

# Best Engine

Vol.18

Corporate Book 2025-26

CEO Message

## “Making the World GOOD” through IT

Accelerating Efforts to  
Create a Better Future and Working to  
Become the Leading Group of Slers

ITOCHU Techno-Solutions Corporation



Tatsushi  
Shingu



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Cover Photo  
Cover Photo/Masataka Nakano  
Born in 1955, photographer Masataka Nakano has won numerous honors, including the Photographic Society of Japan's Newcomer's Award for *TOKYO NOBODY* and the Kimura Ihei Award for *Tokyo Windows*. They say that a majority of offices today have adopted hot desking, an approach rooted in the deep connections between physical movement and thinking. Einstein conceived the theory of relativity while pedaling a bicycle, the story goes, and Steve Jobs held meetings walking around. Not that we're trying to compete with the greats—but moderate exercise can, indeed, spark brain waves and catalyze positive thinking.



“Making the World GOOD” through IT

# Accelerating Efforts to Create a Better Future and Working to Become the Leading Group of Slers

As the wave of digital transformation (DX) surges from business operations into daily life and society as a whole, the roles of system integrators (Slers) are becoming more important than ever. Guided by its Group Corporate Philosophy of “Challenging Tomorrow’s Changes,” CTC is strengthening its business infrastructure and expanding human capital in its steps toward “Making the World GOOD” through IT.

President & CEO  
ITOCHU Techno-Solutions Corporation

## Tatsushi Shingu

### Strengths Honed over Half a Century

The world is now changing at an unprecedented pace. From generative AI, cloud computing, and data analytics to information security, new technologies are going into practical use across a wide breadth of fields—and reshaping the structure of society itself. IT has thus become a critical foundation that influences companies, industries, and even everyday life as a whole. Operating in that milieu, CTC serves as a digitalization partner for more than 6,000 customers of all kinds across a wide range of sectors—from broadcasting and telecommunications to infrastructure providers (electricity and gas, for example), logistics and transportation, manufacturing, finance, healthcare, entertainment, and the public sector. It has been a little over a year and a half since I assumed the role of President & CEO in April 2024. Through direct dialogue with customers all over Japan, I have repeatedly heard customers say that CTC is “indispensable as a DX partner” and that they continue to look forward to what we can do for them. To me, those voices highlight both the scope of our role and the weight of our responsibility. The trust that CTC has earned from a wide array of large-scale customers is rooted in the reliable capabilities we have consistently cultivated over our more than half a century in operation. Our position as a multi-vendor Sler—built on global partnerships with more than 300

companies, from startups to the “big tech” companies leading the global IT sector—is one of the strengths that sets us apart. We identify leading-edge technologies early on, combine them in intelligent, effective ways, tailor the results to Japanese customers’ environments, and implement them in a way that allows customers to be confident using them in real operations. I am positive that our ability to put that cycle in motion at a high level ranks among the best in a highly competitive industry.

### Breaking Through to Become the Leading Group of Slers

That said, CTC has not yet reached its full potential. Our goal now is to step up and carve out a position as the leading group of Slers—and doing that hinges on strengthening our proposal capabilities. At CTC, we have established a sturdy reputation in areas like infrastructure construction, system operations, and system maintenance. From here on, however, Slers will need to go further—stepping into customers’ businesses and envisioning the future together. We will deepen dialogue with not only information systems departments but also management and people on the front lines of business operations. In that process, we will identify the issues customers already see and also essential needs that have yet to come into their view—and then propose solutions with powerful investment impact. As we add to our track record in that



## CEO Message

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kind of work, we will continue to evolve into a partner that works closely with customers and helps them grow their businesses.

### Human Resources who Relish Rising to the Challenge

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In the fast-changing environment we now live in, going on the defensive means getting left behind. For CTC to aim high as a strong team of Slers, we have to take the plunge into the churning waves of change, break out of old shells, and keep taking on new challenges. That sense of mission is why we decided to update our Group Corporate Philosophy to “Challenging Tomorrow’s Changes,” an articulation of our commitment. What does that mean for us at CTC? It means we want people who can take a step forward, unafraid of change or failure, people who choose challenge over precedent—people with that kind of positive mindset. Being able to solve assigned problems and execute predetermined tasks the right way is just the beginning. We want people with initiative and creativity—those who take action on their own, think critically, and generate new answers and new value.

### Uniting as “ONE TEAM” and Turning Differences into Strengths

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The CTC Group is home to more than 12,000 employees. Professionals across technology, sales, consulting, operations, and planning bring diverse expertise—and each and every one has their own unique personality and perspectives. To connect the strengths of so many different individuals and maximize our organizational capabilities, we promote interaction and collaboration that transcends job boundaries and hierarchical lines as what we call “ONE TEAM.” When employees engage with each other in open dialogue and put their heads together, they can go places that would be impossible to reach alone. Time and time again, I have seen how cross-status and cross-job teamwork can get projects going in an instant. Your strengths can help others—and others’ strengths can help you grow. At CTC, we nurture a culture where people grow together and share their achievements as a group. That, we believe, makes the company a great place for young people to work.

Our goal in developing human resources is not to fit employees into a specific, standardized mold. What we aim for is this: every employee valuing their individuality, shaping a career plan with dreams and goals, and growing as a professional. We believe that corporate evolution begins where individual employees grow in synergy, building on each other—and that conviction guides how we shape our career-support mechanisms.

### Using IT to Provide Answers to the Questions Facing Society

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There are still so many roadblocks on the path to sustainable growth for Japan and the rest of the world: reducing greenhouse gas emissions, cutting food loss, encouraging the use of clean energy, and advancing the circular economy, among others. None of them are easy to clear. But IT has the power to help navigate the world toward solutions. CTC will continue to pursue the potential of IT, make the most of what it offers, and work to make good on the bold, overarching promise of “Making the World GOOD.” We have honed and refined our technical prowess ever since our founding, with particular strengths in science and technology. We have cultivated and nurtured insights and expertise through deep relationships with a far-reaching variety of customers that support social infrastructure. Those assets can have a powerful positive impact on solving the social issues the world is grappling with.

### Aspiring to More, Together with the ITOCHU Group

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Through the takeover bid (TOB) and integration with the ITOCHU Group, CTC’s opportunities and range of activity have expanded considerably. We now have an environment that enables more aggressive R&D investment in growth areas like AI and quantum computing. As a core company in the ITOCHU Digital Value Chain, we are also seeing more and more opportunities to be part of larger-scale engagements and major projects in collaborative arrangements with other group companies. The ITOCHU Group has an expansive reach: domain knowledge in every direction and sector-spanning connections, supply chain-building capabilities covering the upstream, downstream, and everything in between, and networks that connect Japan and the world. By leveraging those assets as our own strengths, we put ourselves in better position to take action and deliver more compelling, impactful proposals. We have already started teaming with ITOCHU Group consulting companies to make active, engaging solution proposals to CIOs and other leaders at a bevy of different enterprises. We expect tangible results to emerge over the next several years—and as we look ahead, we see those success cases taking root across society and, ultimately, the globe.

“Making the World GOOD”: the phrase is a succinct reflection of CTC’s commitment to solving social challenges through its business activities. Through IT, we will bolster the corporate sphere, strengthen the social fabric, and guide the future in a better direction. We hope you keep an eye on all the challenges we at CTC are embarking on.



## Company Overview

ITOCHU Techno-Solutions Corporation (CTC) provides its customers with a partner they can trust, offering comprehensive support—from consulting and design to architecture, development, operations, and maintenance—as an integrated IT service company. By connecting and combining advanced technologies, we continue to facilitate our customers’ digital transformation (DX) and help create solutions to social issues.



As of April 1, 2025

Company name	ITOCHU Techno-Solutions Corporation (CTC)
Head Office	Kamiyacho Trust Tower, 4-1-1 Toranomom, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-6950 JAPAN Phone: 03-6403-6000 (main) / URL: <a href="https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/en/">https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/en/</a>
Representative	Tatsushi Shingu President & CEO
Founded	April 1, 1972
Established	July 11, 1979
Paid-in Capital	21.764 billion yen
Shareholders	ITOCHU Corporation 66.67% Digital Value Chain Partners, GK 33.28% BELLSYSTEM24 HOLDINGS, INC. 0.05%
Number of Employees	CTC (non-consolidated) 5,983; CTC Group 12,222
Business Lines	System sales and construction services, including cloud, AI, data analysis, and cyber security Support for the entire IT lifecycle, from consulting to operation and maintenance IT services for science and engineering

### CTC HISTORY



Leveraging the capacity for discernment that we have cultivated over the more than 50 years since our founding, we at CTC have built our reputation on connecting and combining cutting-edge technologies to deliver optimal solutions.

◀ Learn more (Japanese Only) <https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/50th/history/>

# CHALLENGING TOMORROW'S CHANGES

## Challenging Tomorrow's Changes

- We move forward as the world transforms.  
Perfecting our expertise and taking every challenge head on.  
Enhancing the future with technology—  
For the planet, society and all humanity.



This interview with President Shingu and younger employees illuminates the “challenge-seeking” attitude that CTC has long cherished as it keeps pushing forward with the changing times.

◀ Watch the video (Japanese Only)

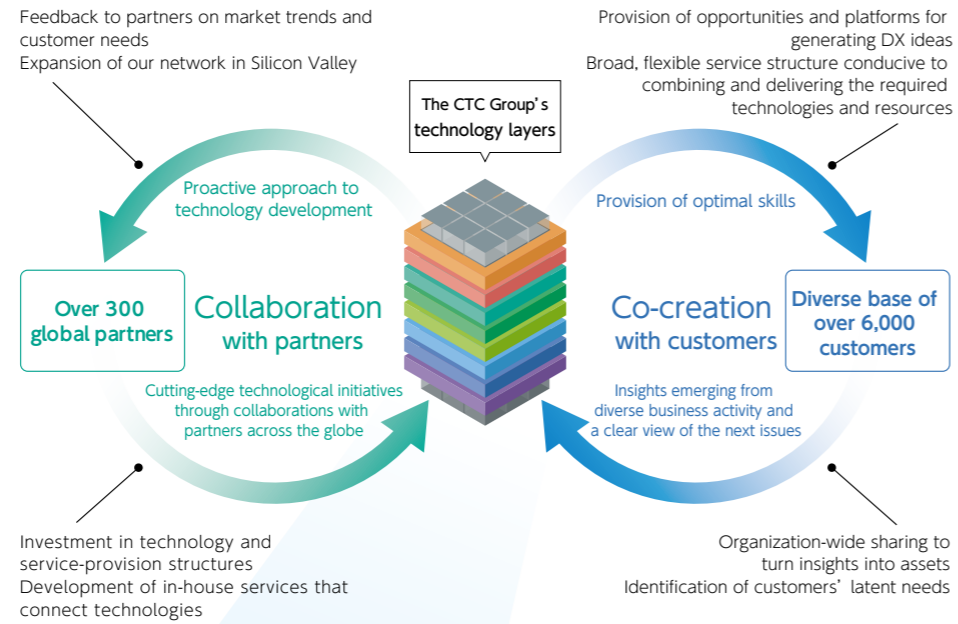
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2jFXNpkGkw&list=PLm8GCv5-OYqdUMOXfXxSGo6lXVaDpRA>

## Creating New Value for Society through IT for Half a Century

Since our founding, we have worked to identify what our customers need and collaborated with partners who can deliver on those demands. By responding to customer needs accurately and effectively, we have continued to provide new value. Connecting and combining a wide range of IT technologies and services is how we help solve the challenges our customers face.

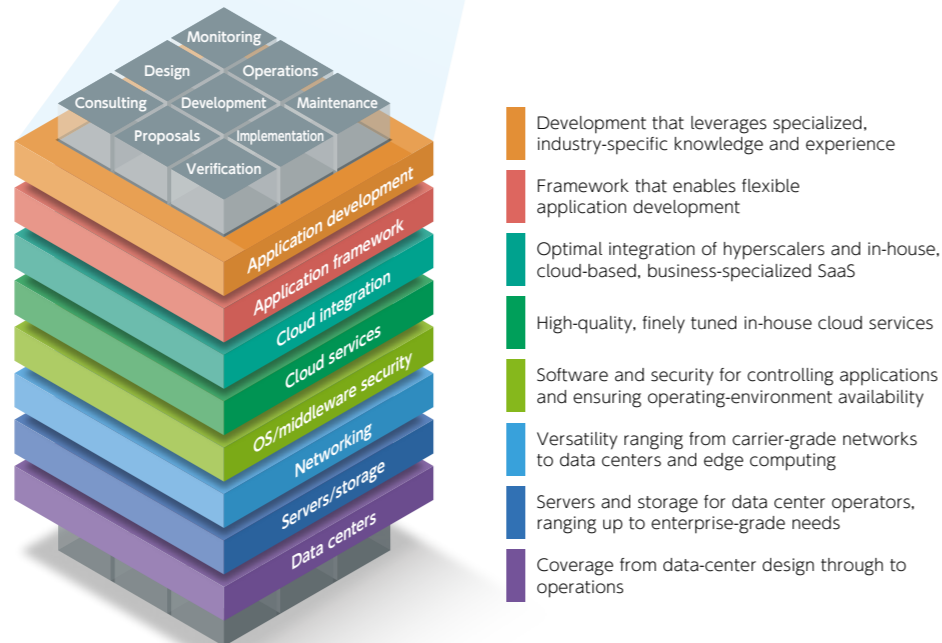
### Business model

The CTC Group does more than just address customers' issues and needs—we also create new value through proposals that anticipate what lies ahead. We collaborate with partners in Japan and overseas, work to incorporate the latest technologies, and invest in developing engineers who can thrive on the cutting edge. Our strength is our ability to connect and combine. As we continue working with our partners to keep meeting needs and delivering new value, we will strive to bolster our technical prowess to make co-creation with our customers a reality.



### The CTC Group's technology layers

From data centers, servers, and storage to application development and operations and maintenance, the CTC Group covers a wide range of technology layers. Our services are tailored to customers' needs at each layer, including consulting, verification, architecture, development, and operations. We also apply the CTC Group's "connect-and-combine" strengths to offer advanced technologies—such as AI, data and analytics, cloud native, and security—in the form of optimal solutions.



CTC's strengths



#### Over 30 years of R&D in Silicon Valley

For more than 30 years in Silicon Valley, we have conducted technology research, market surveys, and marketing activities.



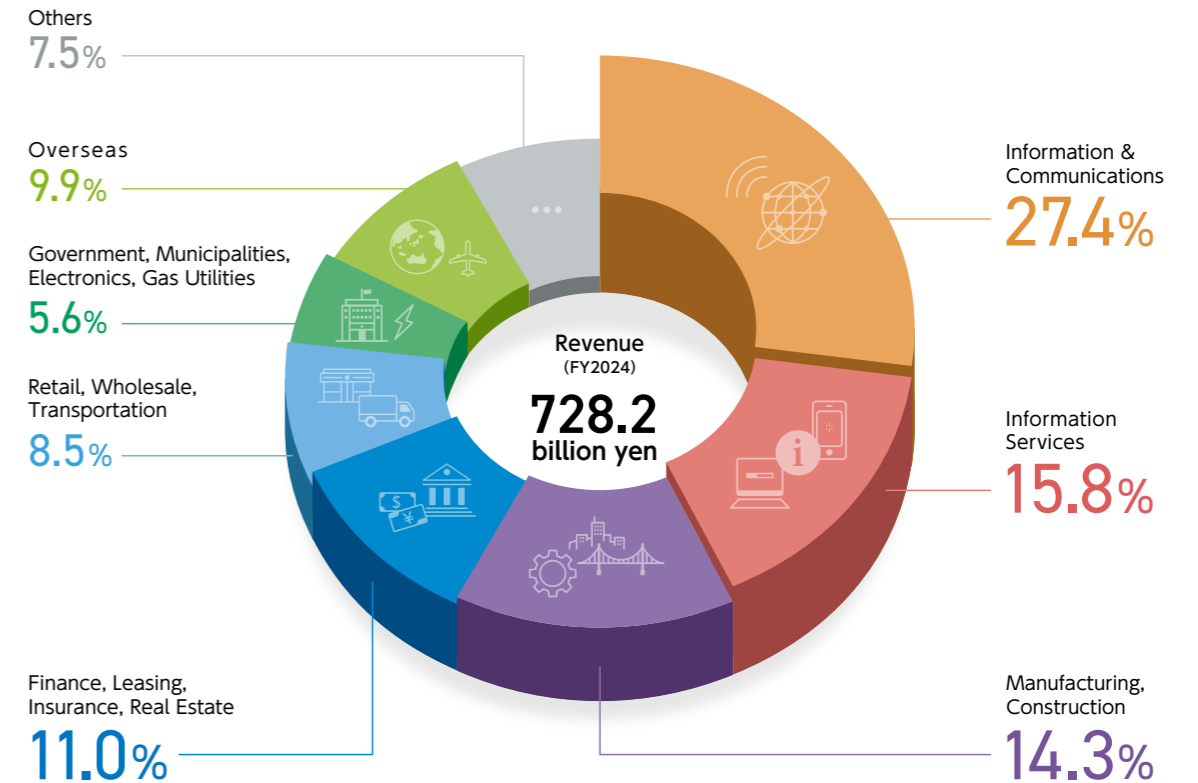
#### Approximately 8,600 engineers

Engineers make up for more than 70% of the CTC Group's approximately 12,200 employees.

## Growing Together with Customers Across the Industry Spectrum

Serving customers in diverse industries that support Japan's social infrastructure, including information and communications, manufacturing and construction, finance and insurance, wholesale and retail, and government and municipalities, stands out as a defining feature—and core strength—of the CTC Group. Over our many years in operation, we have walked side by side with customers in a broad range of fields, building up deep experience and insights along the way. Going forward, we will continue to co-create with our customers as we tackle solutions to the challenges that await.

Sales breakdown by business type



Customer Base Spanning a Diversity of Industries

Information & Communications	Mobile carriers, telecommunications operators, broadcasters, internet service providers, and more
Information Services	Internet advertising, information and communications, service industry, and more
Manufacturing, Construction	Petroleum and coal products, automotive, electrical equipment, construction, pharmaceuticals, and more
Finance, Leasing, Insurance, Real Estate	Megabanks, government-affiliated financial institutions, credit, insurance, securities, online banks, and more
Retail, Wholesale, Transportation	Aviation, transportation, logistics, convenience stores, general trading companies, and more
Government, Municipalities, Electronics, Gas Utilities	Central government ministries and agencies, municipalities, education-related institutions, electric power companies, and more

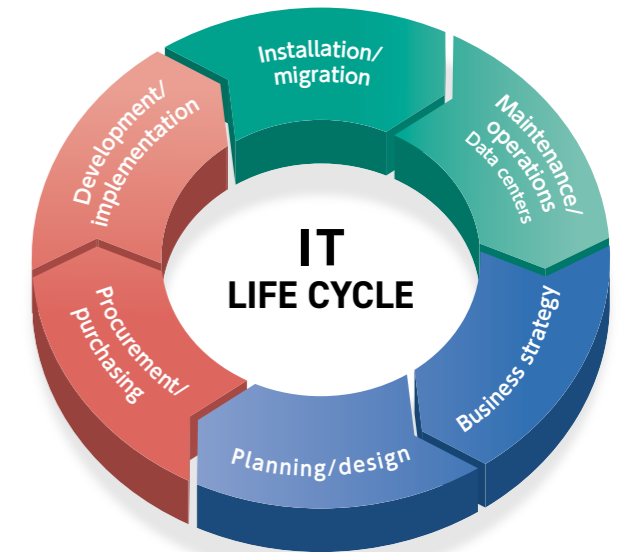
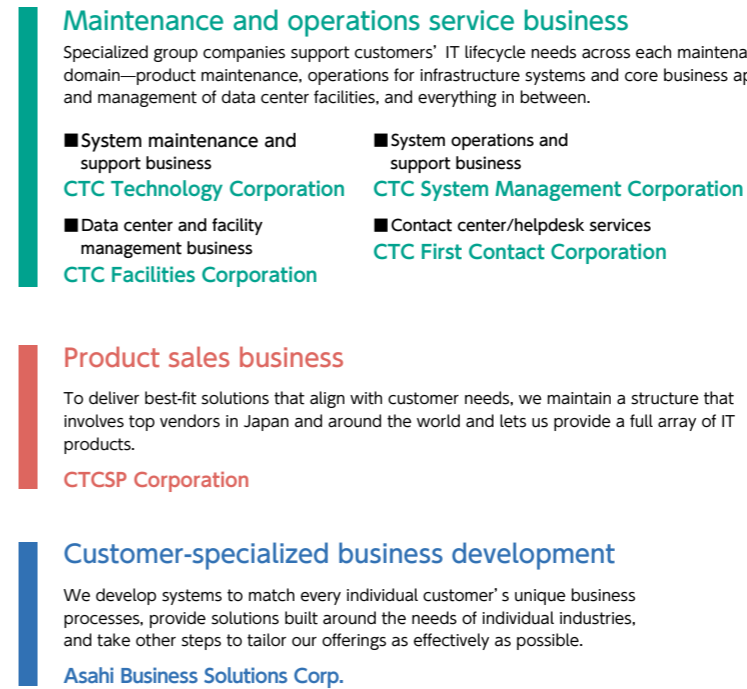
## Our Organization Structure, Optimized for Our Customers' Industries

We organize our business around five business groups, each of which targets a specific business type, pinpoints its customers' needs, and delivers the right solutions. With our companywide organizations, we also drive business across business-group lines.



## Comprehensive Support through Group-wide Collaboration

The CTC Group, working as a whole, supports customers throughout the entire IT lifecycle. Overseas, we scout out new technologies through our North American base, and we apply Japanese SI technologies and services across the ASEAN region. Those comprehensive capabilities, the product of collective Group-wide strengths, make a difference across the globe.

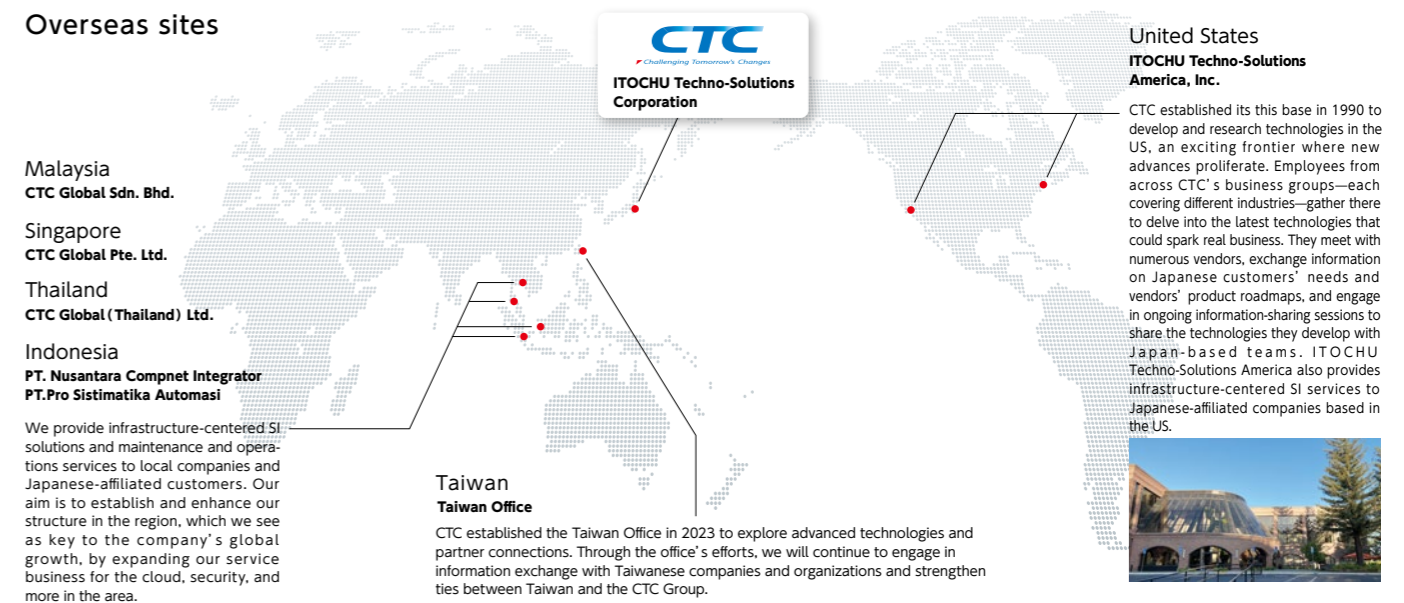


**Efforts to promote employment of people with disabilities**

We promote employment of people with disabilities as part of our aim to build a society where diverse talent can fully demonstrate their abilities. We support motivated individuals who want to take on new challenges, and we strive to create a fulfilling, healthy workplaces.

**CTC HINARI Corporation**

### Overseas sites



# CTC UPDATE

In the CTC Group, we are continuously taking on new challenges with the aim of "Making the World GOOD" together with our customers.

Currently, we are focusing on the four areas of advanced AI, data and analytics, cloud native, and security in Key Technology. We are working to create new value by integrating these technologies with each other, while also leveraging collaboration throughout the ITOCHU Group to contribute solutions to our customers and to social issues. Bringing you information about selected initiatives from the front lines of the CTC Group.

The CTC Group's webpage for press releases is here (Japanese Only) <https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/company/release/>

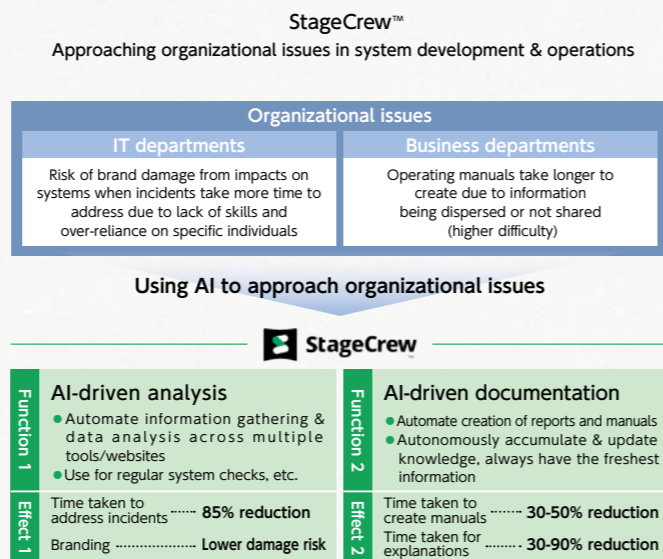


## 01 #CloudNative

### Launching CTC's Original Cloud Service StageCrew™ in North America

Promoting the advantage of "making the expertise of individuals standard equipment for organizations through AI," CTC has launched cloud service StageCrew™ in North America. This service improves efficiency in systems development and operations as well as business operations. The service is being launched in SaaS format through a licensing agreement with US company Technogent. AIOps (Artificial Intelligence for IT Operations), which leverages AI to create more sophisticated operations, has been capturing attention as a means to address increasingly complex IT systems and problems of over-reliance on specific individuals due to shortages of skilled IT personnel. StageCrew™ offers AI-driven documentation employing multimodal AI and provides AI-driven analysis that automates information gathering and analysis from a diverse array of digital assets, including various types of websites and vendor, open-source, and in-house-made tools. It swiftly comprehends situations and implements initial responses. StageCrew™ contributes to the competitive strength of organizations by helping to transform the way they work.

Learn more about StageCrew™ here <https://stagecrew.ai/en/>



## 02 #SophisticatedAI

### Proof of Concept for Generative AI Use in System Development (AI-driven Development)

CTC conducted Proof of Concept on systems development support and automation using generative AI. We automated processes such as design and implementation, code reviews, test case designs, and bug fixing. Based on the results, we formulated our AI-Driven Development Guidelines which we rolled out companywide in August 2025. In Proof of Concept, we achieved "zero involvement" in which AI handled the design and implementation processes without a single line of code written by humans. In the review and testing processes, we were also able to verify that it could detect all of the bugs we had intentionally embedded. Going forward, we will work on adding more functionalities to address the needs of actual projects, while also continuously consolidating the knowledge that we gain and making further improvements by rolling it out again in cycles companywide.

### Accelerating Co-creation with a US Startup Developing Original AI Models

CTC is accelerating collaboration with Liquid AI, Inc., a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) spinoff startup company. Liquid AI is developing its own original AI models called Liquid Foundation Models (LLMs) that enable highly adaptable machine learning using minimal processing power. These models are characterized by requiring little electric power and not needing to have large-scale computing resources to use them. CTC is investing in Liquid AI's Japan-based entity, jointly developing LLMs that handle Japanese language using these AI models, and carrying out verifications on new technologies. In addition to implementations in on-premises infrastructure and cloud services, going forward, we will also be working on utilizing them in edge devices such as electrical appliances and robots, with the aim of rolling out energy-saving AI solutions in the Japanese market.

See the article on the conversation between Liquid AI CEO Ramin Hasani and CTC Chairman Ichiro Tsuge here (Japanese Only) <https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/report/column/liquid-ai/>

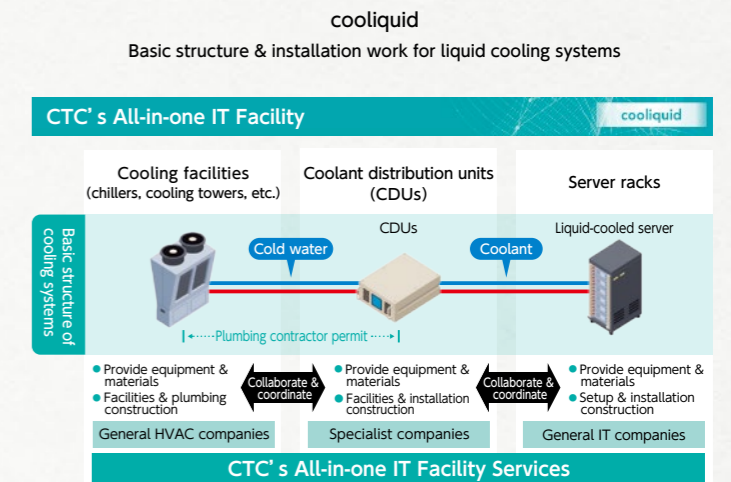


## 03 #Data & Analytics

### Launching Liquid Cooling Solution "cooliquid" for Next-gen Data Centers

As a next-generation cooling technology to address high heating loads on servers and other large-scale computing resources brought about by AI, CTC has launched a liquid cooling solution called "cooliquid." This CTC-original liquid cooling solution is provided comprehensively for everything from formulating facilities requirements to facility construction and selection, procurement, maintenance, and operations of cutting-edge equipment in data centers. Supply of decarbonized electric power has become an urgent issue as demand for electric power in data centers has skyrocketed in recent years. In Japan, data centers of at least a certain size now have mandatory accountability for matters such as regularly reporting their energy consumption and energy-saving measures, while relevant legislation is being established. With a higher level of cooling efficiency than conventional air conditioning formats, cooliquid is a next-generation cooling technology capable of handling high heating loads. Our efforts to deliver more efficient cooling for servers and lower their power consumption are helping to reduce the environmental impact of data centers.

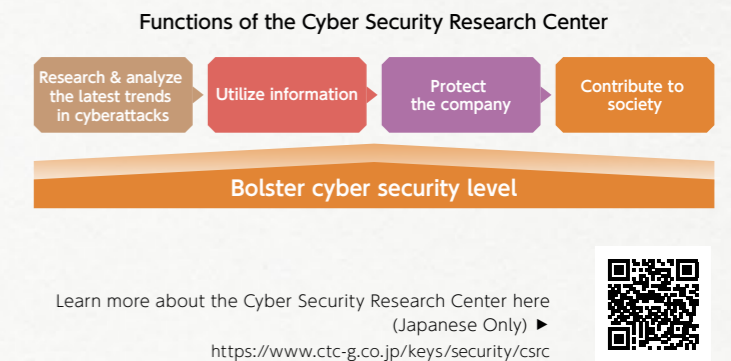
Learn more about cooliquid here (Japanese Only) <https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/keys/download/cooliquid>



## 04 #Security

### Opening the Cyber Security Research Center to Research and Analyze Cyberattack Trends

In recent years, cyberattacks have grown increasingly sophisticated and complex, posing a major risk for companies and organizations. CTC has opened the Cyber Security Research Center to research and analyze trends in cyberattack threats and technologies to counter them. The center aims to help raise the security standards of companies and organizations by swiftly gathering and analyzing the latest security trends in Japan and abroad, and widely publishing its findings through reports and seminars. CTC will also leverage the insights gained to enhance our security services and capability to propose security solutions, ultimately delivering highly effective security measures for multi-vendor environments. Going forward, CTC also envisions fulfilling roles such as reporting vulnerability information to domestic public institutions with the goal of helping to raise security levels throughout society.

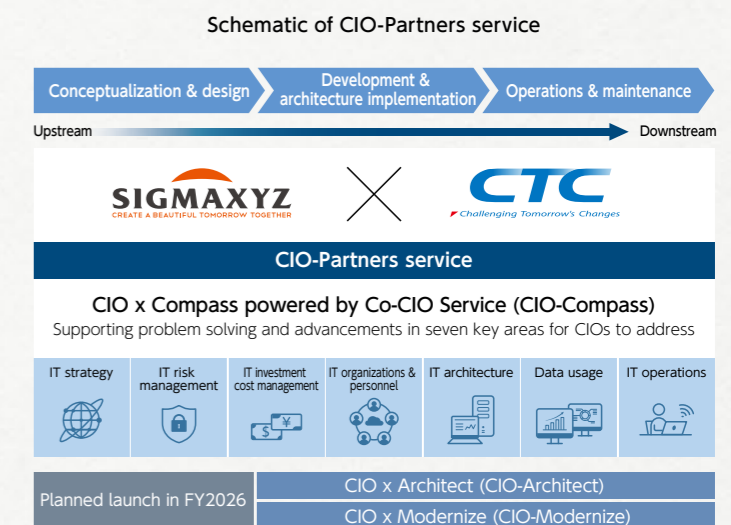


## 05 #ITOCHU Digital Business Alliances

### CTC has Launched the "CIO-Partners Service" which Offers Comprehensive Support for the Chief Information Officers (CIOs) of Companies

As a core company in ITOCHU Digital Business Alliances that support customers' digital transformation (DX), we are providing a wide range of services while collaborating with each company. As part of those efforts, we have partnered with SIGMAXYZ Inc. to launch the "CIO-Partners Service" designed to comprehensively support corporate chief information officers (CIOs) from strategy planning through execution. For the first offering of this service we are launching the "CIO x Compass powered by Co-CIO Service" (CIO-Compass). CIOs now face heightened expectations to play roles in driving business strategy as many companies tackle the transformations of digitalization. At the same time, problems have emerged at the actual worksites with strategies being hard to implement even if well-designed. Since 2023, SIGMAXYZ has been helping CIOs with problem solving and advancements to address this. With our track record of building optimal systems for companies, CTC will also leverage the collective agility and capabilities in execution and implementation of this collaboration to support customers' transformations.

Learn more about the ITOCHU Digital Business Alliances strategy here (Japanese Only) <https://www.itochu.co.jp/ja/about/dx/group/index.html>



# ONE TEAM

## Engineer Roundtable Discussion/Sales Talk/Interview

One of CTC's strengths is its people—employees who keep growing as professionals.

What kind of backgrounds do the people behind the company's creation of so much new value come from?

What roles do they play, and how do they deliver results?

Hearing directly from employees working across a wide range of settings brings what CTC is today into clearer focus.





**Kenta Sasaki**

Infrastructure Engineer

Telecommunication Division No. 2  
Telecommunication Group

Graduated with a degree in the sciences  
Joined the company in 2023



**Rie Suzuki**

Application Engineer

Supervisor

Retail and Service Business  
Planning Division

Retail and Service Business Group

Graduated with a degree  
in the humanities

Joined the company in 2006

**Kotaro Oshina**

AI Engineer

Telecommunication  
Business Planning Division  
Telecommunication Group

Graduated with a degree  
in the humanities

Joined the company in 2023

## A Liberating Culture That Encourages Bold Endeavors—and Turns Curiosity into Growth

Roughly 70% of CTC employees are engineers, working at the forefront of technology. What kind of work do they do day to day? How do they envision their careers? In this roundtable discussion, four engineers share their perspectives on technology, job satisfaction, and the CTC culture.

### What led you to join CTC, and how has your career unfolded so far?

**Suzuki:** I came across an article on CTC's corporate website about employees working overseas, and that made me want to be part of work on a global scale, too. That's what pushed me to apply. After I joined the company, I worked on maintaining core systems (SAP) for ITOCHU Corporation's overseas sites. Later, I got involved in SAP implementation and upgrade projects and spent time on assignment at CISD (ASIA)<sup>\*1</sup> in Hong Kong. Now, I handle SAP maintenance, system reviews, and other responsibilities.

**Oshina:** When I was job hunting, I was looking for an IT company with solid technical capabilities and a diverse product mix. Over the course of the process, people at CTC kept telling me, "It's a really good company"—and that convinced me to join up. My first assignment was to a division that oversees products and services, where I supported sales by handling technical verification and internal inquiries. I'm still in the same division today. Now, as part of the new business team, I help promote core products and drive AI-related

initiatives. That involves things like designing AI-based operational-efficiency tools and GPU server configurations.

**Takahashi:** At my previous job, I had the chance to work with people from CTC. Seeing how seriously they took responsibility for seeing complex customer requirements through—and how strong their proposals and execution were—was pretty impressive. CTC's multivendor model also appealed to me from a career-development standpoint, since it meant being able to engage with so many different industries and technologies. After I joined the company, I worked on IT architecture examination, scrum development, and system maintenance development for customers across a wide variety of industries. Today, I split my role between engineering and consulting, focusing on building and operating generative AI platforms to help boost the efficiency and sophistication of our customers' operations.

**Sasaki:** I used to work at a subsidiary of a major Sler, but I wanted to become a project manager (PM) at a prime vendor eventually. CTC has a wide-ranging customer base and a strong track record. On top of that, another thing that

grabbed my attention when I was applying was a development project CTC was working on for a major telecommunications company. Right now, I'm mainly responsible for redesigning and rebuilding networks tied to customer headquarters relocations. I've also expanded my role into project management.

### What were your first impressions after joining?

**Suzuki:** I did land an assignment in a department with an overseas dimension—just like I'd hoped—but honestly, my English wasn't great. Hearing how fluent the veterans in the group were was intimidating at first. In maintenance operations, a lot of my work had to do with user inquiries and requirements definition—which felt approachable given my humanities background. I'm a cautious person by nature and tend to be on the indecisive side, so I struggled quite a bit at the start. But all the support from the veterans got me through the rough patches. That care is something I'm always grateful for.

**Oshina:** My first impression? "I have no idea what's going on." That pretty much sums it up. I had zero IT knowledge, and I didn't even

understand what my department actually did. All I was responsible for at the start was one single product, which I learned inside and out and responded to internal inquiries about. I looked up every term I didn't know and kept asking veterans for help, gradually getting a handle on everything I didn't understand.

**Takahashi:** During my job hunt, I'd heard people say CTC had a "jock culture," a kind of strict, top-down system—but that turned out to be completely off. The amazing amount of support I got from supervisors and veterans was a very welcome surprise. CTC offers both specialist and management career tracks. Whichever path you're on, though, you're expected to develop far-reaching product and service knowledge and collaborate across departmental lines to give customers the proposals and value they're looking for. That means you have to keep learning—and the great training programs and cross-department knowledge-sharing systems at CTC make it a very growth-friendly environment.

**Sasaki:** Before I took my position at CTC, I'd been warned that the department I was headed into was extremely busy. I assumed I'd be spending my time with a lot of exhausted

people. Instead, everyone had energy and drive. We go out for drinks a lot and communicate with people from other departments, too. It's a fun, dynamic place to be.

### What makes engineering work interesting and rewarding?

**Takahashi:** CTC lets you stay involved end to end—from consulting and design to architecture, development, maintenance, and operations. You can really get a sense of how your work translates into value for end users and society as a whole. My work at the moment focuses on supporting a broad mix of projects across the company—and that involves working with specialists in consulting, infrastructure, and applications both inside and outside CTC. You really can't beat the sense of accomplishment that comes when you collaborate with people inside and outside the organization, push the team forward, and see a large-scale project through.

**Sasaki:** I moved from server engineering into network engineering, and that shift helped me see systems from a whole new angle. Once the big picture clicked and I saw how things moved

in context, the work got a lot more interesting. That larger perspective got me thinking about trying my own hand at system design and eventually got me interested in project management, a role where you steer and manage projects through to completion. PMs get real decision-making authority, which is what makes the position unique, and the moment you finish everything up, pass acceptance, and stick the landing with a project is so satisfying.

**Oshina:** I'm always happy to hear that a project I supported actually made it to implementation. In my second year, I led my first project—a version upgrade for a product with very little internal knowledge to back it up. I built a test environment to simulate the customer's environment, identified issues, established procedures, and finally got to turn what I'd learned into concrete output. It was really gratifying. Another thing about being an engineer is that we get hands-on experience with the latest products and technologies, which is great.

**Suzuki:** I like moving from project to project, drawing on the lessons and insights from every stop along the way—knowing that I'm growing as I work is a really rewarding feeling.

\*1 CISD (ASIA) is a Hong Kong-based joint venture between ITOCHU Corporation and CTC.



## Kotaro Takahashi

Consultant  
DX Consulting Division  
Digital Services Group  
Graduated with a degree in the sciences  
Joined the company in 2019

In my fourth year at CTC, I got assigned to an implementation project in India; in the span of just one year, I went to India about 10 times. Working on the project with local users meant dealing with English accents and business customs that were both completely new to me—it was tough, but it helped me grow. On assignment at CISD (ASIA) later on, I got to work with a mix of people from different countries and generations. That was a really valuable experience, too.

### What do you like about working as a CTC engineer?

**Takahashi:** CTC really has a culture where, if you raise your hand, you can get yourself a chance to tackle something new. There was a role I had my eye on, so I used the internal job-posting system to get a transfer. As part of my new team, I got to work on a prototype PHR platform that integrated and analyzed health-checkup and lifestyle data. I handled everything from planning to development, linking the platform with customers' AI infrastructure to analyze and predict future health conditions and risks. It was a big experience for me, career-wise.

**Suzuki:** My dream of working on global projects just keeps coming true. And whatever your job type might be, CTC has great upskilling programs to offer. I did the English program, which helped a lot, and there's a system in place to help employees improve their proficiency through regular TOEIC testing.

**Oshina:** I completely agree about the supportive,

enabling culture. When you tell your supervisor, "Here's what I want to try," they really listen. They respect what you have your sights set on. Support for skill development is strong, too. There's a cross-company community called Dojo where you can stay up to date on technologies you don't normally work with. The learning doesn't stop there, either. Product teams and manufacturers meet up frequently for study sessions.

**Sasaki:** I told my supervisor I wanted to become a PM and went through the training, which got me to where I am now: running projects. Employees get the recognition they deserve for hard work, too. Some projects do involve long hours, including overtime, but you can really feel you got something out of all that effort when the company acknowledges what you put in.

**Takahashi:** The work-life balance systems are another big plus. I've taken childcare leave twice. Having that option, along with all the support I got from my supervisor and teammates, let me focus on parenting without worrying about work. I still take advantage of the arrangements for paid leave and remote working when parenting duties call. When it comes to balancing work and family, the flexibility of the working environment at CTC is great.

**Suzuki:** I took about 15 months off for maternity and childcare leave, and I'm working reduced hours now. Before coming back to work, I talked through my preferences with my supervisor to find a good situation for me to work in—and

that's exactly what happened. I do need to take unplanned days off when my child gets sick, but that's something everyone at work understands.

### Any words for people considering joining CTC?

**Takahashi:** CTC gives you the chance to work on large-scale projects with real social impact, all in an open environment that's really conducive to growth. If you want to leverage your strengths and challenge yourself in new technologies and fields, I'd love to work with you on projects and initiatives that make a difference.

**Suzuki:** What interests you—and what you want to try—will be your biggest drivers at work. My advice would be to take the time to understand yourself. There are veterans at CTC who can be real role models for all kinds of employees, including women and people with humanities degrees. Being in that kind of environment makes it easier to create your own career path.

**Oshina:** CTC encourages people to take on the challenges they want to. The training system is robust, too, so not having prior IT experience isn't a barrier to success. I can't wait to work with people who want to push themselves.

**Sasaki:** In my department, people aim to add "one extra skill or technology on top of your expertise." CTC engineers tend to be familiar with a wide range of technologies, I think. If you want to broaden your technical command and take on challenges across the spectrum, I'd love to see you join the CTC team.



On Assignment Overseas

## Yuta Kohori

Sales  
Supervisor  
Corporate Planning Division  
Corporate Planning Group  
Graduated with a degree  
in the humanities  
Joined the company in 2009

# Making the Most of the Mindset I Developed Overseas

### The timing lined up, making my dream of working abroad true

Having lived overseas as a kid and studied abroad in high school, I'd always wanted to join a company that would give me the chance to work outside Japan. Sales was an area I had an interest in, so I went to information sessions on trading companies and other employers—and that's where I first learned about CTC. I didn't know much about the IT field at the time. But as I looked more into companies, I started to see real potential in the industry. Since CTC does cross-border business, I decided to apply.

My first assignment put me in a department that handles major telecommunications carriers. Our organization was huge: there were more than 20 people in sales alone and several hundred engineers. The projects were big, too. When I was just about to begin my sixth year on the team, my manager asked about my job-rotation preferences. I decided to be open and honest: I said I wanted to work abroad. It just so happened that around that same time, CTC was exploring an expansion into Indonesia. Things moved quickly, and the transfer came through right away.

### A "solo mission" with lows and highs alike

CTC had overseas sites in the US, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand back then; the entry into Indonesia was still in the planning stages. In 2015, my first year on the project, I made plenty of extended business trips to Indonesia, did surveys, and took care of other groundwork. Once CTC decided on its approach to setting up operations in Indonesia, I transferred the following year to PT. ITOCHU Indonesia—and I was the only person from CTC there. I had a mission: since we had to get projects kicked off right away after the local entity was up and running, my job was to prospect and

develop new customers. Doing sales without any engineers at my side was a challenge, no question. But fortunately, there were many Japanese companies already operating locally. That's where I landed my first orders. I also headed up the process of finding and selecting local partner companies to work with on real projects. On that front, I focused on making sure the partners could deliver the quality Japanese clients expected. Indonesia has a pretty laid-back culture, which made for a pretty different environment—especially the local sense of time.

After we established the local CTC subsidiary in August 2017, a small team of just a few people started preparing for the next stage. Still, it wasn't until 2019, after we'd formally acquired a local company, that CTC launched the business in Indonesia full-scale. Until that point, the whole task of representing and running the company fell to just a handful of us. That was quite the responsibility to have on our shoulders, but the mindset and experience I got out of that period became a real asset for me. I'm also glad I got to work with people from different cultural backgrounds—moving things forward in a mutually respectful way.

### Mentoring the next generation

In March 2020, during my fifth year overseas, I came back to Japan because of COVID-19. Now, I manage overseas group companies from the Japan side. It's rewarding work, of course, but my next goal is to take another overseas assignment—this time as a manager or in a corporate-planning role.

I've always valued relationships with my customers, of course, and my colleagues, too. Veterans have taught me so much to this point. From here on out, I want to be the one teaching my younger colleagues through mindful, effective communication.

Diverse Internal Connections—  
Working in Sync,  
with Everyone Playing  
Their Part—Are a Key Strength

Reona Yamamoto

Product & Service Lead

Deputy General Manager  
Telecommunication Business Planning Division  
Manager, Telecommunication Business  
Development Department  
Telecommunication Group

Graduated with a degree in the humanities  
Joined the company in 2002

Natsuki Shimbo

Account Sales

Financial Services NEXT Sales  
& Marketing Division  
Financial Services Group

Graduated with a degree  
in the humanities  
Joined the company in 2023

People tend to lump “sales” into one big group, but the roles in a sales organization differ dramatically—especially sales teams that handle customers and sales teams that focus on products and services. How do these two roles work together? What makes each challenging—and rewarding? We spoke with Ms. Yamamoto, who has built her career since joining the company out of college as a sales lead for products and services, and Ms. Shimbo, who made a mid-career switch to CTC from another industry as an account sales professional.

What led you to join CTC, and what has your career path looked like so far?

**Yamamoto:** My goal of having a role where I could use English led me to CTC, which was already importing products through a global network of vendors. I also saw a lot of potential in the IT industry, which was still relatively new back then, as an arena where women could thrive.

I joined as a new graduate and spent six years in a sales organization that handled products and services. For about a year and a half of that stretch, I worked on-site at a customer location. In 2007, I went with my husband on an overseas assignment. Since there wasn't a leave of absence system like there is today, I resigned from my position. After I got back to Japan, I rejoined the company in 2011 as a mid-career hire. I wasn't handling the same products and services as before, but I was lucky enough to be back in the same organization. After stints in other departments, like the Corporate Planning Department, I made another return to the same organization—and today, I mainly focus on developing new business.

**Shimbo:** In my previous job, I worked in Hokkaido on sales for office automation equipment. I wanted to move to a more urban area and take on bigger challenges while I was still in my 20s, though. Up to that point, I had mainly handled sales to small and mid-sized companies, so I also wanted to work with larger customers—enterprise-scale organizations. That's what brought me to CTC. Initially, they hired me into a role closer to what Ms. Yamamoto does—product and service sales. After about two years doing that, I spoke with my supervisor about maybe trying something a bit different. They told me to think about account sales: a role where you deal with customers directly. I made that transition, and my role right now has me managing several financial-industry clients. I handle projects for existing customers, develop new areas, and work to bring on new customers, too.

Can you walk us through your work flow and your respective roles?

**Shimbo:** What we do in account sales is work to meet customer needs. We listen to the customer, pinpoint issues, think through how

to solve them, collaborate with different teams within the company, propose the optimal solution, and connect that to an order—that's the basic flow.

When it comes to dealing with customers, we have to build relationships through continuous communication and make sure we understand exactly what they're going for. At the same time, we also reach out for support from our own colleagues—including teams that do sales for products and services like Ms. Yamamoto's—bring together the right people, lead the team, and drive the project forward. For every project, we select the products and services that fit the situation best and identify the key skillsets for the engineers we'll be bringing on board. Gathering the information for that process is another part of my responsibilities. For large projects, we might work across close to 10 departments; the team can grow to as big as 20 or 30 people.

**Yamamoto:** People on our end of the sales spectrum take charge of the products and services we provide. Aiming to respond to any customer need, we serve as the point of contact with vendors, handle contract work,

and promote sales of our offerings. We also accompany our account-sales colleagues to customer meetings to explain products and services.

Beyond that, we look for potential new products and services, develop engineers, and open up new fields that could become future business areas. My department alone works with roughly 50 contracted vendors, so we need a lot of knowledge—not just about products and services themselves but also about contracts and legal applicability. Dealing with products and services means having to align with vendors' different policies and standards. In some cases, they require us to obtain certification. As a team, we constantly need to keep our technology knowledge up to date.

What makes your work difficult—and how do you overcome the challenges?

**Yamamoto:** With our commercial products from overseas, there's a real gap sometimes between what a vendor has in mind and what Japanese customers want. A big part of our job is to bridge that gap and tailor the offering to Japanese specifications. When there's no clear approach to a compromise between those two sides, I sometimes end up caught in the middle between the vendor and account sales, a team that centers on the customer's standpoint. That's a tough situation to deal with. In those moments, I dig in and think: What's the customer's real objective? Is there another way to get there? I stay on task and work to find the right landing point.

**Shimbo:** What you say is true—account sales has to think from the customer perspective and seek out people within the CTC organization for help. One hard part for us, then, is needing to communicate well both with the customer and internally.

For me, the focus is pretty simple: talk to people about what's going on. When I speak up, people help. In a way, account sales can feel like a networking game. You need to keep growing your circle of connections and build good relationships with colleagues across the company, whatever line of work they're in.

**Yamamoto:** People you're not directly working with—“diagonal connections,” you might call them—are always there to step in and help, too.

**Shimbo:** Absolutely. I've even gotten insights from talking with people I'd normally just go out for drinks with.

What kind of growth and fulfillment has sales work helped you achieve?

**Yamamoto:** I've centered my career on selling products and services and gained such a wide variety of experience along the way. Every stop along the way brought new encounters with new people, every one of which has given me so much inspiration. I think that's one advantage of working at a company with such a broad range of business domains.

When you land a big deal and it finds a successful end—there's nothing better than that. And it's so great when a product or service that

grabs me—something that makes me say, “I like this”—makes it out into the world.

**Shimbo:** At CTC, if you raise your hand and say, “I want to do this,” the company lets you try most of the time. That's how it went for me. Just one month after joining the company, I spoke at an external event as a presenter. The ability to go big and try something new has a direct impact, fueling learning and growth.

Like Ms. Yamamoto, I'm thrilled when we win a major deal. More than anything, though, the best part is when something I proposed to the customer—rather than simply doing what the customer told us to do—takes shape.

Finally, do you have any words for students?

**Yamamoto:** Many people in sales, like us, come from humanities backgrounds. The company offers learning opportunities and chances to shine, so as long as you have the motivation, you can keep learning and growing. Another great thing about CTC is all the support systems in place for women. That takes care of a lot of worries, I think. I've used just about every system the company has to offer. I really believe CTC is a place where you can feel secure building a career as you go from life stage to life stage. In terms of doing my work, I've never felt any gender gap in the workplace, either.

**Shimbo:** If you like people and love excitement, come join us at CTC. I can't wait to dive into new challenges and grow together.

Regional Site: Nagoya



## Koki Yamaguchi

Application Engineer  
Automotive Industry Division  
Enterprise Group  
Graduated with a degree  
in the humanities  
Joined the company in 2021

Regional Site: Nagoya



## Mayu Morimoto

Infrastructure Engineer  
Naka-Nihon Engineering Division  
Regional and Social Infrastructure Group  
Graduated with a degree  
in the sciences  
Joined the company in 2023

# Opportunities for Large-Scale Projects and Rewarding Work at a Regional Site

### Finding a springboard for growth

I'm an engineer in the Automotive Industry Division. This year, my fifth since joining CTC out of college, I transferred into the AI Digital Innovation Department. The project I'm working on right now isn't AI-related, though—it's application development using a low-code platform. What first got me interested in working at CTC was a winter internship I did during my job hunt. During my job hunt, I was looking for a place where I could feel my growth as real, tangible results. Through my internship at CTC, I came away thinking that the company would be a good match for the way I wanted to work and develop.

### Five years at the Nagoya Office

After my onboarding training, I was assigned to a team serving automotive customers at the Nagoya Office. Even though my background is in the humanities, not IT, CTC has given me opportunities to work with companies that operate on a global scale. I think it helped that I shared my goal early on at a consultation: I wanted to be involved in big projects and do work that feels fulfilling. Our customers dig deep into issues they deal with, focusing on what really matters. That's part of their culture. They're also pushing forward in areas like next-generation, AI-driven mobility. Working alongside customers on the cutting edge means we have to always stay in step and keep our own standards just as high, too.

When I heard I'd be living alone—something

I'd never done—I was nervous at first. But I wasn't alone. There were about ten other members of that year's batch of new hires there in sales and engineering, and I lived close to the office. That helped me get my life in Nagoya off to a smooth start. Work-wise, my first project was a blur—I remember scrambling constantly because everything was new. Someone I worked with back then recently told me, "You've grown so much in these five years—I hardly recognize you!" It was so nice hearing that. It made me feel like I'd made strides forward. Veterans have also told me that regional sites tend to give individual employees more ownership. I want to take advantage of that kind of environment and keep leveling up.

### How relationships help me thrive at the workplace

Before I started, I imagined engineers sitting alone in front of a computer all day. But it's actually a line of work where relationships are crucial. Questions are bound to come up. There will always be moments when you need advice. That's why it's so important to build an approachable, team-like relationship—not only among sales personnel and engineers but also with customers. I've never worked anywhere else, so can't compare what things are like here with other locations. But it's so easy to build warm, down-to-earth relationships here in Nagoya, and that makes the workplace feel like home. Going forward, I want to keep valuing those connections—and growing my circle of colleagues—so I can take on even larger projects and get results.

# At My Office, Young Talent Has the Room and Support to Grow

### From a physical chemistry lab to the IT world

In college, I was in a physical chemistry lab—completely outside the IT world. When I started looking for a job, I wasn't sure which industry I wanted to get into. I ended up deciding to take a different approach: I'd start my job search by learning what kinds of jobs are out there in the first place. As I went to company briefings and gathered info, one thing became very clear: no matter what industry I went into, knowledge and skills in IT were going to be essential. That's what made CTC stand out. The company's customers span a wide range of fields, and I felt like I'd have so many chances to get experience with different technologies and products—so I decided to apply at CTC.

### Step by step, I turned my plan into reality

After I finished the training program, I got an assignment to the Naka-Nihon Engineering Division in Nagoya—and that's where I am today. My customers are mostly local governments and education-related organizations. The division had an OJT program where you would create your own three-year growth plan and revisit it every year to help guide your growth. My vision for myself was clear: I wanted to take a leadership role under a project manager (PM) in my second year and run things on my own as a PM in year three. At the time, I honestly wondered if I could really do it—but this year, my third year, I achieved everything I originally set out to do. CTC is a place that's open to a lot of different work styles, including remote-work options, but

I'm almost always in the office. It's easier for me to ask questions, talk things through, and move projects along that way. With CTC's range of quality training programs and a culture that supports people who take the initiative and say "I want to try this," I've felt myself grow steadily—and I've been able to make good on my goals.

### The fulfillment that comes with having responsibility

This year, I led a small project for a municipality. From handling the request for proposal (RFP) and gathering information on requirements to doing design, testing, and explaining operations, the whole thing was in my hands. I was still getting a lot of help from the people around me, but having responsibility for the project, staying close to the end user—the customer—as the PM, explaining operations, and answering the questions made me feel like I'd really accomplished something. I think it's part of CTC's culture that younger employees get opportunities like this. The scope of the responsibilities we get in my department now is pretty big, too, and we have veterans around who can help. It's a really fulfilling environment. The work I do demands technical capabilities, of course, but there's also a lot of coordination and negotiation, which makes communication skills another must. This year, I set a new goal during my third-year training program: to build enough experience as a PM that customers ask for me by name when they place an order.

I don't know how long it'll take to get there. Until I do, though, I'm going to keep taking the initiative to make myself even better at what I do, drawing on my colleagues' support, and aiming for the next stage.



### Yuya Sasaki

AI Engineer

MIRAI Design Laboratory  
CRO Group

Graduated with a degree  
in the humanities  
Joined the company in 2019

#### From the humanities to AI engineering and on to research

I was a humanities person in school, but I got so absorbed in building game apps during college that I ended up repeating a year. CTC didn't fault me for that—they found it interesting. What made me want to work at CTC was the great environment, which lets you develop applications and also broaden your experience into surrounding areas, and the fluid, energetic dynamics I got a taste of during my internship. My first assignment was in the Security Business Promotion Department. Next, I joined the Build Services Department (which had just been launched at the time) and worked on cloud-native application development. My next move was to the AI and Advanced Technology Department, where I did AI R&D. Since 2024, I've been with the MIRAI Design Laboratory. These days, I also work at the AI Research Center at Keio University about half the week, teaming with professors and students to advance joint research that brings industry and academia together.

#### Using CTC's systems and structures to balance work and graduate school

In the Build Services Department, I also served as a team leader. Learning how difficult it is to run a team was a big learning experience for me. Alongside my day-to-day work, I decided I wanted to challenge myself with something new and go to graduate school. In 2023, I took the entrance exam, passed, and got started researching the intersection of AI and software engineering. CTC has a system for staggered working hours, which lets me work until early afternoon and then attend graduate school. I'm not only learning in class—I'm also learning how

to manage my time well. I'm so grateful to the supervisors and colleagues who were willing to support what I'd set my mind on.

Going from specialization to specialization, I've had to deal with different kinds of key knowledge and levels of output quality. But over that whole time, I've stuck to one principle: If you try, you can do it. I focus on starting with action—getting my hands moving, testing ideas, and jumping into fields that interest me. The biggest step forward in my growth, I think, was realizing through my different experiences that my career is something I build for myself.

#### A wide array of options for broadening your career range

CTC offers a variety of career choices, so it's easy to find a place where you can thrive. I've made so many career shifts within a single company. I think I've been able to do that because CTC has such a diverse mix of business areas in-house. If you want to try something new at CTC, you can show it through action—building something, earning certifications—and the company responds. There's a real sense of support here. There are also lots of internal gatherings and events where you can meet colleagues across departments, often opening up paths to what you tackle next.

At the MIRAI Design Laboratory, our mission is to create new markets for 20 to 30 years down the road. That means leveraging ideas and free thinking into creating things the world hasn't seen yet. People here are think-outside-the-box types through and through—an all-star lineup of really interesting, unconventional professionals. Everyone is pushing the boundaries of their fields. All that excitement and energy makes the workplace a joy to be at.

Turning Action into Strength and  
Creating MIRAI (future) Markets  
in My Own Way



### Miki Nagano

Science Engineer

Science & Engineering  
Systems Division  
Enterprise Group

Graduated with a degree  
in the sciences  
Joined the company in 2009

#### Applying scientific expertise toward solutions to social issues

I majored in theoretical physics, so I focused my job search on companies and Slers that did scientific computing. What stood out about CTC was that it has a division that specializes in science and engineering, something you don't see much in the Sler industry. I felt like if I had a job there, I could deepen my skills and also venture into new fields.

That division—the Science & Engineering Systems Division—uses analysis and simulation technologies to help solve social problems across a broad scope of fields, ranging from resources and energy to nuclear power and plant engineering. My first assignment at CTC was a team that focused on propagation simulation for ultrasound and electromagnetic waves, working on analysis related to ultrasound sensors and nondestructive testing. Now, I'm a project manager on a team that concentrates on seismic calculations in the nuclear field.

#### Truly meeting customer needs: Challenging, but so rewarding

On my previous team, I handled a wide range of work: developing ultrasound and electromagnetic-wave software packages in-house, providing customers with maintenance support, and making new proposals. Those experiences taught me a lot. The hardest part for me was dealing with customers. There were times I felt so lost about what the customer needed that I even started doubting I could keep going in my role. What helped me through those struggles was my supervisor, who told me we'd "do it together." I did whatever I could

to make sure the customer's needs were met. In the end, they had such nice words for me: "We're glad you were the one in charge." It was a moment I'll never forget.

I still draw on that experience today. The seismic work I do now was a new challenge for me, but the veterans in the group and my teammates have taught me from the ground up and put me in the position to be able to move projects forward now. Knowing that my work has an impact on critical social infrastructure and that I have a role in it as an engineer is an amazing motivator.

#### Sustaining career growth and development through flexible work styles

The Science & Engineering Systems Division organizes frequent study sessions to help employees develop their skills and share information. Dialogue within teams is a big part of the division's culture, too, which creates an environment where learning and growth happen naturally.

Another plus is that you can keep building your career even as your life changes. The return-to-work rate at CTC after childbirth is close to 100%. I personally took maternity and childcare leave twice, came back to work, and used the reduced-hours system to keep my career on track. Even as my living environment changed, my supervisors understood how I wanted to keep going as an engineer and helped me stay part of the Science & Engineering Systems Division. Going forward, I want to keep developing into the kind of engineer that can contribute across multiple domains and hopefully become a role model for other women engineers.

Staying in Pursuit of New Challenges  
in Science and Engineering,  
Even as Life Changes



José. Yoshiaki Kawashima's

# "Coffee Hunting" Adventures

It's now been half a century since José. Yoshiaki Kawashima first set out at age 18 for Central and South America—lands he had long dreamed of since he was a boy. Fueled by a relentless passion for great coffee, José. has weathered every obstacle that has come his way. This is his extraordinary story.

Coverage and text by Mayumi Hirao



## Part 2

### Off to Blue Mountain - Unavoidable Obstacles, Relentless Forward Motion

In November 1981, at the age of 25, I stepped off a plane onto the Caribbean island nation of Jamaica. Here's how I got there. While I was in Los Angeles, waiting for the political situation in El Salvador to stabilize, the chairman of a coffee company in Kobe came to see me in person. He was looking for a technical expert to help on a project. I declined the offer—I was set on going back to the institute, after all. But things in El Salvador only got worse. Eventually, I had to accept the fact that I couldn't go back to the place I thought was my calling. I ended up returning to Japan, disheartened. Then I remembered the chairman telling me to give him a call when I got back. I did just that—and before I knew it, I was hired. The mission the company gave me was ambitious: developing Japan's first overseas coffee plantation development project. And the location? The highest peak in Jamaica—Blue Mountain. Renowned as a source of some of the finest coffee beans on the market, Blue Mountain is home to certain areas where daytime fog creates sizable temperature swings twice a day—conditions that make for exceptional

coffee cherries. Starting on New Year's Day in 1982, I took charge of the company's first plantation purchase. It was on a south-facing mountain slope covering nearly 350,000 square meters, and it soon became the place I lived and worked. The residence was a mansion built in 1805 by a British governor during the colonial era. It was safer than Kingston, where crime was rampant, but far too much for one person. It was scary being there alone at night, with nothing but darkness around. I didn't speak any English. Everything was new to me. There was plenty to be anxious about. But for me—dejected at having no way back to the institute—the joy of having a hand in growing coffee again outweighed my anxieties. The hope of taking on a new challenge won out. That said, nothing came easy. Compared with El Salvador, Jamaica's cultivation techniques were behind by about twenty years. I wanted to shift to modern methods right away, but I ran into labor issues before I could even get started. The previous owner had sold the plantation with untrained "employees" attached, designated as full-time workers in lieu of unpaid wages. Even though the majority

of the staff was illiterate and completely lacking in experience, they immediately demanded higher pay from the new Japanese owners. Growing coffee is long, hard work—which is why having trusting relationships with the people who work the land matters most. In Jamaica, that trust grew out of the process of showing the employees techniques they didn't know and teaching them until they could do the work themselves. Over time, the people who genuinely wanted to learn stepped up as leaders and began getting the whole workforce organized. We were finally taking the first step toward operating like a modern plantation. But then came the next crisis. A fire that started on nearby land spread to one of the company's three plantations. Everyone pitched in to help put the fire out, eventually subduing



the flames after several hours—but the fire had damaged half of the newly planted seedlings. That was when Jamaican workers taught me a way of fighting wildfires: lining up downwind, cutting the underbrush in strips, and setting controlled fires. The second wildfire was even larger. I shouted, "Call the fire department!" but the staff ignored me. "There's no point," they said. I managed to get in touch with the fire department anyway, but it took the fire truck two hours to arrive. On top of that delay, the first thing the firefighters did was ask how much they'd be getting paid. They weren't interested in putting out the fire. In the end, we had no choice but to extinguish it ourselves. By the time the fire died down, we'd lost roughly 50,000 square meters to the flames. I was devastated—but I never once thought of giving up and running away. I'd come all the way to Jamaica, entrusted with developing this plantation. "Get through whatever situation comes along. Put everything you've got into serving everyone who needs you." It was Ambassador Bénéke's words, the street-smart philosophy he taught me, that helped me persevere in Jamaica.

Two years later, the plantation caught fire and sparked another massive wildfire. We fought it around the clock for three days straight. When hollow bamboo caught fire, it sent balls of flame shooting over our heads. Before we knew it, we were surrounded by flames. Creating firebreaks was brutal work—but after dealing with wildfire after wildfire, we'd gotten better at it.

Coffee trees are resilient; you can regenerate them as long as the roots are alive. If you cut the trunk and allow new shoots to grow, the tree can recover. When you plant a new tree, it normally takes three or four years before you can harvest the berries—but a tree with surviving roots can produce fruit in the second year. The plantation had taken a serious hit. By responding quickly and steadily, though, we were able to keep it moving forward.

At the time, I had no idea that the road was only going to get harder. (To be continued)

Read Part 1 here▶

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 Chair of the Board, Sustainable Coffee Association of Japan  
 Executive Committee Director, Challenge Coffee Barista

Born in Shizuoka in 1956, José. Yoshiaki Kawashima traveled to El Salvador to study at a university. There, he joined the National Coffee Institute in El Salvador—then one of the world's three most prominent organizations dedicated to the study of coffee. Setting off on a career in coffee, Kawashima spent time developing farms for a major coffee company before founding Micafeito Co., Ltd. in 2008. He also oversees HINARI CAFE, operated by CTC HINARI Corporation. His major works include *I Decided to Change the World Through Coffee*, *Understanding the SDGs Through Coffee* (both from Poplar Publishing), and *Coffee and Civil War* (Heibonsha). "José." is the nickname he goes by overseas.

## José.'s "Did You Know?" Coffee Trivia #2 Tasty Coffee Beans

To experience the true joys of what coffee can taste like, you need to pick the right beans. Good beans are nicely rounded and roasted to a clean, rich brown, like what "coffee beans" bring to mind for most people. You might be wondering why I'd go to all the trouble of describing something so obvious, but many bags of coffee on the market contain beans that don't meet those standards. Try this: buy a bag of coffee and spread the beans out on a sheet of white paper. You'll usually find some beans that are yellowish, chipped, damaged by insects, or otherwise in less-than-ideal shape. Beans from fully ripened coffee cherries turn a deep brown when roasted. Immature beans, on the other hand, stay lighter and yellowish—which is what leads to bitterness and off-flavors. Beans that have cracks, hollow centers, or insect damage can also hurt the flavor in the end. If you bought a bag of rice and found broken or discolored kernels inside, you'd probably return it. But with coffee beans, people tend to assume that some uneven quality is just what the beans are like. Once you grind the coffee, you can't tell what the original bean quality was. My advice? Take a close look at the beans you drink. If you remove uneven or defective beans, you'll have better-tasting results.

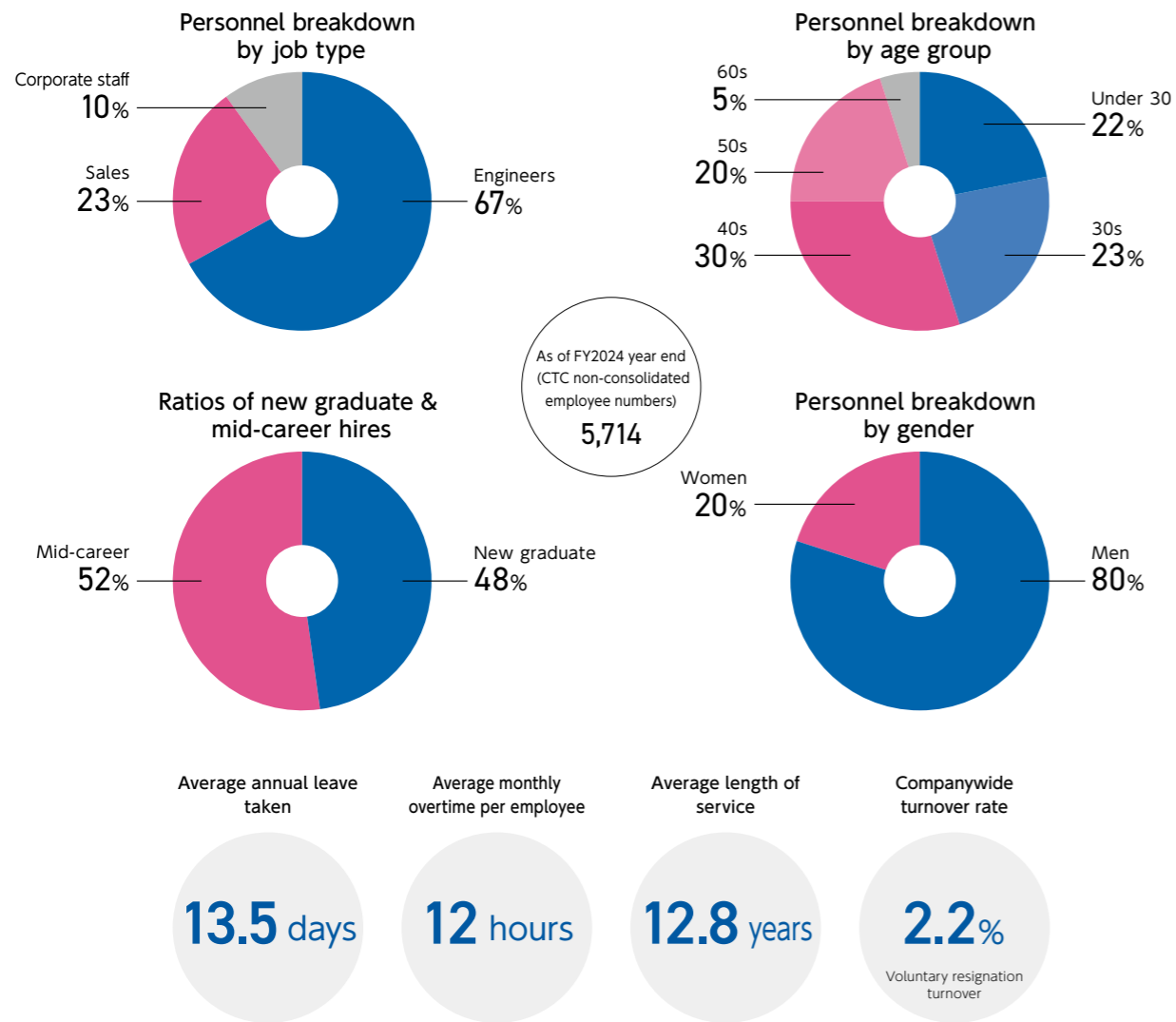


Yellowish or defective beans, like those shown on the right in the photo below, are a major cause of harshness and off-flavors.

# Human resources basic data

CTC is implementing a Human Resources Strategy that drives the autonomous growth of each individual employee in a coordinated manner with its business strategies. We see diversity and human resource development as the infrastructure for bolstering our enterprise value. As such, we are creating company culture and systems to flexibly adapt to changing times and society in order to always be a company whose employees can sense their own professional growth.

## [OVERVIEW]



### Starting salary for new graduates as regular employees (joined in FY2026 / including Grow+Allowance)

Master's degree	University and specialized technical college graduate	Technical college graduates
321,100 yen	301,500 yen	279,100 yen

Average yearly pay (current CTC employees in FY2024) **10,900,966 yen**

### Grow+Allowance (allowance to support growth of young employees / implemented starting April 2026)

New graduate hires in first 1-2 years (per month)	New graduate hires in 3rd year (per month)
6,000 yen	3,000 yen

**Rent subsidy (per month) 35,000 yen**

Eligibility: Rental housing for one-person households, joining company April 2026 or later. Maximum duration of payments: 4 years for master's degrees, 6 years for university/specialized technical college graduates, 8 years for technical college graduates.

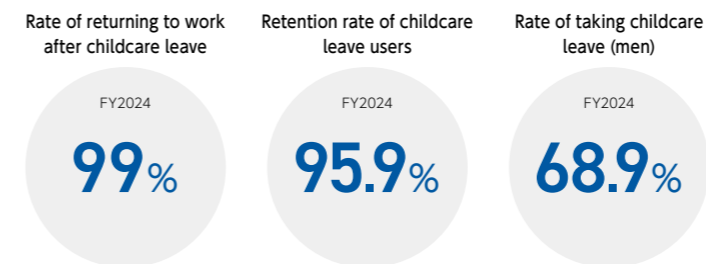
**Lump sum independence support subsidy 500,000 yen**

Eligibility: One-time only payment to those eligible for rent subsidies when moving to a new residence as part of joining the company.

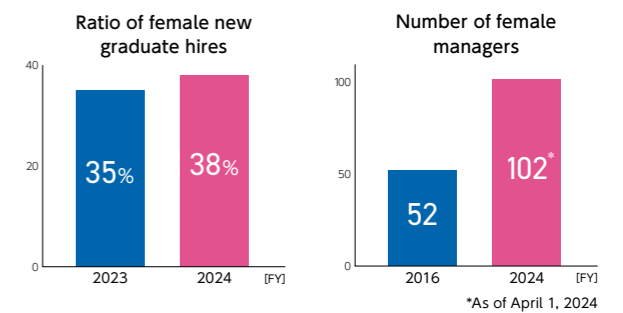
## Basic Policy on Diversity

CTC is striving to instill diversity that ensures all employees are respected regardless of age, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, nationality, and disability. These efforts are based on our conviction that new solutions and quality services are particularly generated in environments where every individual feels motivated and finds self-fulfillment working together with distinctive personalities and using diverse work styles to take on new challenges.

### Childcare leave data



### Women's participation and advancement data



### Related engagement scores

In the workplace, I am respected as an individual. **82%**

## Initiatives for achieving diversity, equity & inclusion (DE&I)

**"Eruboshi" Certification for Women's Advancement**

CTC received third-level "Eruboshi" certification, the highest level, which includes excellence in the requirements for selection by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare pursuant to the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace.

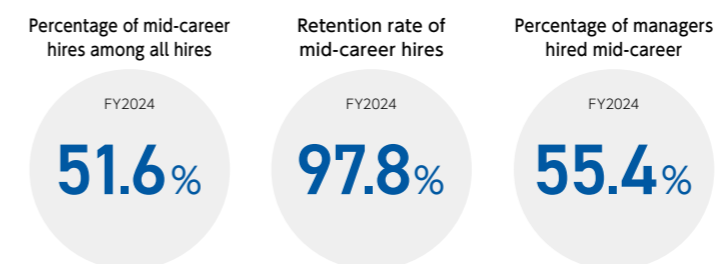
**Next-Generation Certification Logo "Platinum Kurumin"**

We received this certification in recognition of the results of our high-level action plans to support parenting based on the Act on Advancement of Measures to Support Raising Next-Generation Children.

**PRIDE Index 2025: Gold**

We received a "Gold" rating, the highest rating conferred by voluntary organization Work with Pride, reflecting their evaluations of initiatives for LGBTs and other sexual minorities.

## Mid-career hiring data



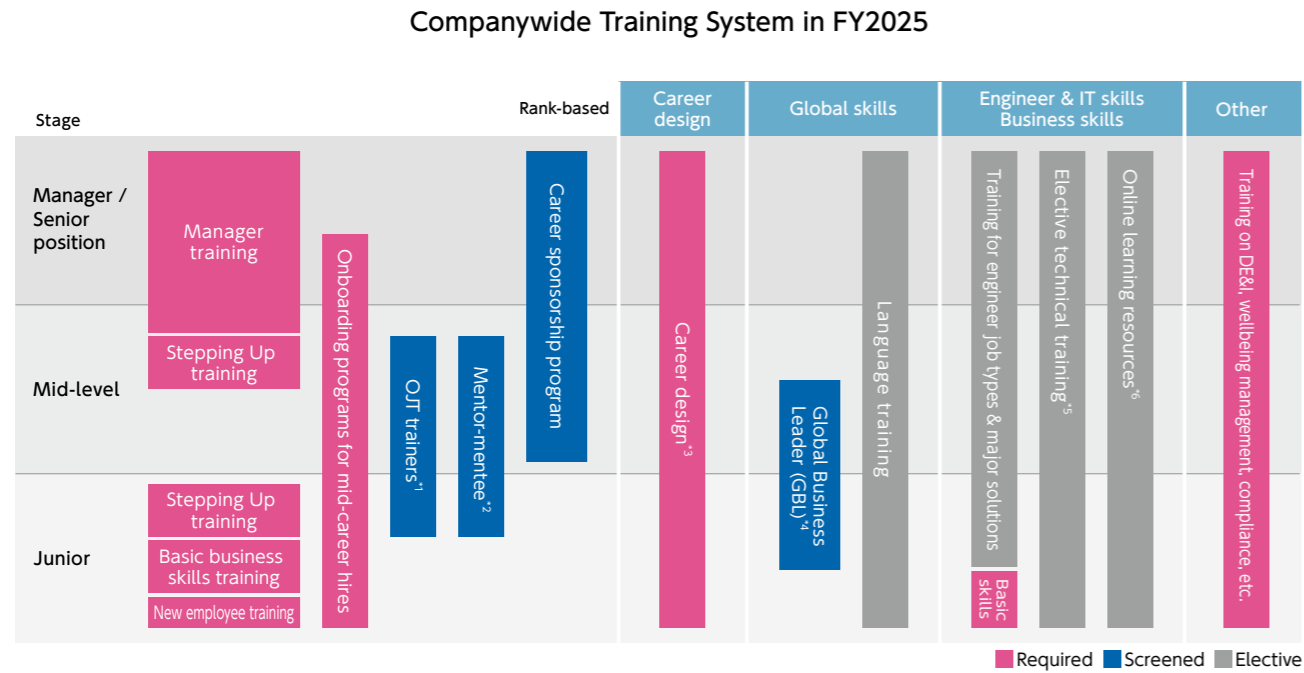
Onboarding programs for mid-career hires are being implemented (follow-up training, counseling, etc.)

\* Numerical figures for hiring and managers reflect employees originally hired by CTC. Actual results of childcare leave and other leave taken are calculated according to stipulations based on the Act on Childcare and Caregiver Leave to determine the percentage of childcare and other leave taken by male workers.  
 \* Rate of returning to work after childcare leave reflects the percentage of employees who took childcare leave then returned to the workplace afterward.  
 \* Retention rate of childcare leave users reflects the percentage of employees who remained with the company as of the end of the fiscal year, from among those who returned to work after childcare leave the previous fiscal year.

# Career Development, Human Resource Development & Work Style Systems

Based on our Career & Human Resource Development Policy, CTC is establishing comprehensive structural mechanisms that integrate training with counseling and systems to enable every employee to continue working while leveraging their strengths and values. We are pushing forward with initiatives that link these systems together. At the same time, we are also offering a wider range of work styles that can empower each individual to harness their peak performance.

## [Career & Human Resource Development at CTC]



\*1: OJT trainers ..... This is a system for veteran employees to support the growth of new employees. Implemented through the third year of employment for new graduate hires.  
 \*2: Mentor-mentee ..... Offering networking opportunities for junior and mid-level female employees to build connections with other female employees.  
 \*3: Career design ..... Providing opportunities for employees to think about their careers at important career milestones.  
 \*4: Global Business Leader (GBL) ..... As a priority measure to further our global business, this program screens and develops employees who have experience and track records in business domestically.  
 \*5: Elective technical training ..... Employees select training in specified technologies and fields according to their career objectives or business needs and undergo the training upon receiving approval from their departments.  
 \*6: Online learning resources ..... Uses online learning services for companies, enhancing engineering and IT skills in addition to business skills.

### Upskilling Support for Employees

We encourage each individual employee to enhance their expertise and pursue autonomous growth. This includes establishing a qualifications acquisition rewards program that pays financial rewards to employees who acquire any of 135 different qualifications that are at or above our company standard levels as they pursue skills and work to enhance their expertise.

#### Objective

- Encourage employees to acquire qualifications and reward their motivation as part of their capacity building and personal development
- Promote professional growth and enhanced expertise of employees by attaching financial rewards to qualifications required by the company

■ Training costs per employee (paid by company) /year (FY2024) **250,000 yen** ■ Average time in training per employee/year (FY2024) **104 hours**

#### Related engagement scores



## [Initiatives to Support Career Development]



**Career development support system**  
 Superiors and their subordinates discuss and share their career-related thinking, with the goal of employees being able to engineer their own career development autonomously and independently.



**Ongoing one-on-one discussions between superiors and subordinates**  
 Good communication is practiced within the organization to support growth through dialogue.



**Career counseling**  
 Autonomous and independent career decision-making is supported through dialogue. Counseling is provided by qualification holders who work for the company and is always available to those who want it.



**Internal recruiting system**  
 Employees are supported in independently taking a step toward their own career goals and fields of interest, and actively pursuing them.



**Multifaceted meritocracy**  
 Offering Specialist Roles with advanced skills and expertise, and an ability-intensive fast-track (skip ahead) system that offers opportunities to succeed.



**Career sponsorship program**  
 General managers serve as career sponsors and support the career growth of female managers and manager candidates through this initiative.



**Learning Platform (Engineering Career Paths)**  
 CTC has independently classified in-house engineering roles into 17 categories and 37 types. The platform presents model career paths and supports growth through self-directed learning.

## [Work Styles that Help to Unlock Performance]



Working remotely



Sliding work hours



Encouragement to take annual paid leave



Extend stays when on business trips ("bleisure" travel)



Extended leave system (sabbaticals)

Basic Data (Consolidated)		Unit	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	
Employees	Total	People	9,927	10,099	10,540	11,095	11,732	
	By gender	Men	8,080	8,134	8,414	8,822	9,193	
		Women	1,847	1,965	2,126	2,273	2,539	
	By region	Japan	8,676	8,897	9,257	9,725	10,389	
		Asia	1,220	1,172	1,255	1,343	1,317	
		Americas	31	30	28	27	26	
Europe		0	0	0	0	0		
Basic Data (Non-consolidated)		Unit	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	
Employees	Total	People	4,636	4,785	4,991	5,318	5,714	
	By gender	Men	3,813	3,915	4,048	4,291	4,551	
		Women	823	870	943	1,027	1,163	
	Non-Japanese	Total	People	50	55	65	68	77
		By age	Under 30	809	889	980	1,098	1,281
			30-39	1,117	1,099	1,124	1,203	1,312
			40-49	1,697	1,693	1,684	1,678	1,698
			50-59	851	917	990	1,084	1,128
			Over 60	162	187	213	255	295
	By job type	Engineer	3,154	3,221	3,372	3,585	3,849	
		Sales	997	1,042	1,081	1,173	1,301	
	Corporate staff	Total	485	522	538	560	564	
		Men	14.1	14.2	14.1	13.8	13.2	
Average years worked <sup>1)</sup>	Women	12.9	12.7	12.4	12.1	11.1		
	Total	13.9	13.9	13.8	13.4	12.8		
Average age <sup>1)</sup>	Men	41.5	41.7	41.7	41.4	41.0		
	Women	38.0	37.9	37.7	37.4	36.4		
	Total	40.9	41.0	40.9	40.6	40.0		
Number of voluntary resignations <sup>1)</sup>	Men	70	106	100	98	106		
	Women	12	28	27	22	19		
	Total	82	134	127	120	125		
Voluntary resignation rate <sup>1)</sup>	Men	1.8	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.4		
	Women	1.5	3.2	2.9	2.2	1.7		
	Total	1.8	2.8	2.6	2.3	2.2		
Average annual salary	¥	9,336,993	9,410,649	10,287,919	10,765,554	10,900,966		
Ratio of base salary and total remuneration between men and women (women:men)	Managers	Base salary	—	1:1.06	1:1.07	1:1.06	1:1.07	
		Total remuneration	—	1:1.10	1:1.06	1:1.06	1:1.07	
	General employees	Base salary	—	1:1.10	1:1.13	1:1.11	1:1.12	
		Total remuneration	—	1:1.14	1:1.12	1:1.11	1:1.12	
Wage difference between genders	All employees	%	—	—	78.3	78.7	77.8	
	Permanent employees	%	—	—	78.8	78.9	78.2	
	Non-permanent	%	—	—	73.0	76.2	67.0	
Diversity (Non-consolidated)		Unit	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	
New hires	Total	People	318	311	368	490	608	
	New graduate	Men	101	97	100	141	182	
		Women	61	59	61	77	112	
		Total	162	156	161	218	294	
	Mid-career	Men	142	134	170	239	258	
		Women	14	21	37	33	56	
Total		156	155	207	272	314		
Post-retirement re-employment	People	122	136	160	182	230		
Managers <sup>1)</sup>	Total	People	1,257	1,324	1,399	1,473	1,502	
	By gender	Men	1,187	1,244	1,316	1,381	1,405	
		Women	70	80	83	92	97	
	Non-Japanese	People	6	5	6	8	8	
Percentage of disabled employees <sup>2)</sup>	%	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.6		
New graduate starting salary	Master's degree	¥	245,200	245,200	245,200	315,100	315,100	
	University and specialized technical college graduate	¥	230,000	230,000	230,000	295,500	295,500	
	Technical college graduate	¥	—	—	—	273,100	273,100	
New graduate retention rate after 3 years	Men	%	93.2	94.8	96.0	91.8	85.0	
	Women	%	100	93.1	95.1	86.4	91.8	
	Total	%	94.9	94.2	95.7	89.7	87.6	

Work style (Non-consolidated)		Unit	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
Average ratio of annual leave taken	%	61.0	64.2	70.7	68.3	67.2	
Annual average number of holidays taken	Days	11.7	12.3	13.5	13.0	12.9	
Average monthly overtime hours per employee	Hours	16	13	12	13	12	
Childcare leave system users <sup>3)</sup>	Men	People	49	58	95	97	100
	Women	People	23	26	20	31	26
	Total	People	72	84	115	128	126
Childcare leave uptake rate (male) <sup>3)</sup>	Men	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Women	%	97.0	97.8	100.0	100.0	96.3
	Total	%	98.8	99.0	100.0	100.0	99.0
Rate of return from childcare leave <sup>4)</sup>	Men	%	77.8	70.0	92.9	97.1	95.9
	Women	%	96.3	87.5	84.0	100.0	96.0
	Total	%	92.0	83.3	87.2	97.6	95.9
Nursing care leave system users	People	144	147	101	137	119	
Long-term caregiving leave system users	People	0	0	0	3	3	
Caregiving leave system users	People	35	33	34	31	48	
Number of work-related accidents	Cases	1	2	0	4	2	
Number of work-related deaths	People	0	0	0	0	0	
Morning work <sup>5)</sup>	Annual	People	3,080	3,135	3,356	3,838	4,126
	Monthly average	People	1,519	1,709	1,835	2,099	2,270
Staggered working hours <sup>6)</sup>	Annual	People	1,916	1,638	1,658	1,698	2,000
	Monthly average	People	846	780	775	780	824
Hourly paid leave <sup>7)</sup>	Annual	People	1,357	845	969	905	907
	Monthly average	People	327	228	266	244	249
Shorter working hour system users	People	93	72	70	62	60	
Absentee rate <sup>8)</sup>	%	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	
Data on promoting women's advancement (Non-consolidated)		Unit	FY2024				
Female managers	People	97					
Appointment of new female managers	People	9					
Female supervisors	People	121					
Ratio of female permanent employees	%	20.4					
Ratio of female new graduate hires	%	38.1					
Health and wellness-related indices (Non-consolidated)		Unit	FY2024				
Ratio of employees undergoing regular health checkups	%	100.0					
Smokers	%	19.9					
Regular exercisers <sup>9)</sup>	%	27.6					
Daily physical exercise <sup>10)</sup>	%	38.3					
Maintaining appropriate weight	%	66.3					
Regular health checkups (examination or re-examination required)	%	53.6					
Subjective health outlook <sup>11)</sup>	%	81.6					
Subjective performance <sup>12)</sup>	Points	6.61					
Satisfied with job <sup>13)</sup>	%	79.7					
Ratio of employees undergoing stress & mental health checkups	%	95.4					
High stress	%	7.1					
Security / Compliance (Consolidated)		Unit	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
Number of serious security incidents	Cases	0	0	0	0	0	
Number of serious compliance violations	Cases	0	0	0	0	0	
Number of serious environmental law violations	Cases	0	0	0	0	0	

\*1: Figures on average years worked, average age, number of voluntary resignations, voluntary resignation rate, managers refer to employees originally hired by CTC.  
\*2: Figures include special subsidiaries and companies considered part of the Group. Headcount is derived according to the counting method for number of persons with disabilities employed in the calculations for statutory minimum employee ratio.  
\*3: Figures have been calculated based on the number of users of childcare leave in accordance with regulations under the Act on Childcare Leave, Caregiver Leave, and Other Measures for the Welfare of Workers Caring for Children or Other Family Members.  
\*4: This is the number of employees among those who returned to work from childcare leave the previous fiscal year who were on the payroll as of the end of March of the current fiscal year.  
\*5: The Company places limits on overtime work at night and on holidays and encourages work in the early morning hours (5:00-9:00 a.m.). As initiatives to encourage this work, we are paying a morning work hours allowance of 25% in addition to legally stipulated overtime allowances.  
\*6: This system allows employees to work full-time while selecting their daily starting times from a period between 5:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.  
\*7: This system allows employees to take five days (40 hours) of annual paid leave in hourly units.  
\*8: The number of days of absence from work due to illness or injury as a percentage of the fixed number of working days is calculated from attendance records.  
\*9: Ratio of "Yes" responses to the question "Have you been doing 30 minutes or more of exercise resulting in a light sweat at least twice per week, for at least a year?"  
\*10: Ratio of "Yes" responses to the question "Do you walk or perform equivalent physical activity for at least one hour a day in your daily life?"  
\*11: Ratio of "Yes" and "Relatively" responses to the question "Are you currently in good health?"  
\*12: The average of the responses to the question, "How would you rate your own work over the past four weeks if 10 was your best performance when you were not sick or injured?"  
\*13: Ratio of "Yes" and "Relatively" responses to the question "Are you satisfied with your job?"

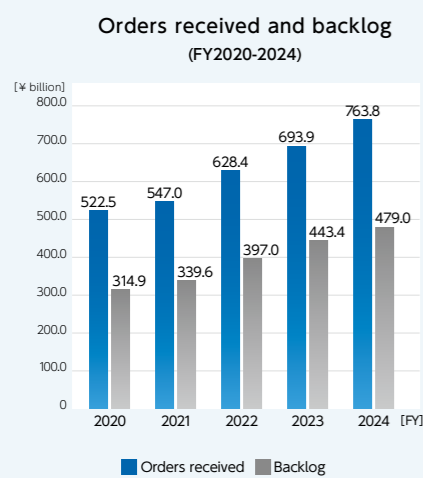
Note: Calculations are based on figures as of March 31 each fiscal year. Numbers with decimals are rounded off to two decimal places, and monetary values listed are rounded off to the nearest unit. Numbers for persons with disabilities employed are as of June 1 every fiscal year and are rounded down to the nearest hundredth.

Operating results (¥ billion)	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
Revenue	479.9	522.4	570.9	647.5	728.2
Gross profit	121.5	134.7	139.1	162.6	187.7
Gross profit margin	25.3%	25.8%	24.4%	25.1%	25.8%
Other income and expenses	(77.8)	(84.2)	(92.6)	(105.3)	(120.2)
Operating income	43.6	50.5	46.5	57.3	67.6
Operating income margin	9.1%	9.7%	8.1%	8.9%	9.3%
Net profit attributable to CTC's shareholders	30.5	35.4	34.2	41.3	50.3
Orders received	522.5	547.0	628.4	693.9	763.8
Backlog	314.9	339.6	397.0	443.4	479.0

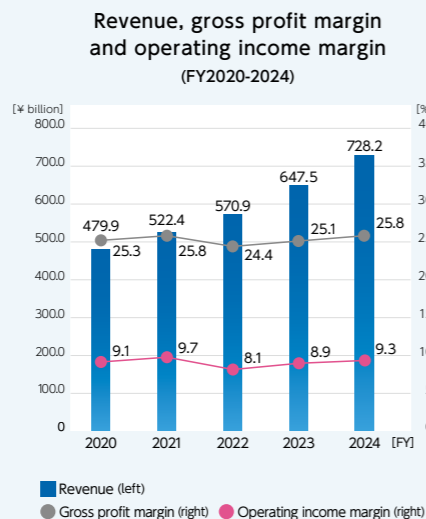
Per capita data* (¥ million)	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
Revenue	48	52	54	58	62
Operating income	4.4	5.0	4.4	5.2	5.8

Consolidated balance sheet (¥ billion)	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024
Current assets	353.7	381.1	405.1	472.2	517.8
Non-current assets	109.1	126.6	123.0	118.9	122.1
Total assets	462.7	507.7	528.0	591.2	640.0
Current liabilities	172.8	173.7	183.0	213.6	239.8
Non-current liabilities	27.3	45.6	39.4	36.6	39.3
Total liabilities	200.1	219.2	222.4	250.2	279.1
Total equity	262.6	288.5	305.6	340.9	360.8
Total liabilities and equity	462.7	507.7	528.0	591.2	640.0

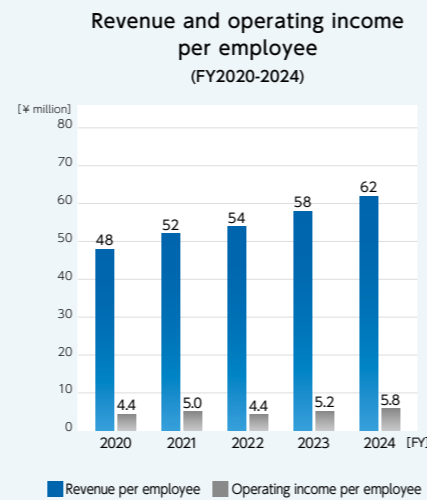
\* Figures are calculated on March 31



Orders received increased by over 10% and backlogs by 8% year-on-year in FY2024, both reaching record highs.



Leveraging our Group's wide-ranging customer base, we captured growing DX demand from every angle to set a new record for revenue in FY2024. Gross profit margin and operating income margin also grew for the second consecutive year due to high added-value projects, improved profitability in development, and other contributing factors.



Due to the growth in revenue and operating profit, revenue and operating profit per employee were steadily performing well.

INFORMATION

Video from Best Engine Vol. 17 "Exclusive Dialogue: 1" Now Available

Video of the exclusive dialogue between Professor Akie Iriyama and President & CEO Tatsushi Shingu on the topics of AI and management from Best Engine Vol.17 is available for viewing on the Best Engine website. Please watch it when you have a moment.



Video of the exclusive dialogue is here (Japanese Only)  
[https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/bestengine/article/2025/1016a\\_01.html?utm\\_source=magazine&utm\\_medium=qr&utm\\_campaign=2601\\_be18](https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/bestengine/article/2025/1016a_01.html?utm_source=magazine&utm_medium=qr&utm_campaign=2601_be18)

CTC hiring information webpage

At CTC, we regularly publish information about our new-graduate and mid-career hiring. For details, please visit our hiring information website.



Hiring information is here (Japanese Only)

ITOCHU Techno-Solutions Corporation (CTC)  
 New graduate hiring website  
<https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/recruit/newgrads/>

ITOCHU Techno-Solutions Corporation (CTC)  
 Mid-career hiring website  
<https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/recruit/mid-career/>

ITOCHU Techno-Solutions Corporation (CTC)  
 Official Instagram account for hiring  
[https://www.instagram.com/ctc\\_recruit?igsh=NnFibFoY2VlZTQ4](https://www.instagram.com/ctc_recruit?igsh=NnFibFoY2VlZTQ4)

Best Engine

Corporate Book 2025-26

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Corporate website  
<https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/en/>

Best Engine website  
<https://www.ctc-g.co.jp/bestengine/>

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**CTCSP Corporation (CTCSP)**  
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<https://www.ctcsp.co.jp/english/>

**CTC Facilities Corporation (CTCF)**  
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**CTC Business Service Corporation (CTCBS)**  
 Kamiyacho Trust Tower, 4-1-1 Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo  
<https://ctcbs.ctc-g.co.jp/>

**CTC Business Expert Corporation (CTCBE)**  
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<https://ctcbe.ctc-g.co.jp/>

**Asahi Business Solutions Corp.**  
 Asahi Beer Azumabashi Building, 23-1, Azumabashi 1-chome, Sumida-ku, Tokyo  
<https://www.n-ais.co.jp/>

**CTC Hinari Corporation**  
 Kamiyacho Trust Tower, 4-1-1 Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo  
<https://hinari.ctc-g.co.jp/>

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