

Nagaileben co., Ltd.

7447

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FISCO Ltd. Analyst

Noboru Terashima



FISCO Ltd.

<http://www.fisco.co.jp>

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Summary

In FY8/19 3Q, operating profit decreased 10.2% YoY, but this was due to special factors and was as expected

1. FY8/19 3Q results

Nagaileben co., Ltd. <7447> (hereafter, also “the Company”) is the leading manufacturer of medical gowns in Japan, with a domestic market share of over 60%. The Company boasts high profit margins and a solid financial condition. The Company has announced its FY8/19 3Q consolidated results, in which net sales decreased 4.2% year on year (YoY) to ¥12,916mn, operating profit declined 10.2% to ¥3,786mn, recurring profit decreased 10.1% to ¥3,839mn, and net profit attributable to the owners of the parent company dropped 10.1% to ¥2,649mn. Sales declined YoY because a renewal project for its mainstay healthcare wear was postponed further than expected. In costs, the gross profit margin declined 0.3 of a percentage point (PP) YoY due to special factors, including increases in depreciation expenses and real estate acquisition tax following the launch of the new plant. But on excluding these special factors, it can be said it improved YoY. Conversely, SG&A expenses increased 5.9% YoY because of temporary factors, mainly the abolition of the retirement benefit system for directors. As a result, operating profit declined by 10.2%, but this result was basically as expected. This is not considered to be a big cause for concern.

2. FY8/19 forecast

The forecasts for the FY8/19 full year consolidated results are for net sales to increase 2.7% YoY to ¥17,600mn, operating profit to decrease 0.4% to ¥5,242mn, recurring profit to decline 0.6% to ¥5,304mn, and net profit attributable to the owners of the parent company to fall 0.7% to ¥3,650mn. In 4Q, the Company aims to secure higher sales by capturing the projects postponed in 3Q, which is within expectations. Conversely, the Company projects a slight decrease in the gross profit margin due to higher depreciation expenses and real estate acquisition tax from construction of the new plant. In addition, ¥81mn was booked in 1H as a reward-for-retirement following the abolition of the retirement benefit system for directors, so operating profit is forecast to decrease marginally.

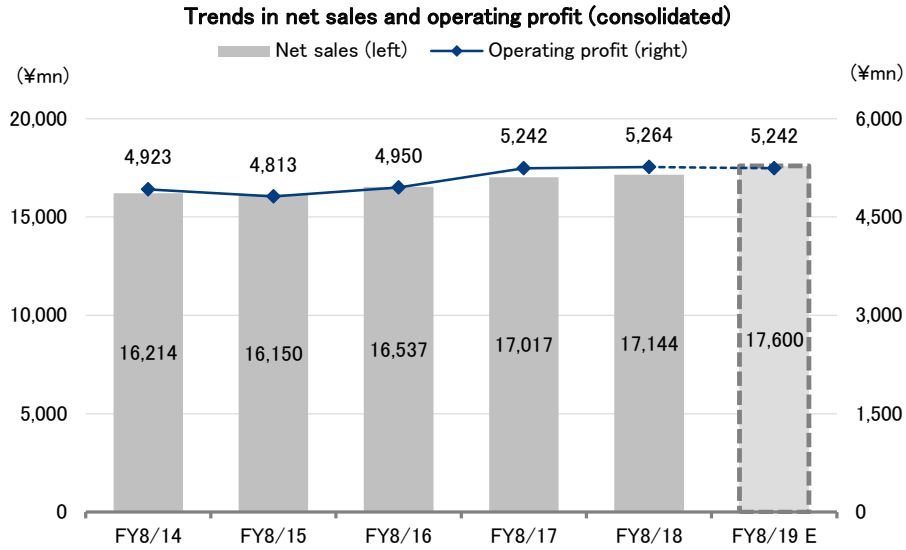
3. Mid-term Management Plan targets

Based on the results in the previous fiscal year (FY8/18), the Company announced that it had rolled over its plan up to that time and set new Mid-term Management Plan targets for FY8/21, of net sales of ¥18,600mn and operating profit of ¥5,600mn. It would seem to be aiming to achieve these targets through expanding overseas production and strengthening highly functional products that have significant profit margins. The Company is also actively returning profits to shareholders. It has pledged a dividend payout ratio of above 50% (on a non-consolidated basis) and in this fiscal year (FY8/19), it plans to pay an annual dividend of ¥60 per share. The Company has also declared it will flexibly buy back its own shares. Thus, the Company’s approach toward returning profits to shareholders seems worthy of praise.

Key Points

- Operating profit is forecast to decrease slightly in FY8/19, down 0.4% YoY, due to special factors
- Mid-term Management Plan target aims for operating profit of ¥5,600mn in FY8/21
- Annual dividend of ¥60 planned with proactive shareholder returns including share buybacks

Summary



Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's financial results

Company profile

Leading manufacturer of medical gowns with a domestic market share of over 60%

Nagaileben is a specialist manufacturer of medical gowns for nurses, doctors, patients and others. Established in 1915 as Nagai Shoten, the Company has a rich history. Since then, it has expanded its operations nationally to become a leading domestic manufacturer with a share of over 60% of the market for medical gowns for nurses.

Company profile

History

1915	Mitsuji Nagai started a privately owned business "Nagai Shoten" specializing in medical gowns in Kanda-Jinbocho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo
1950	Liquidated Tokyo Eisei Hakui Co. Ltd. Mitsuji Nagai and Tatsuro Sawanobori jointly established Nagai Shoten Co. Ltd.
1969	Established a subsidiary, Nagai Hakui Kogyo Co. Ltd., in Akita Prefecture to expand the medical gowns manufacturing division. Tatsuro Sawanobori was appointed President. Shifted focus of manufacturing and sales business specialization from multi-purpose white gowns to medical gowns.
1977	Built second product center in Kameido, Tokyo. Established a partnership with a US company, G.D. Searle & Company, and established Japan Surgical Apparel Co. Ltd. in Hiroshima to expand sales of new surgical apparel products for hospitals. Established technology partnerships with Angelica Corp (US) and Toray Industries, Inc. <3402>. Developed and released medical gowns made with a new fabric for leasing.
1979	Changed name to Nagai Co., Ltd.
1980	Opened a sales office in Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture. Concluded a license agreement with designer Kansai Yamamoto.
1982	Concluded a license agreement with designer Yukiko Hanai.
1988	Established Emit Co. Ltd. as a spin-off from Nagai Co. Ltd. Thereafter, the two companies exchanged their names, with Emit Co. Ltd. becoming a group management company, and Nagai Co. Ltd. becoming a group headquarters for sales.
1989	Newly built Nagai Luminous, a manufacturing plant for high-grade products, in Akita Prefecture. Started overseas production toward the global division of labor.
1994	Changed name from Nagai Co. Ltd. to Nagaileben Co. Ltd. Built a new logistics center in Akita Prefecture.
1995	Started over-the-counter trading of the Company's stock. Started development and sales of a second pillar product to respond to the aging of society. Vice President Ichiro Sawanobori appointed President.
1996	Concluded a license agreement with French designer Andre Courreges.
1999	Opened a sales office in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture. Concluded a license agreement with designer Atsuro Tayama.
2001	Listed on the Second Section of Tokyo Stock Exchange.
2002	Established a technology partnership with Standard Textile Company, Inc. (US) and Toray Industries, Inc. for surgical textiles. Raised the status of the Nagoya sales office to a branch.
2004	Acquired ISO 9001. Listed on the First Section of Tokyo Stock Exchange. Absorbed Hokkaido Nagai Co. Ltd. and established the Hokkaido branch.
2005	Acquired ISO 14001. Concluded a license agreement with designer Keita Maruyama.
2006	Concluded a brand agreement with designer Minako Yokomori.
2014	Relocated to a new head office building in Kajicho, Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo.
2015	Held ceremony to commemorate its 100th anniversary.
2016	Transitioned to a Company with Audit & Supervisory Committee
2017	Concluded a joint development agreement with Shiseido Company, Ltd. <4911>.
2018	Constructed a new sewing center in Daisen City, Akita Prefecture

Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's securities report

Business overview

Focusing on expanding sales of highly functional, high-value-added products

1. Sales breakdown

All of the Company's products are medical gowns and related products. The contribution to sales by item for FY8/18 is 58.2% from healthcare wear, 15.6% from doctors' wear, 2.9% from utility wear, 11.4% from patient wear, 9.6% from surgery wear, 1.1% from shoes, and 1.2% from other products. Healthcare wear consists mainly of products for nurses, and utility wear consists of aprons, cardigans, and other items worn as outer garments. Profit margins for each item do not vary significantly, but the profit margins of purchased products, such as shoes and other products, are relatively lower.

Business overview

In terms of each region's contribution to sales for FY8/18, eastern Japan accounts for 52.9%, western Japan 35.4%, central Japan 10.5%, and overseas 1.2%. While coverage is nationwide, sales in western Japan remain low, indicating the potential for future expansion including overseas.

The product (function) categories were changed from FY8/17. The Company's own brand of high-priced products, together with the products previously in the DC brand, became the "high-end products" category, and products that up to that time were called "highly functional products" have been redefined and categorized as "high-value-added products." The name of the "standard functional products" category was changed to "value-added products," while the "mass products" category has been left unchanged.

In the new categories, the composition of total net sales by product (FY8/18) is 7.4% from high-end products, 51.1% from high-value-added products, 36.5% from value-added products, and 5.0% from mass products. On looking at the approximate price-band classifications in nurse wear, mass products are ¥5,000 or less, value-added products are ¥5,000 to ¥7,500, high-value-added products are ¥7,500 to ¥10,000, and high-end products are ¥10,000 or more. The tendency is for higher prices to achieve greater profit margins, so the Company is focusing on expanding sales of high-end products and high-value-added products.

2. Sales channels and production status

The Company's end users include nurses and doctors, with the purchasers of the products mainly being medical facilities such as hospitals, nursing care facilities, and other such facilities. However, the Company does not conduct direct sales, with 100% of sales being agency sales via medical equipment wholesalers that sell to these medical and other facilities. As a result, sales expenses are kept down, but the Company is still able to understand customers' needs as the sales staff is constantly in contact with large hospitals and other facilities.

In the past, medical gowns were laundered in-house by the hospitals themselves in most cases, but in recent years, they have been switching to leasing alongside the spread in laundry outsourcing. The lease term is typically four years. Because this generates lease renewal demand every four years, it seems to stably support the Company's earnings. However, the lease renewal cycle does not necessarily occur in the same time period as the previous time and there are cases of it being slightly before or after, so sometimes a slight shifting occurs for the net sales (YoY) for each quarter.

Looking at the Company's production structure, based on FY8/18 performance, internal production and at partner plants constitute an aggregate of 98.6% (49.6% domestically and 49.0% overseas), with purchased products accounting for 1.4%. Overseas production takes place in Indonesia, Vietnam, and China, but the Company owns no plants and the goods are produced at the plants of its local partners, which mitigates investment risk and reduces costs.

3. Characteristics and strengths

The Company is a specialized manufacturer of medical gowns, and one of its strengths is that it has in place an integrated system to undertake every aspect of this business, from planning through to raw material procurement, manufacturing, and sales. In its product planning, it can accurately understand customer needs and reflect them in its products. Specifically, the Company sells products that are easy to work in while incorporating anti-static, antibacterial, and other functions, as well as featuring excellent designs, and they have earned excellent reputations among their users. At the same time, it deals directly with major synthetics manufacturers and textiles traders, including Toray Industries, Inc. <3402>, with which it is jointly developing materials, so it is able to secure optimal materials and products at low costs while selling them at appropriate margins.

Business overview

Furthermore, in addition to its large number of affiliated plants, the Company has the necessary financial resources to be able to constantly maintain product item inventories that extend into the thousands of varieties, while also being able to swiftly respond to a broad range of user needs, including for made-to-order products, through a rapid production and sales system (the quick response system) that delivers the desired product on the specified day. This has also helped in earning the strong trust of its customers. On the sales side, the Company has a network of close to 1,000 agents nationwide, and while its sales capabilities are robust, the Company itself keeps sales expenses as low as possible.

As a result, the Company's share of the domestic market for medical gowns for nurses exceeds 60%, and it maintains a firm position as the leading medical gown manufacturer in Japan. Additionally, it is maintaining profitability with a gross profit margin of 47.0% (actual results for FY8/18). The fact that it is both highly profitable and has a high market share demonstrates that most of its customers are satisfied with its products and services, which is the Company's greatest strength.

By concentrating its business resources in the niche market of medical gowns, the Company can efficiently manage every aspect of its business, from planning through to manufacturing and sales. Although it is a niche market, there remains room for further development, as the Company has relatively low shares of the peripheral markets for patient wear, surgery wear, and other items. The Company has explicitly stated that the medical gown business could grow for some time and that it will take active steps to develop the peripheral markets.

4. Company policy (initiatives for CSR/ESG)

The Company commemorated its centennial in 2015 by cultivating "Nagaism," the company spirit, which is focused on realizing interpersonal harmony, generating profits, and contributing to society. It has undertaken the following specific initiatives for CSR/ESG.

(1) Expanding women's roles: Supporting industries led by women

Many of the Company's products are for women working on the frontlines at hospitals and nursing care facilities, and its production facilities have many women involved in sewing work. The Company's business operations create many opportunities to expand the roles of women from a variety of life stages, which connects to supporting working women.

(2) Contributing to communities

a) Lending of historical gowns

Together with the changes to gowns, the Company lends gowns free of charge, such as to the events of medical facilities, with the objective of understanding the history of nurses.

b) Contributing to communities through production sites

The Company is creating employment and contributing to regional economies through its production operations in Akita Prefecture in Japan, and in China, Indonesia, Vietnam, and elsewhere overseas.

c) Medical kids project

This project started from the idea of deepening interaction between hospitals and local communities and enabling children to attend hospitals or undergo hospitalization with ease of mind. Child-sized medical gowns resembling those worn by doctors and nurses are lent to hospitals and a Miffy character makes hospital visits.

Business overview

(3) Contributing to customers
a) Opened the ITONA gallery, an oasis for nurses

The ITONA gallery, Japan's first communication space for nurses, was opened in 2015 to celebrate the centenary of foundation and as a gesture of gratitude to nurses, the Company's main end users.

b) Beauty courses for nurses

With the cooperation of Shiseido Japan Co., Ltd., the Company is providing practical courses, including learning about make-up and personal behavior that are suitable for nurses in medical settings.

(4) Social contribution
a) Promotion of the employment of disabled persons

Subsidiary Nagai hakui kogyo co., Ltd. was awarded by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare in September 2016 after being selected as a business in terms of contribution to the employment and promotion of people with disabilities.

b) Disaster support activities

Monetary donations, provision of medical gowns and presentation of wheelchairs and other items has been made through nursing associations or the Japanese Red Cross Society following the outbreak of SARS and natural disasters including the Indonesian earthquake, the Great Hanshin Earthquake, the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Kumamoto earthquakes.

(5) Environmental initiatives

The Company secured ISO 14001 certification in 2005. Cutting wastage from raw materials is reused for roofing processing and other purposes. The Company has also developed and sells COMPELPAK, a reusable product for use on surgical front lines. By converting to a reusable product instead of the disposable type that had been used until now, it enables medical waste to be reduced and contributes to solving environmental problems.

(6) Recent new measure: support for Planting of Cherry Blossom Trees for Restoration in Minamisanriku

For the "Forest of Life with an Ocean View" project, the Company is planting cherry blossom trees at sites hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami in cooperation with volunteers from Minamisanriku Town, Miyagi Prefecture, in the disaster area.

Results trends

In FY8/19 3Q, operating profit decreased 10.2% YoY, but this was due to special factors and was as expected

● Summary of FY8/19 3Q consolidated results
(1) Profit-and-loss conditions

For FY8/19 3Q consolidated results, the Company reported net sales of ¥12,916mn, down 4.2% YoY, operating profit of ¥3,786mn, down 10.2%, recurring profit of ¥3,839mn, down 10.1%, and net profit attributable to the owners of the parent company of ¥2,649, down 10.1%.

Results trends

Sales decreased overall, because renewal projects, particularly in the mainstay healthcare wear, were behind schedule. In costs, there were special factors, including an increase in depreciation expenses and the occurrence of real estate acquisition tax following the start of operations at the new plant. As a result, the gross profit margin decreased 0.3 of a PP YoY, but excluding these special factors, it improved compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year. On the other hand, SG&A expenses increased 5.9% due to temporary factors, including the abolition of the retirement allowance system for directors. As a result, operating profit decreased 10.2%, but this result was basically within the expected range and not a cause for concern.

Summary of FY8/19 Q3 consolidated results

(¥mn, %)

	FY8/18 3Q		FY8/18 3Q		Change	YoY
	Amount	% of total	Amount	% of total		
Net sales	13,477	100.0	12,916	100.0	-560	-4.2
Gross profit	6,331	47.0	6,027	46.7	-304	-4.8
SG&A expenses	2,116	15.7	2,240	17.3	124	5.9
Operating profit	4,215	31.3	3,786	29.3	-428	-10.2
Recurring profit	4,272	31.7	3,839	29.7	-432	-10.1
Net profit attributable to the owners of the parent company	2,947	21.9	2,649	20.5	-297	-10.1

Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's financial results

The gross profit margin was 46.7%, a decrease of 0.3 of a PP YoY. But as was reported in the 1H results, temporary increases in costs were recorded, including a rise in depreciation expenses (up to ¥15mn in the 1H) and real estate acquisition tax of ¥14mn due to the establishment of the new plant. Excluding these temporary increases in cost, the gross profit margin seems to be about the same level as the previous year (47.0%), and this result is not a cause for concern.

Conversely, SG&A expenses increased 5.9% YoY to ¥2,240mn, but this was mainly due to a rise in domestic shipping expenses and a temporary factor, recording ¥81mn in reward-for-retirement on the abolition of the retirement benefit system for directors. SG&A expenses would only have increased 2.0% YoY if this reward-for-retirement had not been recorded.

As stated above, in this 3Q, operating profit declined by double digits YoY, but it can be said that this was mainly due to the decrease in sales and the increase in temporary costs. The former was caused as some expected projects were postponed, so it is not a reason for pessimism. For the latter also, the cost-increase factors were as initially forecast and were basically within the expected range. Therefore, it can be said that the current decline in profits is basically within the range of expectations.

(2) Net sales by item

In net sales by item, healthcare wear decreased 5.5% YoY to ¥7,448mn, doctors' wear decreased 2.8% to ¥2,090mn, utility wear decreased 11.2% to ¥350mn, patient wear increased 0.5% to ¥1,543mn, surgery wear decreased 1.2% to ¥1,164mn, shoes decreased 6.4% to ¥137mn, and other products decreased 5.5% to ¥181mn. Sales of each item mostly declined YoY due to somewhat lackluster performance overall.

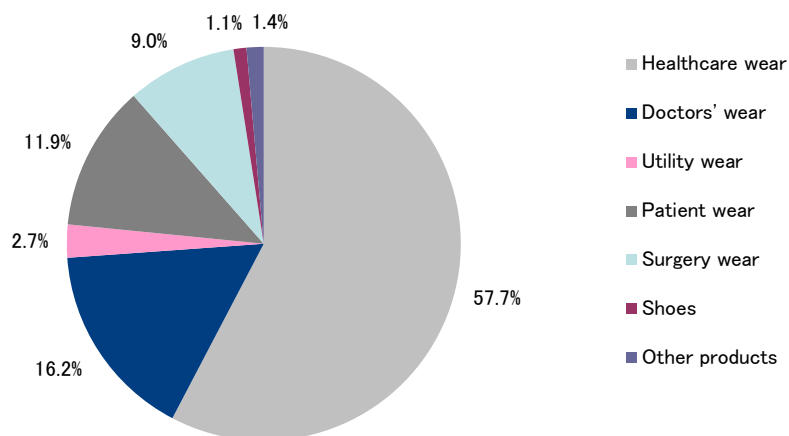
Results trends

Net sales by item

	FY8/18 3Q		FY8/19 3Q	
	Amount	YoY	Amount	YoY
Healthcare wear	7,878	0.1	7,448	-5.5
Doctors' wear	2,150	-1.2	2,090	-2.8
Utility wear	394	-9.2	350	-11.2
Patient wear	1,535	8.8	1,543	0.5
Surgery wear	1,178	-1.0	1,164	-1.2
Shoes	147	-5.9	137	-6.4
Other products	192	-6.3	181	-5.5
Total	13,477	0.2	12,916	-4.2

Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's financial results

Net sales by item (FY8/19 3Q)



Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's results briefing materials

Financial position is sound, with cash and deposits on hand of ¥22.7bn and an equity ratio of 90.4%.

(3) Financial position

The Company's financial position continues to be stable. At the end of FY8/19 3Q, total assets increased by ¥491mn to ¥43,134mn compared to the end of previous fiscal year. Current assets increased by ¥502mn to ¥33,723mn. This was mainly due to a ¥1,222mn decline in cash and deposits, a ¥1,103mn increase in notes and accounts receivable, a ¥681mn increase in electronic record receivables and a ¥103 decline in inventories. Conversely, fixed assets decreased by ¥11mn to ¥9,410mn, mainly due to a ¥54mn increase in investments and other assets.

Results trends

Total liabilities were ¥4,160mn, down ¥136mn compared to the end of the previous fiscal year. The main factors included a ¥347mn decrease in income taxes payable. Total net assets were ¥38,973mn, a rise of ¥627mn, mainly because of an increase in retained earnings of ¥654mn following the recording of net profit attributable to the owners of the parent company. As a result, at the end of FY8/19 3Q, the equity ratio had increased by 0.5 of a PP compared to the end of the previous fiscal year to 90.4%.

Summary of the consolidated balance sheet

	(¥mn)		
	End of FY8/18	End of FY8/18 3Q	Change
Cash and deposits	23,930	22,707	-1,222
Notes and accounts receivable	3,133	4,237	1,103
Inventories	4,386	4,283	-103
Current assets	33,220	33,723	502
Tangible fixed assets	7,880	7,823	-57
Intangible fixed assets	44	35	-8
Investments and other assets	1,497	1,551	54
Fixed assets	9,422	9,410	-11
Total assets	42,643	43,134	491
Notes and accounts payable	1,424	1,454	30
Income taxes payable	1,057	710	-347
Total liabilities	4,297	4,160	-136
Retained earnings	38,670	39,325	654
Treasury shares	-4,902	-4,896	6
Net assets	38,345	38,973	627
Total liabilities and net assets	42,643	43,134	491

Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's financial results

Business outlook

Despite higher sales, operating profit is forecast to decline in FY8/19 due to special factors

● FY8/19 full-year outlook

(1) Outlook of profit and loss

The forecasts for the FY8/19 full year consolidated results are unchanged from the initial forecast with net sales to increase 2.7% YoY to ¥17,600mn, operating profit to decrease 0.4% to ¥5,242mn, recurring profit to decline 0.6% to ¥5,304mn, and net profit attributable to the owners of the parent company to fall 0.7% to ¥3,650mn. The presumptive conditions for this full-year forecast are a decline in the gross profit margin due to factors including the impact of exchange rates, an increase in depreciation expenses and real estate acquisition. In addition, the Company expects SG&A expenses to increase more than usual due to a rise in transportation costs and recording of ¥81mn in reward-for-retirement on the abolition of the retirement benefit system for directors. Therefore, operating profit is forecast to decrease, it only slightly.

Business outlook

FY8/19 consolidated earnings outlook

(¥mn, %)

	FY8/18		FY8/19 forecast			
	Amount	% of total	Amount	% of total	Change	YoY
Net sales	17,144	100.0	17,600	100.0	455	2.7
Gross profit	8,050	47.0	8,210	46.7	159	2.0
SG&A expenses	2,786	16.3	2,968	16.9	181	6.5
Operating profit	5,264	30.7	5,242	29.8	-22	-0.4
Recurring profit	5,338	31.1	5,304	30.1	-34	-0.6
Net profit attributable to the owners of the parent company	3,675	21.4	3,650	20.7	-25	-0.7

Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's results briefing materials

Sales were sluggish up until 3Q, but in 4Q, the forecast calls for steady acquisition of renewal properties in the mainstay healthcare wear, and large new projects are also expected in patient wear, which is performing well. Therefore, sales are forecast to increase YoY, leading to achieving a new record high.

The gross profit margin is forecast to decline slightly YoY, to 46.7% (47.0% in the previous fiscal year). Gross profit is expected to increase ¥159mn, with the anticipated factors being an increase of ¥212mn from the higher sales and a decrease of ¥52mn due to production. Breaking down the decreases due to production, they include a decrease of ¥40mn from the impact of the rise in raw material costs, processing costs and other costs, an increase of ¥11mn from the effects of the exchange rates on costs (¥109.6 to U.S.\$1 in FY8/18→¥109.0 to U.S.\$1 in FY8/19), an increase of ¥25mn from the rise in the overseas production ratio (49.0% in FY8/18→49.5% in FY8/19), a decrease of ¥30mn from the increase in depreciation expenses alongside the construction of the new plant, and a decrease of ¥14mn on the occurrence of real estate acquisition tax on the construction of the same new plant. However, for the exchange rates, the Company already has in place forward contracts for the portion from January to March 2019, a period where the exchange rates are relatively low, and the actual average rates may be lower than expected.

SG&A expenses are forecast to be ¥2,968mn (up 6.5% YoY), as in addition to the increase from normal business expansion, the Company will record expenses of ¥81mn as the reward-for-retirement amount following the abolition of the retirement benefit system for executives. As a result, operating profit is expected to decrease, if only slightly, to ¥5,242mn (down 0.4%). Due to this, both recurring profit and net profit attributable to the owners of the parent company are also forecast to decrease.

a) Net sales forecasts by item

In net sales by item, healthcare wear is forecast to be ¥10,180mn (up 2.1% YoY), doctors' wear ¥2,730mn (up 2.2%), utility wear ¥450mn (down 9.8%), patient wear ¥2,170mn (up 10.4%), surgery wear ¥1,700mn (up 3.5%), shoes ¥175mn (down 6.4%), and other products ¥195mn (down 4.5%).

Business outlook

Net sales forecasts by item

	FY8/18		FY8/19 forecast	
	Amount	YoY	Amount	YoY
Healthcare wear	9,974	0.3	10,180	2.1
Doctors' wear	2,671	-0.4	2,730	2.2
Utility wear	498	-10.5	450	-9.8
Patient wear	1,964	10.0	2,170	10.4
Surgery wear	1,643	0.6	1,700	3.5
Shoes	187	-7.9	175	-6.4
Other products	204	-4.7	195	-4.5
Total	17,144	0.7	17,600	2.7

Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's results briefing materials

In healthcare wear, the Company expects sales to increase as it is forecasting a steady increase in high-end product sales, in addition to the growth in high value-added products. In doctors' wear, although mass products are struggling, the Company is aiming to increase sales by focusing on growing sales of high-end products. In patient wear, business discussions for new business are ongoing, and they may be realized in the 2H, so the forecast is for the double-digit increase in sales to continue. Sales of surgery wear are also expected to grow from increasing the capacity of the COMPELPAK laundry sterilization plant and from acquiring new customers.

b) Net sales forecast by region

For net sales by region, the Company forecasts ¥9,270mn in eastern Japan (up 2.3% YoY), ¥1,800mn in central Japan (up 0.3%), ¥6,300mn in western Japan (up 3.8%), and ¥230mn in overseas (up 7.1%).

Net sales forecast by region

	FY8/18		FY8/19 forecast	
	Amount	YoY	Amount	YoY
Eastern Japan	9,065	0.6	9,270	2.3
Central Japan	1,795	2.2	1,800	0.3
Western Japan	6,069	0.0	6,300	3.8
Overseas	214	16.4	230	7.1
Total	17,144	0.7	17,600	2.7

Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's results briefing materials

In eastern Japan, in addition to the renewal projects, the Company expects to acquire new projects. It is working to steadily capture demand for renewal projects through proposing high-value-added products, and sales are expected to continue to increase. In central Japan, although sales decreased significantly in the 1H, it expects to acquire renewal projects in 2H, and the full fiscal-year sales are forecast to be basically unchanged YoY. In western Japan, sales are expected to increase, by capturing the projects postponed from previous period, and working to acquire new projects in patient wear. Although the conditions are affected by exchange rates overseas, the Company will focus on strengthening the development of its domestic business model (sales to linen suppliers) in Taiwan to achieve sales growth.

c) Net sales forecasts by product

In the net sales by product, the Company forecasts ¥1,370mn for high-end products (up 7.9% YoY), ¥9,170mn for high-value-added products (up 4.7%), ¥6,260mn for value-added products (up 0.1%), and ¥800mn for mass products (down 7.0%).

Business outlook

Net sales forecasts by product

	FY8/18		FY8/19 forecast	
	Amount	YoY	Amount	YoY
High-end products	1,269	6.5	1,370	7.9
High-value-added products	8,759	1.7	9,170	4.7
Value-added products	6,255	-1.4	6,260	0.1
Mass products	860	-1.0	800	-7.0
Total	17,144	0.7	17,600	2.7

Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's results briefing materials

In high-end products, the Company's luxury brands, including Bright Days', 4D+ and Beads Berry, are performing strongly among small-lot users in particular, thus the forecast for high-end products as a whole is for sales to increase. The high-value-added products, such as PRO-FUNCTION advanced-performance products have been well-received by the market and their sales are trending favorably, and the Company plans to achieve even higher sales by continuing to promote its strategy of higher quality and value-added products. The forecast is for sales of mass products to decline, but the plan is to shift to value-added products, including products of other companies.

(2) Reorganization and streamlining of domestic plants

To strengthen the production structure going forward, the Company merged two aging plants as a new plant adjacent to its logistics center. This move is designed to improve operation efficiency and facilitate quick response. The project has completed at the end of August 2018 and the depreciation cost expected to be recognized from FY8/19.

Medium- to long-term growth strategy

Mid-term Management Plan target aims for operating profit of ¥5,600mn in FY8/21

1. Mid-term Management Plan

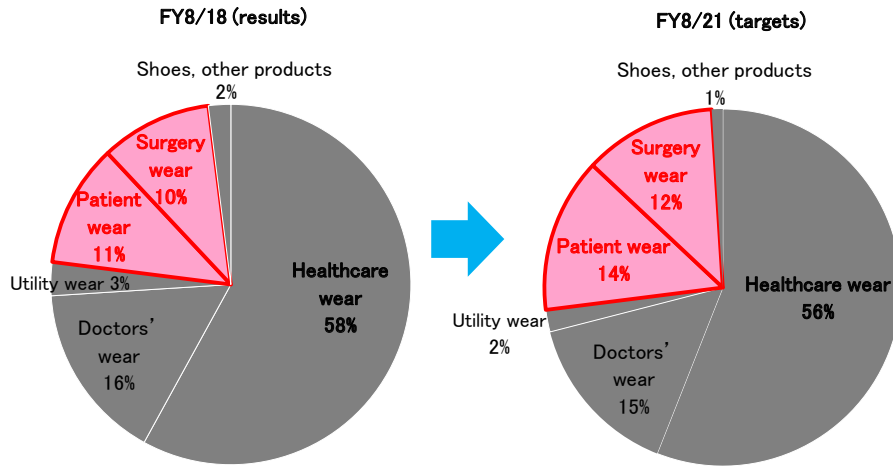
The Company announced targets for FY8/21 of net sales of ¥18,600mn and operating profit of ¥5,600mn in its Mid-term Management Plan based on FY8/18 results.

For composition of total net sales by item, the forecasts are 56% from healthcare (58% in FY8/18), 15% from doctors' wear (16%), 2% from utility wear (3%), 14% from patient wear (11%), 12% from surgery wear (10%), and 1% from shoes and other products (2%).

The forecast composition of total net sales by region is 49% from eastern Japan (53% in FY8/18), 11% from central Japan (11%), 38% from western Japan (35%), and 2% from overseas (1%). The forecast composition of total net sales by product is 9% from high-end products (7% in FY8/18), 54% from high-value-added products (51%), 34% from value-added products (37%), and 3% from mass products (5%).

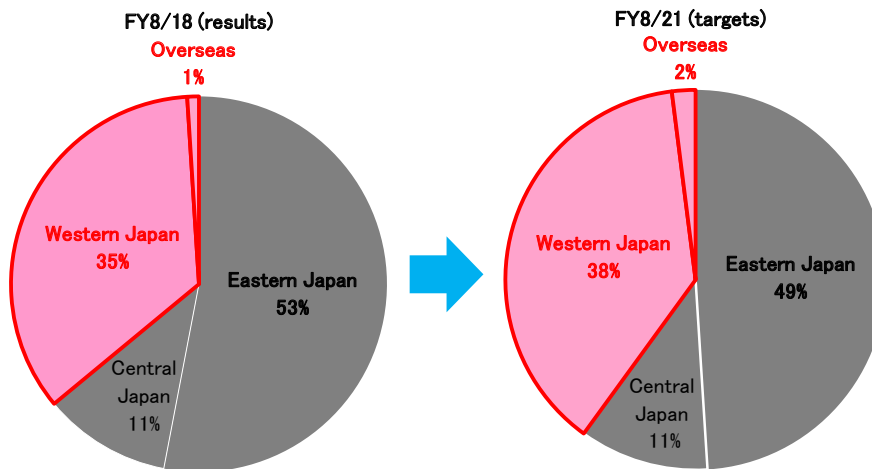
Medium- to long-term growth strategy

Targeted net sales percentage by item



Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's results briefing materials

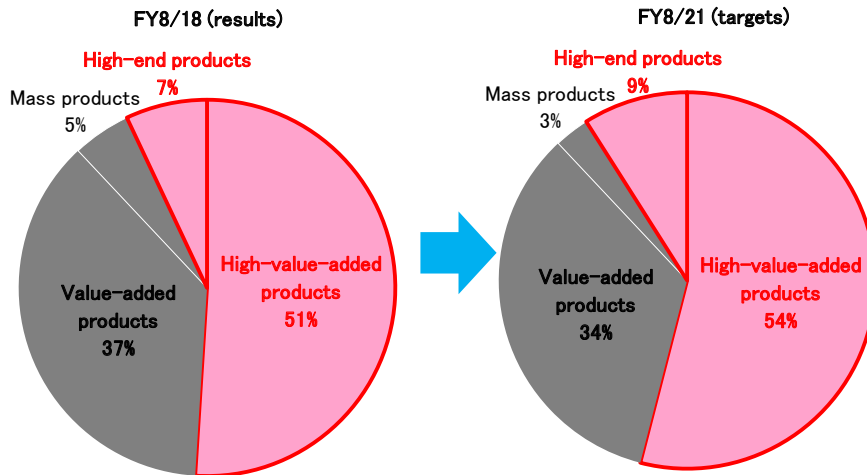
Targeted net sales composition by region



Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's results briefing materials

Medium- to long-term growth strategy

Targeted net sales composition by product

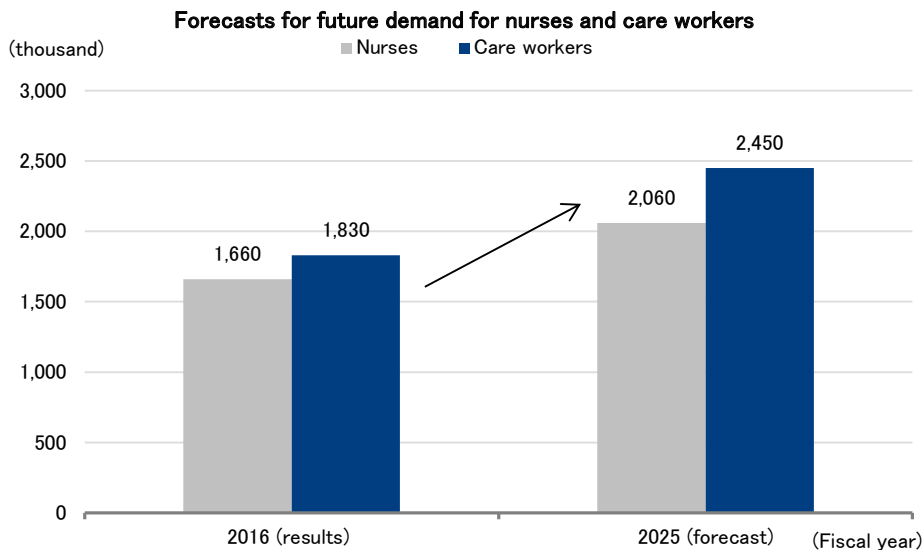


Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's results briefing materials

Actively developing highly functional, high value-added products

2. Future business strategies

The operating environment surrounding the Company should be favorable for some time. According to data released by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the number of nurses in Japan is projected to increase from 1.66 million in 2016 to as many as 2.06 million in 2025. Moreover, the number of care workers is forecast to increase from 1.83 million in 2016 to 2.45 million in 2025. In this operating environment, the Company plans to achieve its medium-term growth by implementing the following strategies.



Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's results briefing materials

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Medium- to long-term growth strategy

(1) Marketing strategy to boost sales

- a) Aim to increase share by further uncovering demand in the core markets, including the current mainstay markets for nurses and care workers.
- b) In addition to the existing mainstay healthcare wear products, further expand the peripheral markets, including patient wear and surgery wear.
- c) Actively open up overseas markets. Particularly in Taiwan, the Company is progressing on establishing the same business model as in Japan (not only direct sales to hospitals, but also sales to linen suppliers), and future developments can be expected,

(2) Production strategy to ensure a steady supply

- a) By relocating domestic sewing plants, further strengthen rapid responses and the ability to meet requests for small-lot, multiple-product production runs.
- b) Strengthen collaborations with materials manufacturers and trading companies, and improve new product development capabilities.

(3) Strategy to stabilize profitability

- a) Further promote the shift from domestic production to overseas production.
- b) Develop new overseas materials applying special tax measures for EPA and FTA.
- c) Secure business profitability by focusing on increasing sales of the high-value-added products

■ Shareholder return policy

Pledges a dividend payout ratio of above 50% (non-consolidated basis) and while the forecast is for an annual dividend of ¥60

The Company's shareholders' equity ratio reached 90.4% at the end of FY8/18 3Q, and it is financially stable. Additionally, considering the Company's business conditions, it seems highly unlikely that its profits will rapidly deteriorate, so continued stable earnings are expected. As a result, if its distribution of earnings outside the Company (particularly dividend payments) is low, profits will accumulate in shareholders' equity each year, and return on equity (ROE) will decline; which is to say, capital efficiency will decline. But in addition to paying dividends commensurate with the growth in profits, the Company actively and comprehensively returns profits to shareholders, including through share buybacks, and as a result has maintained a high ROE (9.8% in FY8/18).

The Company will thus maintain a stable financial position while pursuing solid shareholder returns. In FY8/15, it supplemented the regular dividend of ¥50 per share with an additional ¥50 per share to commemorate its centennial. This raised the total annual dividend to ¥100 per share, for a non-consolidated payout ratio of 107.5%. It also spent ¥1,500mn in repurchasing 1 million shares during the fiscal year, raising the total return ratio (non-consolidated basis) to 153.8%. In FY8/16, it paid an annual dividend of ¥50 for a dividend payout ratio of 52.5% on a non-consolidated basis.

The Company has pledged a dividend payout ratio of above 50% on a non-consolidated basis. In FY8/17, it increased the annual dividend from ¥50 to ¥60, and paid an annual dividend of ¥60 for FY8/18. The Company is also forecasting an annual dividend of ¥60 for FY8/19, which is currently underway.

Shareholder return policy

Trends in the dividend payout ratio and the total return ratio

(¥mn, %)

	Total dividend amount	Share buybacks	Dividend payout ratio*	Total return ratio*
FY8/01	475	0	27.4	27.4
FY8/02	475	0	29.3	29.3
FY8/03	530	1,697	29.7	124.6
FY8/04	744	0	36.5	36.5
FY8/05	1,117	0	56.9	56.9
FY8/06	1,117	0	53.4	53.4
FY8/07	1,117	0	53.1	53.1
FY8/08	1,083	1,077	56.6	111.2
FY8/09	1,040	1,220	57.3	122.2
FY8/10	1,127	0	51.4	51.4
FY8/11	1,205	226	52.0	61.7
FY8/12	1,205	0	55.1	55.1
FY8/13	1,541	229	51.3	58.7
FY8/14	1,712	0	54.4	54.4
FY8/15	3,324	1,500	107.5	153.8
FY8/16	1,662	0	52.5	52.5
FY8/17	1,994	0	55.2	55.2
FY8/18	1,994	0	55.2	55.2
FY8/19 E	1,994	0	55.3	55.3

* On a non-consolidated basis

Source: Prepared by FISCO from the Company's results briefing materials



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■ For inquiry, please contact: ■

FISCO Ltd.

5-11-9 Minami Aoyama, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan 107-0062

Phone: 03-5774-2443 (Financial information Dept.)

Email: support@fisco.co.jp