

# Why Yokohama?

—Company Interview Series—

## Leggett & Platt Automotive

**Leggett & Platt Automotive focuses on providing cutting edge products to OEMs and Tier 1s all over the world, with a focus on high quality, competitive, needed products and excellent customer service.**

*Leggett & Platt*  
AUTOMOTIVE



Hayato Sugawara,  
Manager - L&P Automotive Japan KK (Left)

Steve Henderson,  
Vice President - Leggett & Platt  
President - Automotive Group (Middle)

Barry Jones,  
President, North America  
Chief Technology Officer (Right)



**We have been globalizing the business and now have around 30 locations worldwide, of which our Yokohama branch plays an important part.**

Leggett & Platt started out in 1883, in Missouri, and specialized in wire springs. Over the years the company diversified and expanded its scope. Leggett & Platt Automotive came to life around 2000 with the acquisition of a number of companies, notably the Schukra organisation.

We have grown the automotive group to approximately 30 locations worldwide, and are fortunate to have great relations with all Japanese OEMs.

We service OEMs and Tier 1s around the world, working in a variety of parts for internal combustion vehicles, EVs, and AEVs, with a strong focus on growing our convenience products and comfort items such as seats. We anticipate that as vehicles become increasingly autonomous, the focus of users will shift further toward general convenience and comfort in the cockpit.

Japan is very important, not only because of the OEMs, but also because of a good number of Tier 1 and Tier 2 suppliers critical to the industry are based in the country. Beyond being a simple end market, Japan produces 10% of the world's vehicles, and we are seeing more and more partnerships between American and Japanese OEMs.

The future will bring important changes to the industry; partnerships will diversify and companies working in different sectors will be brought together. We have recently signed an agreement with a important start-up accelerator as part of our structured approach to technology scouting.

**Having moved to Yokohama in 2016, its central location and ease of access has allowed us to easily keep in touch with our partners around the country.**

All our team member like Yokohama very much; it is a comfortable city to live and work, and there are always many interesting events taking place. The Minato Mirai area in particular has a nice welcoming, open, clean, professional feel to it. In the morning, I often jog along the oceanfront, where I see people fishing or doing tai chi; it has a great atmosphere.

Many people from around the world live in the area, and it has quite a cosmopolitan feel. Actually, more than half of the staff in our Yokohama Office are non-Japanese.

From a visitor's perspective, access is very easy since Haneda Airport is right around the corner, and even Narita Airport is under two hours away via the Narita Express train.

It is easy to use the Shinkansen or expressways to go around Japan, and we are only an hour and fifteen minutes away from Toyota City, less than two hours from Honda, and less than an hour from Nissan.

Costs are lower than they were in Tokyo, and Yokohama City has been very supportive when we relocated here. Our team is very happy to be here.

*Interviewed by Yokohama World Business Support Center, 13/11/2018*