

Driving the Wheel of Progress

Itoh Denki's motorized drive roller (MDR) continues to find new value in the logistics field.

Tetsuya Itoh
President
Itoh Denki Co., Ltd.



Production lines, processing facilities and logistics centers. Regardless of whether a place is handling watermelons, circuit boards or first-class mail, there is a good chance that an MDR conveyor serves as the backbone through which goods flow. In many cases, these lifelines are enabled by Itoh Denki, a specialist manufacturer located in Japan's central Hyogo Prefecture. Itoh Denki got its start as a small motor repair business, honing its craft and expanding to supply motors to Japan's burgeoning home appliance industry of the 1950s.

A breakthrough moment came in 1975 with the unveiling of their Power Moller, which incorporates a motor and reduction gear inside of a conveyor roller. While this may seem like a simple invention, the implica-

tions were tremendous, streamlining conveyor design and eliminating the need for complex external drive systems.

Fifty years on, next-generation Itoh Denki rollers are now found on production lines globally, with the company trusted by some of the world's largest firms to keep their businesses flowing smoothly. "In those times, the word 'logistics' was not commonplace in Japan, it was less recognized by society," said Tetsuya Itoh, president of Itoh Denki, reflecting on his firm's legacy. "More recently, it is seen as an art in itself, with supply chain management now recognized for what it is worth."

Itoh Denki has now become the go-to choice for clients not only seeking motorized rollers, but entire conveyor systems. A large part of this

shift from a pure products business to a solutions provider has been the company's systems engineering research, which is done entirely in-house at its Hyogo base. "Our systems are now able to monitor conveyor conditions in real time, which helps with scheduling maintenance and changeovers," said Itoh. "Put simply, our technology helps clients to keep their production lines running."

This year, 2026, is a big year for Itoh Denki. It marks the firm's 80th year in business and the beginning of its full expansion into the United States market. Its latest expansion in Pennsylvania adds to the global Itoh Denki network, bringing the combined site footprint to nearly 120,000 square feet. Itoh sees this expansion as critical to meeting future demand as logistics centers open across the U.S. "We've seen more orders in the region, which necessitates more floor space for us to stock our products, as well as expanding our production lines to handle the increased volume," he said. A key driver of this growth will be Itoh Denki's multi directional Multi Angle Ball Sorter (MABS) module, which allows products to be quickly diverted and sorted. The MABS is one step in the automated logistics future that Itoh coins as "FALA". "By fusing factory automation (FA) and logistics automation (LA) with our MDR technology, we keep goods moving efficiently," he said.



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