Nomura established the internal Well-Growing Institute (WGI) earlier this year, designed to promote

ing value chains.

In 2020, to support sustainable projects and finance overseas, Nomura bought Greentech Capital Advisors LLC, a U.S.-based investment banking firm specializing in M&A for sustainable technology and infrastructure companies. The business was integrated into Nomura’s investment banking business under the name Nomura Greentech and offers its services in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Zurich and Paris.

Developing future talent

To help make its own activities sustainable, Nomura has strengthened its human capital by changing its criteria to evaluate employee performance.

“We have put more stress on qualitative performance appraisal for the last few years,” Ozaki said. “Beyond just numerical targets, leadership skills and the ability to develop and educate team members are now also important factors for promotion.” Also, essential factors for global evaluation include a willingness to take on challenges and an understanding of inclusion, in addition to professional ethics, risk management, compliance and conduct.

Ozaki, who also serves as chief health officer, said that the group announced its health management initiative in 2016 to promote employees’ physical and mental health, which is vital to enabling them to perform at their best. Nomura has also introduced steps to support women’s health, including subsidies for low-dose birth control pills and egg freezing, along with more flexible leave for fertility treatment.

For the next 100 years, what will matter for sustainable organizations is the added value each employee brings, Ozaki said. “Employees will be judged by their own expertise, technologies, skills and experience,” she said.

To help employees enhance their value and broaden their perspectives, the group offers opportunities for assignments to other units, including startups, so they can gain wider experience, she said.

NAONORI KIMURA
INDUSTRIAL GROWTH PLATFORM INC. (IGPI) PARTNER



Nomura Holdings Inc. has formulated its group purpose with an eye toward the next 100 years. What the company emphasized was the way it positioned the development process as an opportunity to put human capital management into practice. Over a period of three years, the company engaged in dialogue with more than 10,000 employees, while executives themselves visited each organization to deepen discussions, fostering a culture in which each employee connects the meaning of working at Nomura with their own personal purpose. To implement its purpose, the company has revised its domestic evaluation system and is also actively investing in ongoing reskilling and talent development to help employees adapt to the changes. Its approach to D&I was also impressive, positioning diversity and inclusion as a management foundation for sustainable corporate growth. Furthermore, its response to the expanding green finance market, particularly in Europe and the U.S., is itself a business strategy that views changes in financial and capital markets as growth opportunities. Through initiatives including financial and economic education and the establishment of the Well-Growing Institute, the company demonstrates a distinctly Nomura-like commitment to achieving both social value creation and enhanced corporate value through its core business. In an era when the role of finance itself is changing, Nomura’s challenge will likely offer new insights into what financial institutions should become over the next 100 years.

Cosplayers from around world unite in Nagoya summit

ESG/SDGs

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Cosplayers dressed as characters from Japanese manga, anime, video games or TV shows gathered from around the world on the weekend of July 31 to Aug. 2, bringing splashes of color to the streets of Nagoya. The World Cosplay Summit 2026 welcomed representatives from 40 countries and regions. With the city itself becoming part of the stage, participants connected across national and cultural boundaries through their shared passion for Japanese pop culture.

Held annually since 2003, primarily in Aichi Prefecture, the World Cosplay Summit is one of the world’s largest cosplay events, aimed at promoting international cultural exchange through cosplay. At the World Cosplay Championship, teams selected through qualifying competitions in their respective countries and regions come together to compete in costume craftsmanship, acting and stage performance. This year’s final was held on Aug. 2 at the Aichi Prefectural Arts Theater’s Main Hall, where representative teams took to the stage to compete for the world title.

However, the WCS extends far beyond the championship stage. A wide range of programs took place at venues across Nagoya, primarily Oasis 21, a multipurpose complex in the heart of the city, as well as Hisaya-odori Park and the Osu shopping district. Across these venues, cosplayers, photographers, fans and tourists from Japan and abroad came together to meet and connect through cosplay. Oasis 21 alone drew a total of 259,000 visitors over the course of the event.

At the opening ceremony on July 31, a red carpet was rolled out along the grand staircase at Oasis 21, where representatives

from participating countries and regions and other guests appeared in colorful costumes. Aichi Gov. Hideaki Ohnura and Nagoya Mayor Ichiro Hirasawa also joined the festivities in costume.

A day earlier, during a courtesy visit by representative cosplayers, Omura welcomed the group dressed as Muzan Kibutsuji from “Demon Slayer.” “Welcome to Aichi and Nagoya,” he said, expressing his hope that the three-day WCS would be a success and encouraging the participants to enjoy both Japan and the event. Hirasawa appeared as Himmel from “Frieren: Beyond Journey’s End.” “We are delighted that Nagoya is the home of the World Cosplay Summit,” he said, describing cosplay as “a treasure that Nagoya is proud to share with the world.” He added that the city would continue to support cosplayers as a “cosplay host town.”

Corporate sponsors supporting the WCS were also represented on the red carpet. Satoshi Osumi, head of Japan Post’s Tokai regional office, appeared in the uniform of a Meiji Era (1868-1912) postal worker alongside the company’s bear mascot, Posukuma. Japan Post seeks to connect people, communities and the world while staying close to individuals throughout their lives and bringing warmth to their hearts. At the WCS, the company not only engaged with visitors but also helped participating delegations arrange the shipment of their belongings, supporting an environment in which cosplayers from overseas could take part in the event with greater peace of mind.

At Oasis 21, Japan Post also set up a booth inspired by its “Zukkyun Post Office” concept. Featuring heart motifs and the Japanese concept of “kawaii,” or cuteness, the pop-up has proved popular with younger generations, particularly Gen Z. The first Zukkyun Post Office opened for a limited time in Tokyo’s Shibuya district in August



The World Cosplay Championship at the Aichi Prefectural Arts Theater on Aug. 2 was livestreamed worldwide. Hong Kong’s AR Lu and Ronnie Kui won with a performance inspired by “Monster Hunter.”



Representatives from participating countries and regions begin the Osu Cosplay Parade from Osu Kannon Temple through the Osu shopping arcade and the streets of Nagoya on Aug. 1.

2023, and subsequent pop-ups have been held in locations including Ikebukuro and Osaka as part of Japan Post’s efforts to make post offices feel more familiar and accessible to younger people.

At the WCS booth, visitors could pose for photos against a large red heart and neon signs, and those who shared their photos on social media using a designated hashtag received a photo card featuring an image taken on the spot. Posukuma also made an appearance, engaging with cosplayers and fans from Japan and abroad.

Meanwhile, Nagoya-based Brother Industries has supported the WCS for many years, helping cosplayers pursue their creativity through its manufacturing technologies. Cosplay involves far more than simply sewing costumes; embroidery, embellishments, props and other details crafted by cosplayers themselves all play an important role in bringing characters and their worlds to life.

At this year’s booth, Brother showcased products including embroidery machines and printers, along with T-shirts and other items created using its technolo-

gies. Original WCS characters were also on display. Such technologies give cosplayers more ways to turn their ideas into reality and expand the possibilities of creative expression.

The following day, Aug. 1, the Osu Cosplay Parade, one of the WCS’s signature events, took place around Osu Kannon Temple and the surrounding shopping district. Around 1,000 cosplayers — including representatives from participating countries and regions as well as other participants from Japan and abroad — paraded through the streets in an array of costumes, drawing crowds of spectators who waved and took photos along the route.

At the championship on the following day, the representative teams took to the stage, showcasing not only the craftsmanship of their costumes but also their acting, stage production and ability to bring their chosen works to life. The championship was livestreamed, allowing cosplay fans around the world to follow the competition unfolding onstage in Nagoya.

The judging panel included voice actor Toshio Furukawa, known for roles includ-



Cosplayers pose in front of a heart-shaped mailbox at a themed Japan Post booth during the World Cosplay Summit 2026.

ing Piccolo in “Dragon Ball”; singer and TV personality Shoko Nakagawa; and kabuki actor Seishiro Sawamura. In addition to the overall rankings, awards were presented across a wide range of categories, including action, dramatic performance, sewn costumes, costume construction, wigs and sound, recognizing the diverse skills that go into cosplay, from costume making and performance to sound design.

The 2026 grand prize went to Hong Kong representatives AR Lu and Ronnie Kui for their performance inspired by “Monster Hunter.” As the winning team, they also received the Foreign Minister’s Prize, presented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a member of the WCS Executive Committee. As part of the grand prize, the pair will be invited to serve as judges at the World Cosplay Championship in 2027. They also received the Tamakoshi Award in the alumni category.

Second place went to Canadian representatives Autumn’s Cosplay and CNR-Cosplay, who portrayed Akira Gunji and Sho Tenkubashi from the manga “Tokyo Aliens.” They also received the Brother Award in the sewn costume category. Team Brazil Avner and Gih took third place for their portrayals of Alphen and Shionne from the video game “Tales of Arise,” while also receiving the Assist Wig Award.

Representatives from around the world, including Kuwait, Latvia, Indonesia, Australia, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, and India, also received special awards in categories ranging from action and dramatic performance to costume construction and sound.

For team Hong Kong, winning the championship marked the culmination of a year of preparation. “We spent a year making the costumes and put our hearts into them, so I was really happy that we could perform in front of everyone,” Ar Lu said.

Ronnie Kui was still taking in the victory. “I still can’t believe we won,” he said. “All the teams were amazing, so I was really surprised. I’m simply grateful that our performance received such a high score.”

The duo chose “Monster Hunter,” a game Kui loves. AR Lu took on the role of Airou, the feline companion that assists hunters in the game. The hunter’s armor was made entirely by hand, with particular attention paid to its coloring. “The part we focused on most was the coloring. We painted it using UV light,” Ar Lu said.

Aiming to highlight issues related to a sustainable society, The Japan Times gave its support to this event by becoming a media sponsor.

