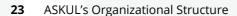
# Section 2

# **Management Strategies**



#### COO Message

**Achieving Breakthrough Innovation with** an Organizational Structure That Can **Respond Flexibly to Change** 

- Awareness of the External Environment and Handling of Shortages and Other Prominent Issues
- Medium- to Long-Term Corporate Aims
- 32 TOPIC **Building a Logistics System That Supports Long-Tail Products**
- **CFO Message**

**Accelerating ASKUL's Transformation through Growth Investments** 

- Financial Results for the Fiscal Year Ended May 20, 2024 and Plan for the Fiscal Year Ending May 20, 2025
- Sharing Group Companies' Strengths and Creating Synergies













**EC Business Unit** 

#### Saori Onsen **Executive Officer**

Ms. Onsen joined ASKUL in 2002. She has been engaged in the formulation, planning, development, and implementation of website strategy in the ASKUL Business Unit and the promotion ASKUL's large-scale website renewal. Since 2022, she has overseen the ASKUL Business Unit as executive officer, and in March 2023, she was appointed executive officer of the EC Business Unit, which encompasses both the B-to-B and B-to-C businesses.



**EC Product Unit** 

#### Shinichi Hokari Director, CTO,\*2 Executive Officer

Mr. Hokari joined Yahoo Japan Corporation in 2003, where he was engaged in business and infrastructure development for Yahoo! Shopping and served as general manager of the company's Production and Marketing units. In 2019, he was appointed representative director of Netrust, Ltd., and in 2022, he transferred to ASKUL, where he became a director the same year. He has served in his current position since March 2023.



**Sales Unit** 

#### Katsuhiro Kawamura Director, COO,\*1 Executive Officer

Mr. Kawamura joined ASKUL in 2001 after working as a construction consultant and in the retail industry. He became an executive officer in 2012, serving as executive officer of the B-to-B Business Planning Unit, Corporate Planning Unit, and Logistics Division, and as director of ASKUL LOGIST Corporation, After overseeing the B-to-C Business, he was appointed and currently serves as director, COO, and executive officer of the Sales Unit of the Company in 2022, and president and representative director of SOLOEL Corporation.



**Technology Unit** 

#### Kazuyuki Ikeda CDXO.\*3 Executive Officer

After working for a major IT business company and a major distribution retailer, Mr. Ikeda joined ASKUL in 2003, where he was engaged in numerous projects in fields ranging from IT to logistics. His endeavors have included the establishment of core systems in the IT Division and a project to introduce logistics robots in the Logistics Division. In 2016, he was appointed executive officer of the Logistics Unit and has served in his current position since 2022.

# **ASKUL's Organizational Structure**

ASKUL has established 10 units to ensure that it can respond quickly to the needs of its customers and society at large in the most efficient way possible. In addition, six chief officers have been appointed as the highest-ranking executives in the Company, responsible for overseeing each of our business areas and formulating and implementing strategies.

Units marked " \* " are under the jurisdiction of the COO.

- \*1 Chief operating officer
- \*2 Chief technology officer
- \*3 Chief digital transformation officer
- \*4 Chief financial officer
- \*5 Chief security officer
- \*6 Chief human relations & healthcare officer



## Mizuki Takehisa

**Executive Officer** 

Ms. Takehisa joined ASKUL in 2001 as its first new graduate hire. She worked as a merchandiser in the Stationery Division and OAPC Division and was involved in the development of many of the Company's original mainstay products. She has also been active in developing services such as the launch of an automated delivery service for copy paper, which is a frequently ordered item. Since 2022, she has overseen the Merchandising Unit as executive officer.



**Logistics Unit** 

#### Takeshi Narimatsu

**Executive Officer** 

Mr. Narimatsu joined ASKUL in 2007 and was engaged in customer relationship management, promotion, and new service planning before participating in the launch of LOHACO. In 2022, he assumed the position of executive officer in charge of the LOHACO Business Unit and promoted B-to-B data utilization as the director of EC marketing. In March 2023, he was appointed executive officer of the Logistics Unit.



Customer Service Unit \*

Hideo Sakurai **Executive Officer** 

Mr. Sakurai transferred to ASKUL Corporation in 1997 after working in the ASKUL Business Division at PLUS Corporation and was appointed general manager of the Customer Solutions Department in 2006. From 2010 to 2012, he served concurrently as president and representative director of BUSINESSMART CORPORATION and was appointed executive officer of the same company in 2011. Since 2012, he served as executive officer of the Agent Sales Tokyo Metropolitan Area Unit, executive officer of the Stationery Business Unit, and deputy executive officer of the Logistics Unit, before assuming his current position in March 2020.



**Corporate Unit** 

#### Tsuguhiro Tamai Director, CFO.\*4 Executive Officer

After working in the construction industry, Mr. Tamai joined ASKUL in 2007 and was appointed executive officer of the Finance & Public Relations Office in 2012. He has served as director of AlphaPurchase Co., Ltd., TSUMAGOI MEISUI CORPORATION, and charm Co., Ltd., and assumed his current position as CFO of the Company in 2016. He has also served as executive officer of the Corporate Unit since 2018 and was appointed director in 2020, overseeing risk, accounting and finance, information disclosure, and

management and quality KPIs (to present).



**Legal & Security Unit** 

#### Hiroyuki Ueno CSO.\*5 Executive Officer

Mr. Ueno joined ASKUL in 2006. After working in corporate planning and accounting, he was appointed general manager of the Corporate Planning Unit in 2014, and in 2015 became executive officer of the Print on Demand Business Unit. In 2017, he was appointed director of ASKUL LOGIST Corporation and has served in his current position since 2020. From 2021 to 2023, he served concurrently as executive officer of the Human Relations & General Affairs Unit.



**Human Relations & General Affairs Unit** 

#### Tamami Ito

CHO.\*6 Executive Officer

Ms. Ito joined ASKUL in 2003 after her involvement in launching an office furniture mailorder business at a stationery manufacturer. After launching the furniture business and working in solution sales with the Company, she became the general manager of the Customer Service and Logistics divisions. In 2020, she became director of ASKUL LOGIST Corporation and in 2022 the executive officer of the Logistics Unit of the Company. She has served in her current position as CHO and executive officer since March 2023.





What Is ASKUL?

Achieving Breakthrough Innovation with an Organizational Structure That Can Respond Flexibly

to Change

In the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024, ASKUL changed the curve of its B-to-B Business growth trajectory and made LOHACO profitable for the full fiscal year. What are your thoughts on this, taking the business environment into consideration?

A In the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024, we worked to improve the profitability of both the B-to-B Business and LOHACO. That said, we had our sights on double-digit growth for the B-to-B Business in the final year of the current Medium-Term Management Plan, but we have fallen short of our sales targets and recognize that there are issues to be addressed.

One of the major strategies of the current Medium-Term Management Plan is to merge our ASKUL website for small and medium-sized enterprises and our SOLOEL ARENA website for mid-tier and larger enterprises to form the New ASKUL Website.

ASKUL began its B-to-B office supplies mail-order service over 30 years ago. Based on the concept of providing small and medium-sized enterprises with the same level of service as larger corporations, the ASKUL website for small and mediumsized enterprises is characterized by its straightforward registration process, its easy-to-use interface that allows users to purchase items with a feel similar to that of a B-to-C site, and its comprehensive search and personalized recommendation functions. On the other hand, the SOLOEL ARENA website for mid-tier and larger companies has features that include approval workflows and volume discounts, which aim to

streamline purchasing operations and reduce costs through bulk purchasing management.

The integration of the two sites will increase convenience for customers and enable the Company to operate the site more efficiently. The site's search results and recommendations are generated based on various data, so we believe that centralizing the data that was previously dispersed across two sites will lead to improvements in search accuracy and the ability to propose products that meet customer needs.

We had some issues with the investment amount exceeding our initial plan and delays in the schedule for the migration of customers to the New ASKUL Website. We believe that once we have combined the two sites to complete the new B-to-B site for purchasing indirect materials, which will generate sales of over ¥300 billion, it will greatly improve customer convenience and have great potential for future business expansion. We will make every effort to see the project through to its completion.

Looking at the current business environment, I believe that labor shortages in companies will become even more apparent in the future. The number of people going into the office and opportunities to do so are decreasing. This trend, combined with ever-changing workstyles, is sure to lead to a fall in demand for traditional office supplies in the medium term. In addition, we expect to see a further increase in the need for greater efficiency in indirect materials purchasing operations at larger companies. We foresee a shift toward purchasing platforms that allow customers who have been using multiple suppliers to complete their purchases on a single site and anticipate that this trend will spread from larger companies to mid-tier companies.

#### **COO Message**

The Company will work to capture changing customer needs and reflect them in its business activities.

In the fiscal year ended May 20, 2023, we launched Bizraku, a service that offers end-to-end support for promoting digital transformation (DX) at small and medium-sized enterprises. However, in reality, it is difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises to take on the cost of introducing digital tools. Because there are different representatives in charge of purchasing indirect materials and introducing digital tools, it takes time to reach the person who can make decisions on the introduction of digital tools, which means that they are not able to turn a profit as quickly as we would like. We are currently in the process of devising a new approach in collaboration with our agents, who are also one of our business strengths.

- The Company is currently undergoing organizational reform, which includes the establishment of the EC Business Unit in March 2023 and the announcement of its merchandising-focused DX initiative in the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024. Please tell us about any results that have emerged so far and what you plan to achieve in the future.
- A With regard to organizational integration, the EC Business Unit and the Merchandising Unit have eliminated the barriers between the B-to-B and B-to-C businesses. In the past, there were periods when they were managed by different companies or different business units, but there were many similar

processes that were being managed twice over, such as product selection and marketing, so we reviewed the allocation of resources.

We have received positive feedback from our suppliers, who have found that having a single point of contact for products and sales promotion has made processes much more efficient. Originally, the B-to-B Business was mainly a

catalog business, for which we had our own unique know-how, but e-commerce is evolving at a very fast pace, so it is very important to apply the web marketing knowledge we have gained through LOHACO to the B-to-B Business as well.

One of our major policies for the fiscal year ending May 20, 2025 is to make the value creation process algorithmic through a data-driven approach. We will rebuild all processes

# Increasing the Accuracy of Our Measures and Raising Our Growth Rate through Data-Driven Approaches

#### **Strengthening Product Development Capabilities**

Improving the profitability of mainstay products and enhancing product lineups and original products

- Launched marketing lab in the ASKUL Business and enhanced product lineups through data use in collaboration with suppliers
- Enhanced original products through the establishment of a dedicated product development division

Contributing to Net Sales Growth from the Fiscal Year Ending May 20, 2026

#### **Merchandising-focused DX**

- Improve the speed of tasks related to product adoption and pricing decisions through data-driven decision-making
- In the fiscal year ending May 20, 2025, we will conduct analysis, development, and testing to implement measures.

#### **UI and UX**

Review customer acquisition methods and measures to improve retention rates

• We will strengthen our methods for targeting potential customers who are likely to become regular users by utilizing data and implementing measures to retain customers after they have registered.



#### Improve accuracy of sales promotions

By automating exposure to our enhanced product lineups and bargain items and optimizing our recommendation engine, we can create a virtual storefront that suggests items that customers want.



#### Evolve into a site that is easy to search

• We will make the site easier to browse and more convenient to buy from by combining search algorithm optimization with functional improvements based on customer feedback.

#### **COO Message**

in the value chain, including product selection, pricing, pointof-sale development, sales promotion, sales, and logistics, in a data-driven manner.

The area where there is still the most room for reform is merchandising. Since the Company was founded, the merchandising coordinators in each category have overseen almost all aspects of operations, including product selection, pricing, catalog production, and sales promotion planning. However, with the number of items now exceeding 14 million, the complexity of these tasks has increased, and it has become extremely difficult to manage all aspects manually. Based on the idea that "data never lies," we will promote data-driven DX in each of our merchandising processes to create even more value. We have established a dedicated product development team in order to utilize the resources generated through DX and focus on strengthening our product development capabilities.

#### **Q** What strategies are necessary in securing digitally literate personnel?

A Many companies around the world are finding it extremely difficult to recruit engineers and data analysts. Of course, it is important to hire digitally literate personnel, but first and foremost. I believe that it is crucial for ASKUL to continue to be a platform that appeals to such personnel.

Our businesses have established a value chain that covers everything from product planning to last-mile delivery, and we have an environment that allows us to make use of

vast amounts of big data. Engineers and data analysts often seek out new and interesting work, and I believe that being a company with the potential to create innovation in various processes of the value chain and provide value to customers will be extremely effective in terms of securing and nurturing human resources.

Going forward, I think that the use of data will become important in our human resource strategy. By creating a database of information about what roles employees have held in their previous jobs and what skills they have, we will be able to ensure that the right people are assigned to the right jobs and that they receive appropriate training.

**Q** With an eye toward the next medium-term management plan, what are your thoughts on **ASKUL's medium-term growth going forward?** 

A I believe that ASKUL's greatest asset is its customer base. Having started out as an office supplies mail-order company, our customers range from small and medium-sized enterprises to major corporations, and we have a strong presence in a wide range of industries.

For me, the key words to bear in mind when building a business model that can make the most of this asset are "openness," "integration," and "alliance."

Since our founding, we have pursued social optimization and functionalism. Social optimization involves reviewing the multitiered distribution structure of manufacturers, primary wholesalers, secondary wholesalers, retailers, and customers

and shortening and smoothing out the flow of the value chain. Functionalism involves dividing up tasks between players who excel in their respective functions, such as manufacturers for products, ASKUL for point of sale and logistics, and agents for sales and credit.

That said, it is essential that we change our way of thinking and ensure that our organizations, functions, and employees can respond flexibly to change in order to achieve breakthrough innovation.

As for my vision for the future of ASKUL, I would like to become a one-of-a-kind company that continues to solve all of our customers' problems in 2050. To this end, we will aim to achieve a transition to a new business model that includes M&As while leveraging our existing assets.

I believe that there is a great deal of latent energy at ASKUL. At our core, we have a strong desire to evolve for the benefit of our customers. Although we have yet to see this energy surface, I believe that if it can be awakened and mobilized under the vision and strategy of our next medium-term management plan, it will be unleashed with tremendous force.

> Katsuhiro Kawamura Director, COO

## Awareness of the External Environment and Handling of Resource Shortages and Other Prominent Issues

## Promoting Awareness of the External Environment That Surrounds ASKUL, Identifying Issues and Opportunities, and Determining Actions to Be Taken

By positioning significant changes in the Company and external environment as risks and opportunities and by identifying resource shortages and other issues in the Company and viewing them as future opportunities, we are taking various actions to implement strategic measures geared toward enhancing our corporate value over the medium to long term.

Key Aspects of the External Environment				ASKUL's Issues and Opportunities	Actions / Relevant Pages		
1	Falling birthrate and aging population	<ul> <li>Labor shortages due to ongoing decline in working-age population</li> <li>Aging and diversifying workforce</li> </ul>	•	<ul> <li>Reducing logistics burden, improving efficiency, and maintaining and improving service levels</li> <li>Providing new services and advancements through co-creation with customers and suppliers</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Improve logistics automation, labor saving, and digital transformation through use of technology</li> <li>Various procurement, sales, and distribution measures</li> <li>P.39-55 ASKUL's Value Creation through DX</li> </ul>		
2	Accelerating growth of e-commerce and changes in workstyles	<ul> <li>Expansion of e-commerce services</li> <li>Faster digitalization of business processes</li> <li>Changes in attitudes toward different lifestyles and workstyles, work-life balance, etc.</li> </ul>	<b>)</b>	<ul> <li>Increasing customer experience expectations and responding quickly</li> <li>Developing IT personnel and establishing a flexible system to promote projects</li> <li>Utilizing customer feedback and data to co-create and resolve issues together with manufacturers</li> <li>Developing and expanding original products and services that adapt to changes in workstyles and lifestyles</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Maximize and integrate product and business expertise in both B-to-B and B-to-C businesses</li> <li>P.24-26 COO Message</li> <li>Engage in co-creation through the opening up of big data</li> <li>Strengthen original products through co-creation with manufacturers</li> <li>P.19-20</li> </ul>		
3	Advances in Al and technologies	<ul> <li>Increases in business productivity</li> <li>Stronger competition in terms of utilizing technology in business operations</li> <li>Need for new innovations</li> </ul>	<b>)</b>	<ul> <li>Promoting evolution of entire value chain by:         <ul> <li>Leveraging state-of-the-art technologies, including Al</li> <li>Developing proprietary technologies</li> <li>Utilizing large volumes of data</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Establish and utilize a big data platform</li> <li>P.39-55 ASKUL's Value Creation through DX</li> <li>Develop and reskill digitally literate personnel within the Company and at affiliates</li> <li>P.53 Development of Digitally Literate Personnel</li> </ul>		
4	Climate change and sustainability management	<ul> <li>Need to implement measures to combat climate change</li> <li>Shift to environment-friendly management</li> <li>Solutions for social issues</li> </ul>	•	<ul> <li>Achieving and implementing sustainability management that connects stakeholders and helps resolve social issues</li> <li>Spreading sustainability values, promoting movement, and driving behavioral change</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Performance of function as a sustainable hub and promotion and realization of ethical e-commerce</li> <li>P.64-67</li> </ul>		
5	Need to strengthen human capital	<ul> <li>Growing interest in human capital investment</li> <li>Need to secure, invest in, and develop human resources as source of competitive advantage and value creation</li> </ul>	•	<ul> <li>Developing human resources to strengthen sustainable corporate activities</li> <li>Innovating with proactive human resources</li> <li>Promoting diversity to allow individuals to demonstrate their abilities</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Strategy and initiatives for strengthening human capital</li> <li>1) Digitally literate personnel 2) Sustainability specialists</li> <li>3) Next generation of senior management</li> <li>P.73-77 CHO Message / Strengthening of Human Capital</li> </ul>		

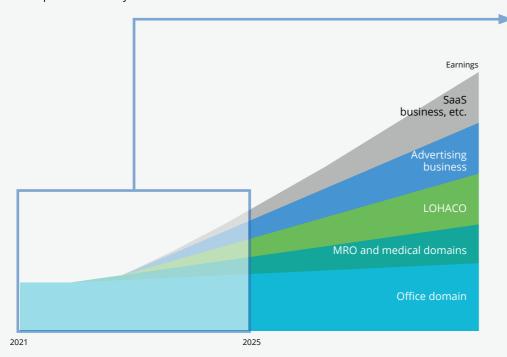
## Medium- to Long-Term Corporate Aims

#### Transformation from an Office Supplies Mail-Order Company

E-commerce has not yet been widely adopted in Japan. With the emergence of new workstyles and changes in lifestyles, the e-commerce business is a huge market that is expected to continue growing. ASKUL is leveraging its unique position as both a B-to-B player and B-to-C player in the e-commerce market to pursue strong growth.

In the B-to-B Business, we are leveraging our customer base, a strength, and big data to expand in the maintenance, repair, and operations (MRO) and medical domains. Furthermore, ASKUL is keen to expand operations beyond the domain of office supplies mail-order services by launching its advertising business to provide new value to both customers and manufacturers, and the SaaS business to support DX at small and medium-sized enterprises. In the B-to-C Business, ASKUL aims to reignite growth after becoming profitable.

The ASKUL Group will carve out a position as an infrastructure company to support all workplaces and lifestyles.



#### **Medium-Term Management Plan** (Fiscal Year Ended May 20, 2022-Fiscal Year Ending May 20, 2025) Transformation from an office supplies mail-order company into an infrastructure company

#### **Basic Policies**

Sustainable management

that supports all workplaces and lifestyles

Maximize customer value

Transformation to a highly profitable model

#### **Key Strategies**

- **Strategic Areas and Expansion of Product Lineups**
- Establishment of the Most Powerful B-to-B **E-Commerce Website**
- 3 Synergies with Z Holdings (Currently LY Corporation)
- **Reform Platforms**

#### P.30

P.29

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#### **Management Indicators**

		FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025 (targets)	FY2025 (initial targets)
	Net sales (billions of yen)	422.1	428.5	446.7	471.6	500.0	550.0
Consolidated	Operating profit (billions of yen)	13.9	14.3	14.6	16.9	18.0	27.5
Consolidated	Operating profit margin (%)	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.6	5.0
	ROE (%)	14.0	15.9	16.2	26.9*	13.9	20.0
B-to-B non- consolidated basis	Net sales (billions of yen)	315.2	317.2	336.7	353.3	374.9	413.5
LOHACO	Net sales (billions of yen)	52.8	54.3	46.1	36.1	37.8	74.3

<sup>\*</sup> One-off figure due to extraordinary profit from litigation related to the ASKUL Logi PARK Metropolitan fire

#### **Progress of the Medium-Term Management Plan**

Since the Medium-Term Management Plan began in the fiscal year ended May 20, 2022, both net sales and operating profit have been growing, and we will continue to steadily implement its measures in the fiscal year ending May 20, 2025.

Initial plans were difficult to achieve due to factors such as an increase in depreciation costs associated with the increased investment in the New ASKUL Website, failure to

achieve the projected benefits of the opening of the SOLOEL ARENA website, low utilization of new products due to an overemphasis on product expansion, failure to reach the sales plan for LOHACO due to prioritizing profitability, and the impact of increased fixed costs due to the launch of the ASKUL Kanto Distribution Center. That said, the high targets we set have accelerated the pace of growth.

# Key Strategies 1 Strategic Areas and Expansion of **Product Lineups**

#### Strategic Reinforcement of Two Major Areas B-to-B Business

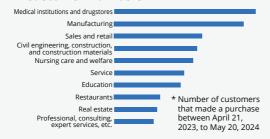
Looking ahead, we will position the manufacturing and medical institute/nursing care facility industries, which are closely related to the MRO and medical domains that are expected to grow significantly, as our two major strategic industries, and we will broaden the range of products needed in each of these industries to acquire new customers and encourage shopping around.

#### E-commerce Market Growth Potential



\* ASKUL's estimates are based on information from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's "Statistics of Production by Pharmaceutical Industry" and the Statistics Table of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's "Census of Manufacture (Report by Commodity)"

#### Top 10 Sectors for B-to-B Business **Customer Numbers\***



#### Expansion of Product Lineups B-to-B Business

ASKUL will maximize customer value by expanding its product lineups, centering on products for the two major strategic sectors, and expanding the inventory of products available for same-day or next-day delivery along with ASKUL's most frequently purchased original products.

#### Products handled

Widely expand with a focus on products for strategic sectors

14.08 million items (as of end of FY2024)

#### Products in stock

Expand products available for next-day delivery

Grow to **258,000** items (as of end of FY2024)

## **ASKUL** original products

Better prices and quality, expand environment-friendly products

(as of end of FY2024)

#### Purchasing frequency

High

#### **Assessment of Progress**

**Achievements** 

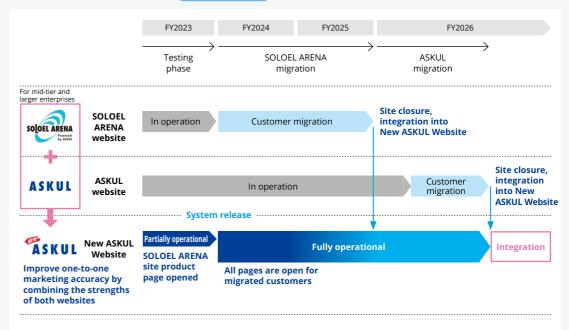
- Expanded product lineups as planned
- Increased proportion of net sales from original products from 34.2% in FY2020 to 38.1% in FY2024

Measures to be taken

- Increase utilization rate of products launched
- Increase work speed with merchandising-focused DX

## Key Strategies 2 Establishment of the Most Powerful B-to-B F-Commerce Website

#### New ASKUL Website B-to-B Business



#### **Progress of the New ASKUL Website**

We have extended the completion date for the migration of customers of the SOLOEL ARENA site, a website for medium- and large-sized enterprises, to the new website to May 20, 2025, and we are steadily working to support current users of SOLOEL ARENA first and foremost.

The migration of customers from the ASKUL site, a website for sole proprietors and small- and mediumsized enterprises, to the new website is scheduled to take place after the migration of customers from the SOLOEL ARENA is completed.

#### **Assessment of Progress**



## Key Strategies 3 Synergies with Z Holdings (Currently LY Corporation)

#### LOHACO "Makes Life More Comfortable and Enjoyable"

With LOHACO, we aim to "make life more comfortable and enjoyable" through shopping for daily goods. With an abundant product lineup specializing in daily goods, we can deliver a diverse range of products at designated times as quickly as the next day. We offer customers a fun shopping experience for daily goods that only LOHACO can provide, such as LOHACO-exclusive products created in collaboration with manufacturers, and the outlet corner with great deals on products.



#### LOHACO Turns Profit for Second Consecutive Fiscal Year LOHACO

In the fiscal year ended May 20, 2023, LOHACO achieved profitability for the full fiscal year for the first time since its launch. The service achieved both of its goals for the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024: to continue to be profitable for the second consecutive full year and to achieve renewed sales growth.

We will continue to pursue sustained growth for LOHACO by expanding its lineup of lifestyle goods and daily necessities, strengthening its lineup of original products, improving and evolving its UI/UX, and collaborating with LY Corporation on sales promotion.



#### **Assessment of Progress**

**Achievements** 

- LOHACO turned a full-year profit in both FY2023 and FY2024
- Supported tech personnel in the launch of the New ASKUL Website

Measures to be taken

Ramp up collaboration with LY Corporation in marketing and DX domains

## Key Strategies 4 Reform Platforms

#### Distribution Center Structural Reform

To resolve the structural issue of the increasing inventory storage space at our distribution centers brought about by the expansion of our product lineups, we have been working to maximize shipping capacities at our distribution centers by utilizing nearby external warehouses.

As a next step, we have enhanced the facilities at ASKUL Value Center Kansai, our largest logistics center and the core center in the western Japan area, in order to increase storage capacity in line with the Medium-Term Management Plan's target of 330,000 items by May 20, 2025. The new facilities have been in operation since December 2023.

In addition, the introduction of PopPick, a new GTP\* solution facility, has greatly increased storage efficiency, enabling an increase in the number of items in stock of around 190,000, and has established a hybrid-type distribution center that can handle both fast-moving mainstay products and long-tail products.

## Improvement of Delivery Efficiency by Combining the Logistical Operations of Our B-to-B and B-to-C Businesses

We are making deliveries more efficient by promoting mixed deliveries of B-to-B and B-to-C parcels through two main initiatives.

The first is the provision of our in-house delivery management system "Torakkuru" to our delivery partners, which has increased the number of partners who are able to accommodate B-to-C delivery needs.

Secondly, LOHACO has set unattended delivery as the standard delivery method, giving rise to an increase in the number of orders with no designated delivery time. As a result, delivery partners who were only in charge of B-to-B deliveries have had more opportunities to handle B-to-C parcels, which has improved overall delivery efficiency.

#### **Assessment of Progress**

Achievements	<ul> <li>Increased shipping and storage capacity through the introduction of the latest logistics equipment</li> <li>Improved delivery efficiency through measures such as combining B-to-B and B-to-C business operations</li> <li>Maintained stable operations of the ASKUL Tokyo Distribution Center</li> </ul>
Measures to be taken	Successfully launch the ASKUL Kanto Distribution Center and establish mother centers in both eastern and western Japan.

<sup>\*</sup> Goods-to-person: Refers to robots that transfer goods directly to the location where the workers in charge of picking them are located.

#### 4 Reform Platforms

## Logistics Platform That Enables Same-Day and Next-Day Deliveries

To enable same-day and next-day deliveries to customers across Japan, the ASKUL Group operates 10 distribution centers\* nationwide. Roughly 70% of parcels are delivered through the Company's own distribution management system.

In addition to utilizing external warehouses and building a digital network between distribution centers, ASKUL operates a procurement system that prevents shortages of items as much as possible by sharing inventory data among distribution centers and flexibly stocking up inventories by using external warehouses close to its distribution centers. Furthermore, in order to deliver products in just one box as much as possible, the Company has created a system that automatically changes the distribution centers from which products are shipped out depending on the state of inventories.

\* The ASKUL Kanto DC is not included in the 10 distribution centers because it is scheduled to begin operations at the start of the fiscal year ending May 20, 2026.









## **ASKUL Kanto DC**



Operations planned to begin at the start of the fiscal year ending May 20, 2026

# **Demand Chain Management** (DCM) Center



**ASKUL Tokyo Distribution** 

November 2022

#### **Distribution Centers**

- Only B-to-B Business
- B-to-B and B-to-C businesses
- Only B-to-C Business
- Pre-handling and third-party logistics business
- Same-day delivery area
  Next-day delivery area

Note: Certain ASKUL distribution centers included in this report use the following abbreviations. Demand Management Center: DMC; ASKUL Logi PARK: ALP; ASKUL Tokyo Distribution Center: ASKUL Tokyo DC; ASKUL Value Center: AVC; Demand Chain Management: DCM; and ASKUL Kanto Distribution Center: ASKUL Kanto DC

· Date each center began operations



· December 2015

Center (DMC)

• September 2006



Nagoya Center

• September 2004

May 2016

**ASKUL Logi PARK Yokohama** 

## **TOPIC**

## Building a Logistics System That Supports Long-Tail Products

#### Medium-Term Distribution Center Strategy: WDC/LDC Concept

Up until now, we have established distribution centers primarily to support sales growth, but the new widearea distribution center (WDC) and local-area distribution center (LDC) concept is a strategy that emphasizes the optimization of overall distribution.

By establishing two mother centers in eastern and western Japan that handle both same-day delivery of frequency-ordered products (LDC) and next-day delivery of long-tail products (WDC) and reorganizing existing distribution centers at the same time, we will be able to deliver products from distribution centers in a single box to meet customer orders. Since transportation and delivery distances will also be shortened, delivery efficiency will improve.

In addition, by closing the LOHACO-only center and merging it with the B-to-B distribution center, we will be able to share inventory and respond to increases in product volume with the aim of improving distribution quality and structurally reducing costs.

## Sendai DMC **DCM Center AVC Hidaka ASKUL Tokyo DC ALP Yokohama** Note: Long-tail products are shipped from AVC Kansai Western Japan Nagoya Center Osaka DMC

Current



**AVC Kansai** 

**ALP Fukuoka** 





WDC: Shipments for ASKUL, including long-tail products, and LOHACO

#### Establishment of the ASKUL Kanto DC

The ASKUL Kanto DC is positioned as our eastern Japan mother center, playing an important role in our medium-term logistics

Through the consolidation of long-tail products at this center, we aim to reduce the delivery cost ratio by delivering a variety of products in a single box and increasing the unit price per box.

The center is in an excellent location that allows easy access to three expressways: the Ken-O Expressway, Tohoku Expressway, and Metropolitan Expressway, and covers the Kanto and Tohoku areas. By switching the shipment of long-tail products currently shipped from AVC Kansai to this center, we aim to shorten

New distribution center for both B-to-B and B-to-C ASKUL Kanto DC

Existing distribution centers

delivery distances to customers in eastern lapan and achieve a next-day delivery service for long-tail products. After the ASKUL Kanto DC begins operations, we plan to reorganize the functions of existing distribution centers in the Kanto region.

**ASKUL Kanto Distribution Center** Name

Ageo City, Saitama Prefecture Address

Start of Lease June 2024

Area of lease

Start of operations June 2025 (plan)

Capital investment ¥18.0 billion (plan)

(¥15.0 billion for material handling, ¥2.0 billion for construction, and

¥1.0 billion for systems)

Approx. 90,000 m<sup>2</sup>

Note: The ASKUL Kanto DC has the same shipping capacity as AVC Kansai, ASKUL's largest facility.

Structure Seismic isolation structure, 5 stories

above ground



#### **Advantages of the Location**

- Close to the Ken-O Expressway, Tohoku Expressway, and Metropolitan Expressway, making it easy to access all of eastern Japan
- ■There are residential areas and large-scale commercial facilities in the surrounding area and commuting by train or bus is easy, which makes it easier to secure human resources.



#### **Solidification of the Support of Our Customers** While Adapting to Changes in the Business **Environment**

ASKUL's Value Creation through DX

Against the backdrop of Japan's shift to inflation following nearly 30 years of deflation, the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024 was a year of major change for the Company. Under deflation, we grew by focusing on reducing delivery costs through the improvement of logistics efficiency and by increasing our price competitiveness through the expansion of our lineup of original products. In an inflationary environment, however, logistics efficiency and cost reductions alone will not be enough. While operating in a more streamlined manner, we need to accentuate ASKUL's unique characteristics to differentiate ourselves from our competitors.

For example, while next-day delivery has now become commonplace, we have been focusing on further improving the quality of our services. If a product is sold out, damaged, or its delivery is delayed, then we have broken our promise to our customers. By thoroughly implementing measures to ensure this doesn't happen over the past three years, we have seen significant improvements to the quality of our services.

In addition, we have been challenging ourselves to create entirely new things by firmly addressing the needs of our customers and changing our ways of thinking. An example of this is the highly transparent masking tape for posting notices that went on sale in 2023. This original product was developed with non-standard use in mind, as we noticed that many customers buy masking tape for the purpose of putting up notices, even though most of the tape on the market is available in highly conspicuous colors such as brown and green. Revealing a previously unrecognized need, the product was featured by numerous media outlets, resulting in high sales. This initiative won the grand prize in the ASKUL WAY AWARD, an award system that promotes in-house innovation.

Currently, original products account for around 40% of total net sales in the B-to-B Business. Since our original products are highly profitable, we will further solidify support from customers by using purchase data to enhance our development capabilities.

#### **Progress of the Medium-Term Management Plan**

#### Significance of Announcing the Medium-Term Management **Plan and Setting Performance Targets**

In the fiscal year ended May 20, 2022, we announced our first Medium-Term Management Plan, with the fiscal year ending May 20, 2025 as the final year. In the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024, we posted record-high net sales and operating profit. Operating profit achieved double-digit growth as planned, due in part to increased logistics efficiency as a result of raising the threshold for free shipping, and LOHACO posted a profit for the second consecutive fiscal year.

One of the benefits of announcing the Medium-Term Management Plan is that it has enabled us to make management decisions from a long-term perspective. The decision to raise the threshold for free shipping is a prime example of this. By raising the threshold, we have encouraged customers to buy in bulk, which has led to an increase in the unit price per box and a reduction in distribution costs. This allows us not only to absorb costs but also address the shortage of personnel in the logistics industry due to Japan's declining birthrate and aging population. We believe it is an important measure for providing sustainable services to our customers. We were able to make this decision because we set our sights on achieving higher profitability while ensuring business continuity over the medium to long term.

#### **CFO Message**

#### Reflections and Challenges

Unfortunately, we expect to fall short of the ¥550.0 billion in net sales and 5.0% operating profit margin we set as final-year performance targets in the Medium-Term Management Plan. In addition, we are only halfway—or less than halfway, if I were to be strict—through our transformation from an office supplies mail-order company, the main theme of the Medium-Term Management Plan.

There are two main reasons why we failed to meet these targets. The first is an increase in fixed costs and the second is our failure to achieve sales growth in our mainstay B-to-B Business.

The rise in fixed costs is mainly due to higher depreciation costs associated with the increase in investment in the New ASKUL Website and the costs related to the ASKUL Kanto DC, which is scheduled to begin operations at the start of the fiscal year ending May 20, 2026. However, the ASKUL Kanto DC is an investment made as part of our structural reform of logistics and differs in nature from the construction of new centers to accommodate increased logistics volume, as has been the case in the past. The new facility will allow us to consolidate existing logistics centers, and we expect to fully recover the investment amount through reductions in land rent and improvements in delivery efficiency, without having to rely on increased sales. Although this represents an increase in expenses in the final year of the Medium-Term Management Plan, we have made the decision to invest in building a more robust logistics system over the next five to 10 years.

As for the New ASKUL Website, the migration of SOLOEL ARENA customers to the new website, which is currently in progress, is scheduled to be completed during the fiscal year ending May 20, 2025. We will work to steadily integrate our two e-commerce sites: our ASKUL site for small and medium-sized enterprises and our SOLOEL ARENA site for mid-tier and larger enterprises. By integrating the big data held by the two sites, we will realize finely tuned, personalized customer service based on a larger pool of big data to accelerate our growth.

Meanwhile, we must reflect deeply on the abovementioned failure to meet our B-to-B net sales target. We introduced new products to the market based on the policy of strengthening the two major strategic industries of manufacturing and medical institutions/nursing care facilities, which is one of the key strategies set out in the Medium-Term Management Plan, but this led to the launch of products that were not in line with customer needs, and as a result, the products were underutilized. We consider this to be the result of being too focused on our KPI of increasing the number of products that we handle.

I believe that the reason for this lies in being unable to break away from our successes to date. When we were growing as an office supply company, we would launch a large number of products, create a purchasing website, and carry out generic sales promotions, and this would lead to sales growth. However, the highly specialized long-tail products that we are focusing on are different from the office supplies we have dealt with in the past in that we need to respond to the specific needs of each customer's industry and business scale, and we are keenly aware that we have not been communicating well with our customers or digging deep enough into their needs in this regard. By effectively utilizing the big data that we have accumulated through our office mailorder business and our unparalleled customer base, which is an asset that no other company has, we will strengthen our efforts to meticulously meet the needs of our customers.

We will continue to move forward with initiatives like these in the final year of the Medium-Term Management Plan without becoming complacent.

#### **Our Financial Strategy for Achieving ROE of 20%**

ASKUL's financial structure is extremely simple and robust. ROE has remained at around 15%, and if we look at the structure of the balance sheet behind this figure, with a total asset turnover ratio of just over 2.0 times and financial leverage of just over 3.0 times, it is at a healthy level. We are conscious of the need to achieve ROE of 20.0% as a target level of capital efficiency, but we believe that the most pressing issue is raising the level of net profit by increasing the profitability of our core business while maintaining the total asset turnover ratio and financial leverage levels.

ASKUL has grown thus far by focusing on the area of office supplies, which is difficult to make a profit from due to its low unit prices and the bulkiness of items sold. As we have been operating in the consumables area, where customers make frequent purchases, we have a strong business foundation in terms of customer contact points. Our profitability will increase as customers choose to add one or two more of our long-tail products, which are highly profitable and have a high unit price, to their purchases of conventional consumables. In addition, we aim to achieve ROE of 20.0% by expanding our highly profitable business model to our existing businesses. This will include providing services other than the sale of goods that make use of our longcultivated customer base, thereby increasing our profit margin.

#### **CFO Message**

#### **Disciplined Growth Investment**

The current Medium-Term Management Plan was created based on the incremental growth of existing businesses, but the next management plan will be formulated with an eye on medium- to long-term changes in the business environment and growth strategies. This approach led to the emergence of our ¥100 billion investment plan.

Investing this amount of money is a major undertaking for the Company. I would like to emphasize that the purpose of this investment is not just to increase the amount of money we invest but also to demonstrate our commitment to making bold investments in growth and encourage business innovation by welcoming new ideas that go beyond the conventional thinking within the Company.

The plan is to invest around ¥100 billion over the next four years to achieve growth. The main sources of funding will be cash flows from operating activities of over ¥20 billion per year and cash and deposits.

We will review the level of cash on hand and deposits that we have traditionally set and use the surplus funds as investment capital, with the aim of having the equivalent of one to one and a half months' worth of sales on hand.

In addition, although the current debt-equity ratio is around 0.4 to 0.5 times, we believe that it is acceptable to increase it to around 1.0 times while maintaining financial soundness and security, and we also have the capacity to raise funds through borrowing and other means, so we plan to secure a total of around ¥100 billion in funds.

In an economic environment in which interest rates are expected to rise, it is necessary to carefully assess the return on investment. As a concrete investment decision-making standard, we will set a discount rate based on the weighted average cost of capital and consider whether or not we can expect profitability to exceed that rate. Under such fixed investment standards, we will actively invest in measures to evolve in a nonlinear manner, in addition to strengthening our existing E-Commerce Business.

#### Investment in the Seeds of **Medium- to Long-Term Growth**

We consider investment in promoting digital transformation in the value chain of our e-commerce business to be of the utmost importance for improving productivity and enhancing our services. Investing in human resources is also essential. While ramping up our recruitment of highly skilled IT personnel, we will also enhance our reskilling programs for employees to improve their data utilization skills.

In addition, we will achieve nonlinear growth by going beyond the sale of goods to invest in service businesses. In addition to companies that handle specialized goods for B-to-B sales, such as ASKUL Group members FEED Corporation, which handles dental products, and AlphaPurchase Co., Ltd., which handles indirect materials for the manufacturing industry, we are also focusing on companies that provide B-to-B services that are not related to the sale of goods as part of our efforts to expand into new domains. By having companies that have joined the Group utilize our customer base, which is one of our strengths, and growing business together, we will achieve profit growth on a consolidated basis.

We also plan to strengthen the Bizraku services we are currently offering in order to achieve nonlinear growth. At present, we are selling tools that support the digitalization of back-office operations for small and medium-sized enterprises. However, as this is an SaaS agency model, to strengthen our services and improve profitability we will also consider the option of making companies that provide digital tools into Group companies in the future.

We will invest in nonlinear growth and aim to have new businesses and service businesses account for 10% to 20% of total revenues in 10 to 20 years.

#### **Building of Relationships of Trust through Dialogue with Investors**

Engaging in dialogue with our shareholders and investors is extremely important in helping them to understand our growth strategy. We believe that it is important to build relationships of trust by not only explaining figures but also clearly communicating our long-term vision and strategies. In the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024, we held a dialogue between outside directors and shareholders and investors for the first time. We would like to continue to expand on these initiatives in the future and create more diverse channels for discussion.

The feedback we receive from our shareholders and investors through our investor relations activities is also used in the formulation and review of our management strategies. We believe it is important to continue to attract the interest of as many investors as possible and to continue to meet their expectations. To this end, we will strive to achieve sustainable growth and improve our corporate value and disclose and explain our results in an appropriate manner.

We are keenly aware that we need to accelerate the pace of change going forward. While building on the robust business model we have established to date, we will accelerate our efforts to enter new areas, including expanding our lineup of long-tail products, developing service businesses, and creating Group synergies by more actively pursuing M&As. We will achieve sustainable growth by communicating the need for these changes both internally and externally and implementing them with a sense of urgency.

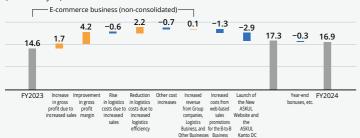
> Tsuguhiro Tamai Director, CFO

## Financial Results for the Fiscal Year Ended May 20, 2024 and Plan for the Fiscal Year Ending May 20, 2025

#### Financial Results for the Fiscal Year Ended May 20, 2024

Having successfully changed the trajectory of the B-to-B Business's sales growth curve in the fiscal year ended May 20, 2023, our biggest goal for the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024 was to change the trajectory of the B-to-B Business's profit growth curve.

## Factors Behind Changes in Operating Profit for the Fiscal Year Ended May 20, 2024

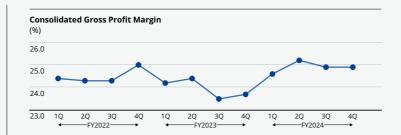


#### Net Sales Revised Downward in Third Quarter, **Exceed Revised Plan**

In our initial plan for the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024, we set out to achieve a sales growth rate of 7.9% through the opening up of the SOLOEL ARENA website, the further strengthening of online sales promotions, and the consolidation of FEED Corporation, a subsidiary of AP67 Co. Ltd., which joined the group in February 2023.

However, we revised our full-year consolidated sales forecast downward by ¥12.0 billion, from ¥482.0 billion to ¥470.0 billion, as of the third quarter based on our judgment that sales would not reach the planned level due to factors such as the failure to achieve the intended effects of opening up the SOLOEL ARENA website, the reactionary fall in demand following the greater-than-expected surge in demand for COVID-19-related products, longer holidays during the Obon\* and New Year periods, and the low utilization of newly introduced long-tail products.

In the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024, we posted consolidated net sales of ¥471.6 billion, a 5.6% increase from the previous year and slightly exceeding the revised plan.



#### **Gross Profit Margin Improves Significantly Year on Year**

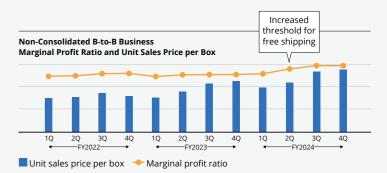
In the fiscal year ended May 20, 2023, the gross profit margin fell due to the yen's depreciation and the soaring cost of raw materials, which led to a decline in the gross profit margin for our mainstay copy paper. In the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024, we were able to maintain a favorable foreign exchange position throughout the year, and the gross profit margin for copy paper continued to improve throughout the year compared with the last fiscal year.

In addition, as a result of our flexible price revisions for a wide range of products, the gross profit margin in the B-to-B Business improved by 1.0 percentage point year-on-year, as planned, and the consolidated gross profit margin improved by 0.9 percentage point.

#### Improving the Marginal Profit Ratio to Change the **Curve of Our Profit Growth Trajectory**

In November 2023, we raised the threshold for free shipping from ¥1,000 to ¥2,000. The increase in demand for home delivery services due to the proliferation of e-commerce and the resulting labor shortage in the logistics industry have led to the emergence of the "2024 issue." The revision of the threshold for free shipping, which has encouraged customers to buy in bulk, has led to a reduction in the number of boxes used for deliveries, thereby reducing the burden on the environment and logistics. In addition, the increase in the sales unit price per box has led to a reduction in the variable cost ratio, led by logistics costs, and an improvement in the marginal profit ratio.

As a result, operating profit was ¥16.9 billion, exceeding the initial plan of ¥16.5 billion, due to a significant improvement in the gross profit margin and an increase in the marginal profit ratio due to a



reduction in the variable cost ratio, achieving our biggest goal for the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024, which was to change the curve of our B-to-B Business growth trajectory.

#### Significant Increase in Net Profit Due to **Extraordinary Profit**

In addition, the Company recorded extraordinary profit of ¥11.8 billion following the finalization of a judgment on the lawsuit ruling related to a fire that occurred in 2017 at its distribution center ASKUL Logi PARK Metropolitan. As a result, profit attributable to owners of parent reached a record high of ¥19.1 billion, significantly higher than the ¥10.3 billion initially planned at the beginning of the period.

#### **Benefits of FEED Group Consolidation and Group Synergies**

In February 2023, the Company acquired FEED Corporation, which operates FEED Dental, a mail order website widely recognized by dentists nationwide, and other companies as subsidiaries. FEED Corporation's group sales were ¥12.6 billion for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024, and its highly specialized dental products are highly profitable, with an operating profit margin of more than 8%. ASKUL has already begun cross-selling products to FEED Corporation and has achieved a considerable scale. Going forward, we intend to accelerate the development of synergies between the ASKUL Group and the FEED Group by promoting measures to enhance corporate value by leveraging the strengths of each group.

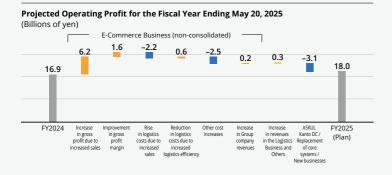
<sup>\*</sup> An annual Japanese holiday to commemorate and remember deceased ancestors.

#### Financial Results for the Fiscal Year Ended May 20, 2024 and Plan for the Fiscal Year Ending May 20, 2025

#### Plan for the Fiscal Year Ending May 20, 2025

In the fiscal year ending May 20, 2025, we will continue to make investments with a view to medium- to long-term growth. In addition to the ¥3.1 billion in expenses related to land rent and start-up costs for ASKUL Kanto DC, which is scheduled to begin operations at the beginning of the fiscal year ending May 20, 2026 as our core distribution center in eastern Japan; the replacement of core systems; and new businesses, we expect fixed costs to increase by ¥2.5 billion, including personnel costs associated with wage increases, the promotion of merchandising-focused DX, and higher utilities costs.

By accelerating sales growth and improving gross profit margin, we plan not only to absorb the increase in fixed costs but also to achieve further profit growth.



#### **Business Policies**

In the fiscal year ending May 20, 2025, we will focus on creating new value by maximizing our use of AI and other technologies and combining them with our big data.

In the ASKUL Business, we will increase the speed of execution of measures and raise the growth rate to approximately 6% by improving the accuracy of each measure through digitalization and data utilization while promoting the automation of business processes related to our two core measures, the enhancement of product appeal and the improvement of UI/UX.

In the LOHACO Business, we will continue to aim for around 5% growth by maintaining the momentum we have achieved in regrowth.

#### **Revision of Method for Disclosure for Business Segments**

Previously, both net sales and operating profit were disclosed down to subsegments, but starting from the fiscal year ending May 20, 2025, net sales will continue to be disclosed down to subsegments, while operating profit will be disclosed by segment.



The main reasons are that the products and logistics of the B-to-B and B-to-C businesses are becoming more integrated, business structures are becoming more unified, and, in terms of business management, fixed costs such as labor and amortization are managed as a whole in the EC Business. As such, we decided to revise our method for disclosure for business segments for investors in a way that is more in line with actual business conditions. After these revisions, LOHACO will continue to focus on profitable growth of the EC Business as a whole, aiming for sound growth as a major sales channel.



## **Incorporating Dialogues with Investors** into Our Shareholder Return Policy

#### **New Shareholder Return Policy**

We have set a total shareholder return target of 45% as our shareholder return policy. We have announced that we will secure a ¥100 billion growth investment fund as the main pillar of our capital allocation over the next four years, and we have also disclosed a numerical target for shareholder returns for the first time.

Although we recorded sizable extraordinary profit for the fiscal year ended May 20, 2024, net profit fluctuates greatly due to one-off gains and losses, so we cannot avoid the risk of reducing dividends if we base shareholder returns solely on the dividend payout ratio. We believe that achieving our total shareholder return ratio target by continuing to steadily increase dividends and systematically acquiring treasury stock in accordance with net profit is optimal for all stakeholders, and we will continue to promote shareholder returns under our new policy.

The basis for our new shareholder return policy is the suggestions we received from our dialogue with institutional investors. After much internal discussion, we decided to disclose our shareholder return policy based on the suggestion from one investor that the Company should disclose a policy for systematically acquiring treasury stock based on certain rules, as it is difficult for share prices to reflect the acquisition of treasury stock unless it is carried out systematically.

The Company will continue to place importance on dialogue with shareholders and institutional investors and reflect the suggestions received in its management.

#### Number of Meetings Held with Analysts and Investors in the Fiscal Year Ended May 20, 2024

Meeting body	Meetings held
Financial results briefings and Q&A sessions for analysts and institutional investors	4
Small meetings for analysts and institutional investors	12
Individual meetings for analysts and institutional investors	246
Visits to distribution centers for analysts and institutional investors	1
Individual meetings between independent outside directors and analysts/institutional investors	1

## Sharing Group Companies' Strengths and Creating Synergies

Under our basic policy of strengthening our Group strategy through federal management to solve social issues, we will continue to provide the highest value to our various stakeholders through the combined strengths of the Group by ensuring the freedom of management at each Group company, as well as by sharing missions and building a governance structure to solve issues.

In addition, we will share many of our strengths, including our customer base, and develop a growth strategy that is consistent with these strengths in order to achieve nonlinear growth. This will create various synergies and enhance the competitiveness of the entire Group. In addition, we will promote entry into business areas other than sales of goods in order to become an infrastructure company that supports all workplaces and lifestyles, rather than being limited to existing business areas.

the development of services other than the sale of goods

#### **Expansion of Product Lineups**

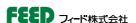
Offering a wide range of products other than office supplies

**Dental supplies sales** 

**MRO** supplies sales

Pet supplies sales

**Production of mineral water** 







#### **Logistics Infrastructure**

Distribution center warehouse operations and small-lot delivery operations

ASKUL Logist

#### **Customer Contact Points**

New customer acquisition and support



Provision of purchasing solutions for large companies

