

Japan's parcel giant sets to build an open platform for cold chain logistics

日本快遞龍頭擬為冷鏈物流建立國際安全標準規範



Katsuhiko Umetsu, Senior Executive Officer of Yamato Holdings Co, Ltd points out that Hong Kong's unique economic structure and highly transparent judicial system make it the world's core business hub.

雅瑪多控股有限公司高級執行役員梅津 克彥指出，香港獨有的經濟架構及高度透明的司法制度，令香港成為全球企業的主要商業基地。

Yamato Holdings Co, Ltd accounts for 43 percent market share of delivery service in Japan, has 1.8 billion packages delivered annually. As the country's leading parcel delivery provider, the company regards cold chain delivery as its most important area for future expansion, and it is on the lookout for more strategic alliances and partnerships in Asia. In addition, Yamato is set to leverage innovative technologies to maximise customer satisfaction - a particularly important element in the e-commerce market.

A disruptive business model to capitalise on global trends

Founded in 1919, Yamato Holdings is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year with a footprint in 24 countries and regions and about 220,000 employees. In response to the challenging business environments and to sustain company's growth for another 100 years, the company has built a special taskforce to formulate their "KAIKAKU2019 for NEXT 100" corporate reform plan in 2017. Strategies include reforming the delivery business and developing cross-border e-commerce platforms, and adopting a customer-oriented organisational structure.

According to Katsuhiko Umetsu, Senior Executive Officer of Yamato Holdings Co, Ltd, "We foresee a lot of changes in our

global communities, especially as more FTA (free trade agreements) and EPAs (environmental protection agreements) are imposed," he notes. "In view of the high growth in e-commerce, we need to think in terms of change, and to apply new disruptive business models to capitalise on those global trends."

Mr Umetsu continues, "While we are facing a shrinking labour force and an insatiable demand for convenience and even faster deliveries, we need to create new digital channels for communicating with customers." For instance, the company has joined forces with a social media company LINE in an effort to create direct customer communication. "We can send messages directly to recipients," says Mr Umetsu, "to deliver parcels at customer's convenience, which is directly related to customer satisfaction."

In addition, the company has been actively building an open-type network of parcel lockers, and has worked on other efforts for the development of next-generation logistics services including utilisation of artificial intelligence in big data and automated driving technologies to enhance operation efficiency.

Raising the bar

Mr Umetsu, who is responsible for the company's global strategic planning and development as well as cold chain platform development, reveals that the company will be shifting more towards the high quality cold chain business as a result of the decreasing number of primary producers and the increasing demand for imported food in developing regions including Mainland China, India and Africa. He pinpoints the need to enhance food safety to comply with international standards for parcel-chilled and frozen goods delivery services, and to provide consumers with a high level of confidence in the products they purchase.

He also reveals that the company has been making efforts to build an open, global cold chain platform that meets the ISO certification standards, "primary products from the farm to the table, and parcel delivery at the truck, air or ocean level, would all meet the same standards." As such, customers can eat safely

with confidence, knowing where the food comes from and how it got to them. “Creating a global safety platform not only benefits Yamato but also benefits everybody.”

In fact, Yamato has already launched its chilled and frozen parcel delivery services back in 1988. “Cold chain is currently one of the company’s core areas of advancement,” says Mr Umetsu. “While food safety standards are often driven by Europe and the US, it’s now the time for Asia to take the lead in light of the population growth in the region.”

He continues, “We are looking for partners in Mainland China where the market is very large. We have no intention of competing with big players like JD.com or Alibaba. Rather, we are seeking more alliances.” In 2017, Yamato Holdings teamed up with JD.com to build a cold chain logistics network in the mainland. Under the partnership, JD.com will leverage Yamato’s logistics network to export mainland goods to Japan, Southeast Asia and Europe, and Yamato will make use of JD.com’s nationwide logistics network to enhance its own last-mile delivery capability in the mainland.

A gateway to global trade

“Hong Kong is one of the world’s biggest food traders,” says Mr Umetsu, adding that “Hong Kong should be part of the platform that advises the global community on how to do business with Japanese farmers and primary producers.” Hong Kong has long been enjoying special free trade status with connectivity, efficiency and dynamism that are widely appreciated. With its unique economic structure and highly transparent judicial system, Hong Kong remains the world’s core business hub not only for big companies, but also for SMEs and start-ups.

“How to translate innovative ideas into practical platforms is a case in point,” says Mr Umetsu. “With more FTAs signed, markets will be united, and logistic transport systems should be seamless platforms.” The company is, at the same time, seeking strategic alliances and partnerships in Asian countries including Vietnam, Myanmar, the Philippines and India.

From 19–20 November, Mr Umetsu will be attending the Asian Logistics and Maritime Conference (ALMC) organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. “The ALMC is the leading industry forum in Asia, and, as such, it should take the lead in terms of becoming not only an information hub for major industry players, but also for innovators, start-ups and SMEs.” He expects cold chain logistics and new customer experiences to be just a couple of the many highlights of the conference.

在日本快遞市佔率達43%、每年派遞18億份包裹的雅瑪多控股有限公司(Yamato Holdings Co., Ltd.)，視高端冷鏈物流服務為未來業務增長最主要的領域。該公司有意在亞洲尋覓合作伙伴，並建立策略聯盟，以助集團業務持續發展。與此同時，有見電子商貿發展蓬勃，該公司將積極應用創新科技，以提升消費者的銷售體驗。

顛覆性營運模式 應對全球新趨勢

於1919年成立的雅瑪多控股有限公司，今年已踏入一百周年，業務遍及24個國家及地區，僱有大約22萬名員工。面對營商環境的嚴峻挑戰，並迎接下一個一百年，該公司自2017年已成立特別工作小組並制訂「KAIKAKU2019 for NEXT 100」企業改革計劃，包括改革旗下的快遞業務，並發展跨境電子商貿平台，以及推行以客為先的管理架構，冀實現持續發展的目標。

雅瑪多控股有限公司高級執行役員梅津 克彥提到，「我們預計全球情況將出現不少變化，尤其是不少自由貿易協定及環保協議陸續簽訂。另一方面，由於電子商貿正以高速增長發展，我們認為需要有『改變』的新思維，並以顛覆性的營運模式，應對全球的新趨勢。」

他續說：「日本現正面臨勞工短缺。但消費者對快遞業服務的要求卻不斷提高。所以，我們需要建立創新的數碼平台與客戶直接溝通。例如，我們夥拍社交媒體LINE，可以直接與客戶





溝通，在方便他們的時間及地點去送件，藉以提升他們對服務的滿意度。」

此外，該公司亦積極建立包裹儲物櫃的聯網，又藉著科技的應用，包括人工智能的大數據、自動化駕駛技術等，以提高營運效率。

確立國際安全標準

梅津 克彥負責公司的環球策略及冷鏈業務發展方向，他指出由於發展中地區如中國內地、印度及非洲等的務農人口正在減少，以至這些地區對入口食品需求增加。因此，公司未來將全力發展高端冷鏈業務，並認為冷凍及急凍食品的送遞必需符合國際標準，以確保食物安全，為消費者帶來信心。

他透露，該公司一直在建立符合ISO認證標準的冷鏈業務平台：「農產品由農田到餐桌，不論經過貨車運載、空運還是海運，整個運輸過程都符合國際認證標準。」由此，消費者在對食品產地及運送過程充份了解，便可吃得安心。「這個符合ISO認證標準的冷鏈平台不但推動公司業務增長，而且可以造福人群。」

事實上，該公司在1988年已首次推出冷凍及冷藏包裹業務。梅津 克彥表示，目前冷鏈是公司發展的核心業務之一：「過往食物安全的標準，一般是由歐洲及美國所確立，但現時人口增長主要來自亞洲，所以有必要由亞洲牽頭制訂新標準。」

「中國內地市場雖然很大，但我們無意與京東商城或阿里巴巴等主要電商直接競爭。反而，我們正在尋覓夥伴攜手發展冷鏈業務。」早於2017年，該公司已夥拍京東商城在內地建立冷鏈物流網絡。透過該策略聯盟，京東商城可藉著雅瑪多的物流網絡，出口內地貨品到日本、東南亞及歐洲等國。雅瑪多則利用京東商城的全國物流網絡，以提高其內地最後一哩送遞的服務效率。

環球貿易樞紐

梅津 克彥認為，香港一直享有自由貿易的地位，而且與國際接軌、擁有高度城市效率及富有動力，一直以來為全球商界所讚許。此外，香港獨有的經濟架構及高度透明的司法制度，令香港不但成為國際巨企，也是中小企及初創的主要商業基地。他表示：「香港是全球最大的食品貿易商之一，相信可成為日本農民通往全球市場的跳板。」

他續指，「因應愈來愈多自由貿易條約簽訂，預計市場將走向一體化，物流運輸平台因此亦應該無縫接通。所以如何引進創意思維，是推進平台發展一個重要的元素。」他並透露，該公司將積極在亞洲國家包括越南、緬甸、菲律賓及印度等，尋覓策略夥伴。

梅津 克彥將於11月19及20日出席由香港貿易發展局舉辦的「亞洲物流及航運會議」(ALMC)。他預期，冷鏈物流及消費者新體驗將是論壇焦點討論之一，並期待大會提出全面的業內議題，以兼顧巨企、中小企、初創公司及創新企業的需要。

Meet Katsuhiko at:
Plenary Session 1

Where opportunity knocks –
Asia supply chain wedged
between challenging
geopolitics

Date: 19 November
Time: 9:15am-10:45am
Venue: Main Forum

與梅津 克彥會面：
主題論壇1

機遇前來敲門 –
當亞洲供應鏈穿梭於
充滿挑戰的地緣政治之間

日期：11月19日
時間：9:15am-10:45am
地點：主論壇