

# Topics

## Greetings from the Guam Branch Manager

I was appointed Guam Branch Manager on April 1, 2023.

As I strive to fulfill my responsibilities, I contemplate what I can do and how I should proceed each day. I have been involved in U.S. military projects for seven years in Okinawa and seven years in Sasebo, but in order for this experience to be useful in Guam, my first priority is to listen to the voices on the ground.

Although the local Filipino staff is still quite young, they have a lot of potential, and I look forward to growing together with them.

Guam serves as a crucial base in the Asia-Pacific region during times of crisis, making it an extremely attractive market for U.S. military construction. Going forward, I will work toward establishing a solid structure to secure new contracts and ensure profitability.

The coconut tree depicted on the Guam flag symbolizes self-sufficiency and the ability to grow under any circumstances, and is said to represent strength. While the Guam Branch is currently supported by various individuals, our goal is to unite,

combining our efforts to grow and become self-reliant, like the coconut tree. Although I may still be inexperienced, I kindly request your guidance and support.



**Masanori Hioda**  
Guam Branch Manager

## Launch of Kubota Juku

Kubota Juku, a study group for a small number of people, started in February of this year. My first encounter with Mr. Yasuhiko Kubota, the former CEO of Hoken No Madoguchi Group Inc., dates back more than 10 years, when I asked him to become an outside director of our Company. At that time, I was impressed by how much Mr. Kubota

values the customers and the employees. I have always been influenced by Mr. Kubota as an example of a decisive business leader who made tough decisions during merger negotiations with other non-life insurance companies and during financial crises. The reason I asked Mr. Kubota to preside over Kubota Juku is that I believe his

experience and insight will be of great value for the employees who will be responsible for our Company in the future. Everyone has a different take on Kubota Juku, but I hope that the number of employees who make their own decisions and act on their own will increase.

## Projects for the U.S. Military

1. Yokota Air Base, Equipment Storage Facility (ADR), Repair Work, Tokyo, Japan
2. Yokosuka Naval Base, U.S. Forces, Purdy Gym, Repair Work, Kanagawa, Japan
3. Kadena Air Base, Helicopter Rescue Service Hangar Reconstruction, Electrical Equipment Construction, Okinawa, Japan
4. Hiroshima Akizuki Ammunition Depot, Repair Work, Hiroshima, Japan
5. Contract Drawings, Project 1013751 (QKKA171042), Dormitory B542, Repair Work, Aomori, Japan

## Editorial Note

Hello. This is Nagae, the editor-in-charge of The Innovator.

What did you think of this volume?

This issue's reporting involved a lot of legwork! I had the opportunity to speak with the persons in charge for both the 36 Series feature and the Shizuoka Branch feature, and then I summarized those conversations into the articles you see here. I was quite energized throughout all of this as I found the subject matter incredibly interesting.

We will continue to share stories that we hope everyone will find interesting, so please keep reading!



# THE INNOVATOR

## ISSUE 10, 2023

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## Our Current Status



Quiapo Church, visited on a business trip to the Philippines

Recently, Japan has been experiencing abnormal weather conditions. Winter saw heavy snowfall in many parts of Japan, and in June two typhoons skirted Japan and brought record-breaking rainfall. In Guam, where our branch office is located, super typhoon Mawar struck directly in May, causing significant damage to the island.

Power and water supplies were disrupted, and it took a considerable amount of time to restore them. Fortunately, there was no damage to the branch office, but many employees were forced to stay in hotels due to the issuance of evacuation orders affecting their places of residence. The hotel itself had power outages due to the failure of emergency generators, and our employees had to evacuate from there as well. These events made me once again realize the importance of electrical power and the significance of our business dealing in electrical works. Going forward, we will be more committed than ever to advancing management with the awareness that our mission is to create and protect infrastructure.

As a new challenge, we will start hiring engineers from Mapúa University in the Philippines. We had been recruiting from the University of the Philippines, but owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic it has become difficult to recruit from this institution, so we are starting over this year and will first start recruiting from Mapúa University. Already, we held a company briefing session at the university at the end of May. We received tremendous support from the university's Administration Office for this recruitment activity, for which I am extremely thankful. As of this writing, we have not yet made an official offer, but if possible, we plan to hire two individuals and provide them with a solid Japanese language education in the Philippines before having them come to Japan. Considering the shrinking of Japan's working-age population, I am confident that increasing the number of engineers from foreign countries and training them will contribute to the growth of the Company. In the future, we plan to expand our hiring efforts not only in the Philippines but also in other countries.



Mapúa University



**Takayuki Sakamoto (Third from the left)**  
Senior Managing Executive Officer

# Feature 1 The Path from 36 Bind Development to Production

The 36 Series has been covered several times before in this publication, and I believe many of you are familiar with it. That said, probably not many people know about the product development process.

We recently asked Mr. Takashi Kawakami, who is the manager of Information System Management and also a developer, how he was able to extract opinions from the field, and which parts were difficult during development.

You can also experience product development using 3D CAD on our YouTube channel. Please be sure to watch!

## History of the 36 Series



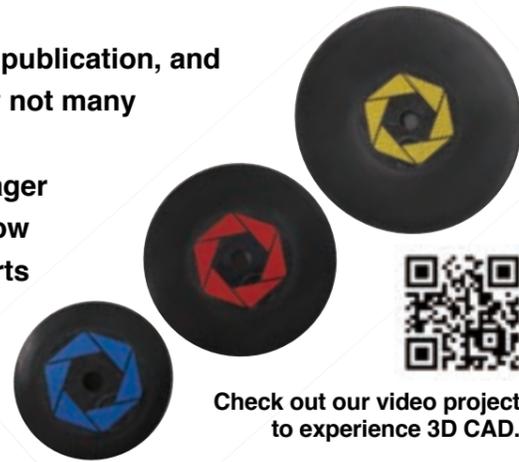
**Takashi Kawakami**  
Information System Management

In 2002, the development concept of the 36 Series was launched. The impetus for this project came from the idea of making something by recycling resin

scraps from social welfare corporation JAPAN SUN INDUSTRIES, a current production contractor.

We decided to develop products made from waste materials for use at construction sites. In order to investigate what kind of product we should make as our first development project, we conducted an in-house questionnaire to collect requests from construction sites, and then performed product development.

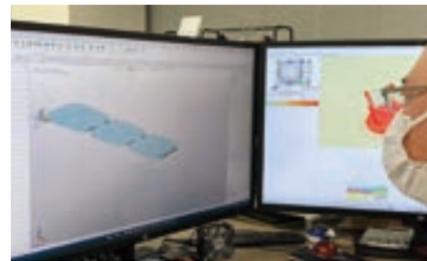
Gradually, our product lineup and the number of shipments increased, and the waste materials generated by JAPAN SUN INDUSTRIES were no longer sufficient,



Check out our video project to experience 3D CAD.

so we began to change materials and increase the number of subcontractors.

As a result, we now have more than 30 types of products. In addition to developing new products, we also improve existing products based on requests from construction sites.



## Important Considerations in Product Development

Although it is often thought that knowledge of 3D CAD and 3D printers is necessary for product development, this is not so important as it is just a means to an end.

What is actually needed is imagination. As mentioned earlier, we develop products based on requests from construction sites. In this context,

creating products based directly on requests from construction sites will not result in products that can actually be used.

The ideal product must be developed by imagining the kinds of problems that occur at sites and spawn the requests that are made, and how to solve these

problems. For that reason, we visit sites to check the situation there and have workers use prototypes to see if they actually solve the problem.

This is why I believe that imagination is crucial to bringing things into being,

## Difficulties in Development

Many things require ingenuity. Products that require strength are a prime example of this. To increase strength, one can run simulations using different thicknesses and shapes, but increasing thickness to increase strength costs

money because it reduces the number of pieces that can be made per hour while increasing the cost of materials. On the other hand, if shapes are excessively thinned down, more complex dies are required, resulting in higher initial costs

and maintenance costs.

At this time, it is difficult to adjust thickness and shape to minimize cost.

Doing things through trial and error is difficult, but at the same time it's extremely rewarding!

## The Fun of Development Work

It's simply delightful when the products you create sell well, isn't it? We forecast demand to a certain extent, but it doesn't always go as planned. So, when a product has increased sales in a particular month, it's exciting!

I don't work alone. Rather, I work in collaboration with staff members who take care of ordering and billing, as well as with nine or so subcontractors located throughout Japan. So, once a product sells, this leads to more work for our subcontractors, creating a win-win situation for both sides.



Some pieces from the 36 Series

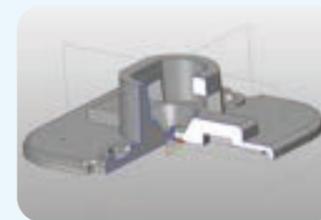
## Future Prospects

Having been involved in development for nearly 20 years, I think it's about time to establish a structure that will allow successors to take over the work. I also want to maintain the valuable connections between our subcontractors and HEXEL Works, so I'd like to ensure that they are handed down to successors.

What I hope for when successors are found is that they will approach product development with a different mindset than mine. Considering that our Company's motto is "Ever-Evolving DNA," I believe it's good for HEXEL Works to change its way of doing things. If this allows us to develop products

that improve on-site construction efficiency and reduce costs, this will be beneficial for the Company as well. I'd be delighted if someone who embodies these qualities appears!

## Product Development



### 1. Design (3D CAD)

Design products using 3D CAD, and confirm strength and other factors through simulation.



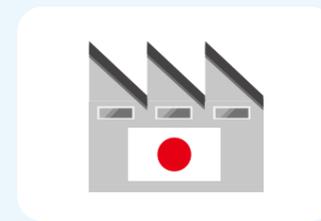
### 2. Modeling (3D Printer)

Mold prototypes with a 3D printer to plan mass production methods and confirm usability.



### 3. Mass Production in Mexico

Partial mass production at partner company in Mexico (Aoi Techno, Inc.).



### 4. Mass Production in Japan

Partial mass production at partner company in Japan (JAPAN SUN INDUSTRIES).



### 5. On-Site

Products delivered to the site are used in various parts of the electrical installation.





For this issue, we visited the Shizuoka Branch to film a YouTube interview covering the renewal of the branch.

This interview focuses more on the workplace atmosphere, such as what the branch manager values and what kinds of people are at the Shizuoka Branch, but it also touches on the growth of young employees.



## Masayuki Abe (Branch Manager)

### Q What is the purpose of the branch renewal?

We relocated the branch near Shizuoka Station to improve the workplace environment. It is now just a two-minute walk from the station, so this has contributed significantly to reducing commuting times.

We also introduced a system that automatically adjusts the lighting in the office and renewed the furniture to create an environment where branch employees want to work.

### Q What is the organizational structure of the Shizuoka Branch?

The Shizuoka area consists of the Shizuoka Branch and the Iwata Sales Office. The personnel breakdown is 17 people at the branch and 6 at the sales office.

Because of the distance between the sales office and the branch, we coordinate through online meetings. Moreover, we hold events at the branch, such as start-of-term explanation meetings, welcome parties, and end-of-year parties, three times a year to give employees the opportunity to meet one another and develop deeper connections.

### Q How would you describe the branch's employees?

The Shizuoka Branch has many senior employees who take good care of others and keep close contact with partner companies. I think this is because the mindset of the branch is that a workplace is not whole without teamwork.

I value strongly consideration for others and caring, and place importance

on teamwork with branch members. As such, I am always ready to listen to the concerns and problems of subordinates, propose solutions or encourage them to find solutions, helping them turn hurdles into lessons that they apply to their next job.



Masayuki Abe  
Branch Manager

## Masaki Takei (6th Year, Construction Management)

### Q How have you changed since joining the Company?

I think I have grown since joining the Company in that I am now able to work by thinking on my own. The first year or two, I was working by following the instructions of my seniors, but now I am able to think clearly about my work. For example, if I am going to take on a particular construction project, I can do the work based on my own planning that clearly outlines the steps that need to be taken.

### Q What kind of employees are at the branch?

We have many people who are flexible and proactive about things. That's the

way I see it because many of us will proactively introduce new tools and try out new approaches without sticking to old ways of doing things.

Also, I feel that many of us like to talk. If I have a construction project that I am not sure how to go about, I feel comfortable discussing the project with my highly experienced seniors, so I can take on challenges without fear.

Overall, I think this is a workplace where I can learn many things.

### Q What is your goal for the future?

It is to work here for a long time to come! Literally, I want to work for a long time and

contribute to the Company. I currently work while receiving advice from my seniors, but in the future I want to be able to give guidance to my juniors. I want to work for a long time so that one day I may reach the level of the seniors I respect.



Masaki Takei  
Construction Management



## Shizuoka City Report

For this issue, I also took a walk around the Shizuoka Branch. I actually lived in Shizuoka for five years in my previous job. Therefore, I think I can tell you about the charms of Shizuoka as only a local could. Please take a look at my carefully selected information.

### 📍 Sumpu Castle Park

Do you know Tokugawa Ieyasu? Tokugawa Ieyasu was a shogun during the Edo period. Sumpu Castle is the castle where he lived in his later years. It is now a park and a place where locals like to go to relax. In spring, the cherry blossoms are in full bloom and it is a famous cherry blossom viewing spot. It also serves as a venue for events



such as the Shizuoka Festival in April and the Street Performance World Cup in November. Be sure to visit during these periods.

### 📍 A City of Toys

Shizuoka City is home to many toy factories and companies, including model and mini 4WD manufacturers. For this reason, objects fashioned after plastic models are displayed throughout the city. Currently, there are about nine of them, and more will be added in the future. If you are interested, please look for them in the city!



### 📍 Shizuoka Summer Festival and Abekawa Fireworks Festival

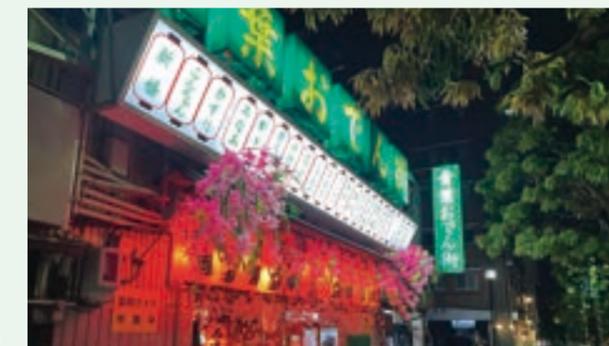
Let me introduce the big summer events in Shizuoka City. One is the Shizuoka Summer Festival Night Market. It is an event where the city's shopping streets collaborate to set up shops and concerts. On the day of the event, the locals gather and it gets as crowded as the Shibuya Scramble Crossing in Tokyo.

There is also the Abe River Fireworks Festival, which is one of the finest fireworks shows in Shizuoka City. Ten thousand fireworks light up the sky of Shizuoka. A great way to watch the fireworks is while eating shaved ice on the riverbank!



### 📍 Aoba Oden Street

Shizuoka City is famous for oden. At night, that street is lit up and has a gorgeous atmosphere. You can try out black *hanpen*, a local specialty of Shizuoka. Normally, *hanpen* is white, but in Shizuoka it's black! The reason is that not only the meat of the fish but also its bones and skin are kneaded in. Loaded with fish umami, black *hanpen* is delicious!



## Introduction of Foreign Employees

Ron Neil Matthew Alonzo and Romel Constantino are from the Philippines and were assigned to Japan in March 2023.

Ron is a new employee, and Romel is an existing employee who has been assigned to Japan from the Guam Branch. At this time, we would like to introduce these two employees while listening to what they are looking forward to in their new environment and their enthusiasm for their work.



**Ron Neil Matthew Alonzo**  
Okinawa Business Office



**Romel Constantino**  
Okinawa Business Office

### Q: What are your favorite Japanese words?

In life, for our dreams and aspirations to come to fruition, we tend to make plans and micromanage the decisions we make. However, there are times when things do not go as planned, yet a favorable and surprising outcome occurs. This interesting phenomenon is often referred to as “fate” or “destiny,” whose Japanese counterpart is 運命.

### Q: What would you like to do in Japan?

Being in Japan gives me the opportunity to learn about a different culture and language. One of the things I would like to do is explore a Japanese city without having a specific destination in mind. I would also like to try a Japanese onsen, as it is often portrayed in Japanese media.

### Q: What were your reasons for joining HEXEL Works?

Since high school, one of my hobbies has been learning Japanese. After graduating with a degree in electrical engineering from the University of the Philippines, I wanted to look for a job where I can apply the things I learned in university. Joining HEXEL Works allowed me to use the fundamentals and theories I learned in university, as well as gave me an opportunity to use Japanese in daily life. On top of that, working abroad allows me to explore Japan and learn more about its culture. HEXEL Works gave me the opportunity to do all these things at the same time.

### Q: What are some specific goals you want to accomplish in your future?

After getting used to work in Japan, I would like to be effective and make a difference to the outcome of projects. During my free time, I would like to explore Japan and be immersed in its rich history and culture as well as become more proficient with the Japanese language. Lastly, I would also like to be able to support my family and girlfriend living in the Philippines.

### Q: What are you looking forward to in Japan?

It has been a great experience working with HEXEL Works for the past six years in Guam. Recently, I was given the opportunity to work here in Japan at our headquarters, and so I have been looking forward to almost everything Japanese—the country’s tradition and culture, its beautiful nature, and Japanese work ethics. It has been a warm welcome for us in the office and I am incredibly thankful to all my colleagues. I look forward also to improving my Japanese language ability.

### Q: How do you want to make the most of your experience at the Guam Branch?

For the past six years working in Guam, when thinking about my day-to-day learning experiences and the knowledge gathered from school and work experiences, I believe that the opportunity to handle construction jobs and work with so many different people has been the most important lesson that I have been a part of. The majority of the time I need to be able to provide workable recommendations and on-the-spot solutions to everything related to installation.

### Q: What do you value in your work?

I value the dedication and motivation to work, and to finishing a project on time. I take pride in the experience and the great opportunities given to me in the field of construction, as this has prepared me to be a team leader, to be responsible, and to always be professional and accountable for my decisions. I believe this is how one gains respect from their peers, subordinates, and colleagues, and how one creates their own identity.

### Q: What are your future goals?

I still see myself working in the construction industry, as it is my passion and interest. I love being involved with it.

## Topics

### Young Employee Develops Materials Ordering System

Erick Valverde from the Guam Branch has developed a materials ordering system.

There is no precedent for system development at a branch office, so this truly is a pioneering initiative.

We interviewed Erick to hear the behind-the-scenes story of the development and to learn what can be done with this system.

#### Q. Please tell us the reason behind developing your materials ordering system.

Construction material management is one of the most important elements on a project site. All construction material demands have an impact on the budget flow and construction activities, which significantly corresponds to project profit upon completion. As a project nears completion, we usually experience difficulty with overall project management as we also need



Materials ordering system screenshot

to deal with ongoing activities and new modification orders that the government requires us to complete. These issues push us closer to losing control of construction material management since we always need to collaborate and discuss all of the items required to keep our activities on-site running while minimizing any purchasing errors. It is often difficult to find the time needed to meet with site staff to discuss these demands, and this results in delay of project. To address this issue, I created a platform that would allow us to collaborate on all construction material requests via our mobile phones or any other device we could easily use anywhere to track and document all materials that must be purchased for the project.

#### Q. Please explain what the materials ordering system enables us to do.

With the goal of creating stronger collaboration between site staff and office engineers in terms of handling all purchase requisitions of materials and/or services, I developed a configurable program for construction material management. This program or application can be utilized on almost any device including a mobile phone,



**Erick Valverde**  
Guam Branch

tablet, laptop, or desktop computer. As we usually have mobile phones in our pockets, this platform makes it easier to check and approve new requests from site staff. It can also be used to track ordered materials’ comprehensive description, status, and inventory needed for the project. Moreover, it allows us to document all materials purchased, save budgets by having references for comparison of unit prices among suppliers, and maximize our working hours by saving time on each request discussion before taking action. In other words, the application is an end-to-end framework that allows us to track (1) purchase requisitions, (2) purchase order issuance, and (3) request of payment to suppliers/contractors to guarantee that all materials are correctly managed and monitored.

### Okinawa Life by Romel Constantino

Moving to Okinawa from Tokyo feels like a new beginning for me. I am looking forward to making new friends, exploring new places, and having new and exciting adventures here.

During my first few days here, I was experiencing that common feeling of unfamiliarity when moving to a new place. As such, I focused on getting myself adjusted and learning how to get to and from work, where the local supermarkets, convenience stores, bus stops, restaurants, and malls are located, and exploring the neighborhood around my new

apartment. These were the first of many struggles or excitement that I expect to be dealing with.

Going to work here is extremely convenient as you just need to go to a bus stop and hop on. With that said, I would ideally like to get my driver’s license soon.

I have been able to get out and explore my new area a bit, discovering nearby malls and supermarkets where I can buy all my daily necessities, as well as several restaurants serving ramen, *gyuniku*, *yakiniku*, sashimi, and even bento boxes. I look forward to learning

about new places to eat, especially those focusing on Okinawa specialties in the coming days.

