

Japanese Innovation Spaces Foster Global Breakthroughs

ORIENTAL GIKEN's visionary approach to architecture and innovation is reshaping global workspaces, empowering collaboration, creativity and discovery in industries from tech to science. *By Daniel de Bomford, Bernard Thompson and Paul Mannion*



Lab Furniture "DAHLIA"

When Einstein realized the Theory of Relativity, it wasn't in the seclusion of a stuffy laboratory. For years, in a patent office in Bern, he collaborated with his peers and formed the "Olympia Academy," where they discussed philosophy and physics. The "aha" moment of discovery was the culmination of a collaborative effort in which ideas and discussions were encouraged. According to Masayoshi Hayashi, the Creative Director, Designer, President, and CEO of ORIENTAL GIKEN, modern spaces are not conducive to creativity that creates these "aha" moments.

ORIENTAL GIKEN and its holding company, 600 Holdings, are creating spaces that encourage collaboration, foster creativity and contribute to the health and well-being of researchers and staff.



XiS Worksite

Each of the five businesses within the holding company is working tirelessly to create these moments of inspiration that spur humanity forward. The group focuses on three key pillars: place, organizational culture and talent. Hayashi explains, "When these three elements are aligned in a positive direction, it creates an environment

where people and companies feel empowered to take on new challenges and drive innovation."



EBINAXCITE

To establish this first pillar, Hayashi founded Planus Inc., an architectural company specializing in innovative architectural designs and dynamic working environments. Notable projects include a research center for Sumitomo Chemical Company. TECH HUB YOKOHAMA, which hosts a variety of earth-tech startups, is a prime example of its philosophy. The space is designed to be dynamic and engaging, breaking down the barriers that separate people with thoughtfully curated spaces and includes a café where residents can mingle. The company's approach is comprehensive, extending beyond architectural design to include operational and interior design services, as well as the selection and placement of furniture, demonstrated in its EBINAXCITE project.

Architecture is but a single pillar; organizational culture is essential to foster collaboration, and it is a space Japan has struggled with historically, where the primary focus is on functionality, leading to what Hayashi describes as almost "factory-like" workplaces. In the case of research facilities,

this often results in laboratories that prioritize efficiency over creativity. To foster human resource development, ORIENTAL GIKEN established XiS Worksite, an incubation center for tech startups that supports their research and collaboration. It approaches its mission by creating spaces, fostering culture by hosting events and seminars featuring high-profile Japanese speakers, and bridging the gap between startups and industry players.

Hayashi describes imagination as the "final frontier" for human innovation. The final pillar is developing talent, and AI and DX are driving that development by freeing up time and energy from menial and repetitive tasks. Where traditional labs can become cluttered, and researchers often bring in their personal equipment, which discourages sharing. The AI Lab Kiosk overcomes this barrier to collaboration by creating a vending machine-style system that automates inventory management and streamlines the process, reducing clutter and ensuring a more organized and collaborative environment. It also offers digital twinning services, creating a 360 virtual walk-through of facilities to optimize equipment and resource utilization.

The company is looking to break into international markets and began last year in Southeast Asia. Despite challenging global competitors from the US and Europe with established



"Innovation thrives in an environment without boundaries, both physically and mentally."

Masayoshi Hayashi, Creative Director, Designer, President & CEO, ORIENTAL GIKEN Inc.

presences, it is being sought out by clients who specifically seek Japanese quality and standards.



AI LAB KIOSK "GALAXY"

Hayashi has a vision to help people around the world recognize these "aha" moments and wants 600 Holdings to be the company that facilitates them. "Through our work, we hope to redefine innovation spaces and inspire more people to embrace creativity and collaboration in their industries," he says. Perhaps the next Theory of Relativity will be realized in one of the company's collaborative spaces.

for Discovery Moment

