

Why Yokohama?

—Company Interview Series—

Rocket Software Japan Ltd.

Targeting to expand sales in the massive mainframe market in Japan, we would like to contribute to the society by delivering enterprise products and solutions, leveraging our strengths as a software vendor supporting the critical social infrastructure.



Hisato Suehara, Representative Director (Right)
Yoichi Satow, Manager of Marketing and Partner Relations (Left)



Our long awaited Japanese foundation was established in 2015. We have strong recognition by our US headquarter for our development capabilities.

Rocket Software was founded in 1990 near Boston USA, and serves as a global company, developing business software. Based on the OEM partnership with IBM, Rocket provides software, mainly in the IBM mainframe area which is its core business. It also provides over 150 products, which includes Rocket brand software as well, and covers a wide range of industries. (Suehara) Japan has a massive mainframe market, having the second largest market next to the USA. It is an attractive market for Rocket Software, and sales expansion in Japan is a key priority for Rocket Software. To achieve this goal, we have been preparing over time for the establishment in Japan, including closer customer engagement. (Satow) IBM's IMS (Information Management System) is a data management systems for mainframes that is developed and sold by IBM. Rocket Software Japan develops essential products that are used along with IMS, which manage and improve the productivity of IMS. The company was established mainly by the staff members of a research institute at IBM Japan with skills in the IMS area. This took place in April 2015. While the development work is jointly being done between Rocket Japan and US, by the accurate work with the quality output of the Japanese engineers, the responsibility of the Japanese engineers has been growing. I would say this is the result of establishing a solid foundation for development in Japan. (Suehara)

Yokohama is surprisingly close to Tokyo, and is very convenient. The city has the right population density, and the office environment is comfortable without being too crowded.

As we established a Japanese corporation in Yokohama, we received a subsidy under the Foreign Firm Setup Support Program of Kanagawa Prefecture. Such support through a subsidy shows how welcoming the local municipality is, and it helped us convince the headquarters in USA to establish our base in Yokohama. (Suehara) Since I started commuting to the office in Minato Mirai 21, I have rediscovered that Yokohama is surprisingly close to Tokyo. The city has the right population density, and we don't need to suffer overcrowded commute, like in downtown Tokyo. At the beginning, we were also thinking about having an office in Tokyo. However, office rent is more reasonable in Yokohama. Consequently, each worker can have more space in the office, making it more comfortable. Also, the brand image of Minato Mirai 21 is very positive, and it is quite famous in Japanese communities. (Satow) Those on a business trip from the USA stay at a hotel in Minato Mirai 21, and can enjoy walking or jogging in the sea breeze in the morning. They also like the fact that the hotel and the shopping area are right next to the office. Rocket Software was established in Boston, also a port city. This may be one of the reasons why those visiting Yokohama on business feel close to this city as soon as they arrive, fall in love with it, and always say they would love to return. Rocket Software Japan currently has about 60 employees, and this number is growing every year, and we are planning to expand the office size. Leveraging our strengths as a developer of software for mainframes that supports social infrastructure, we would like to keep enhancing the existence value of Rocket Software Japan while actively taking on challenges in new fields, such as use of ICT in a community-based integrated health care system that has been a challenge in the Japanese society. (Suehara)

Interviewed by Yokohama World Business Support Center, 9/1/2017