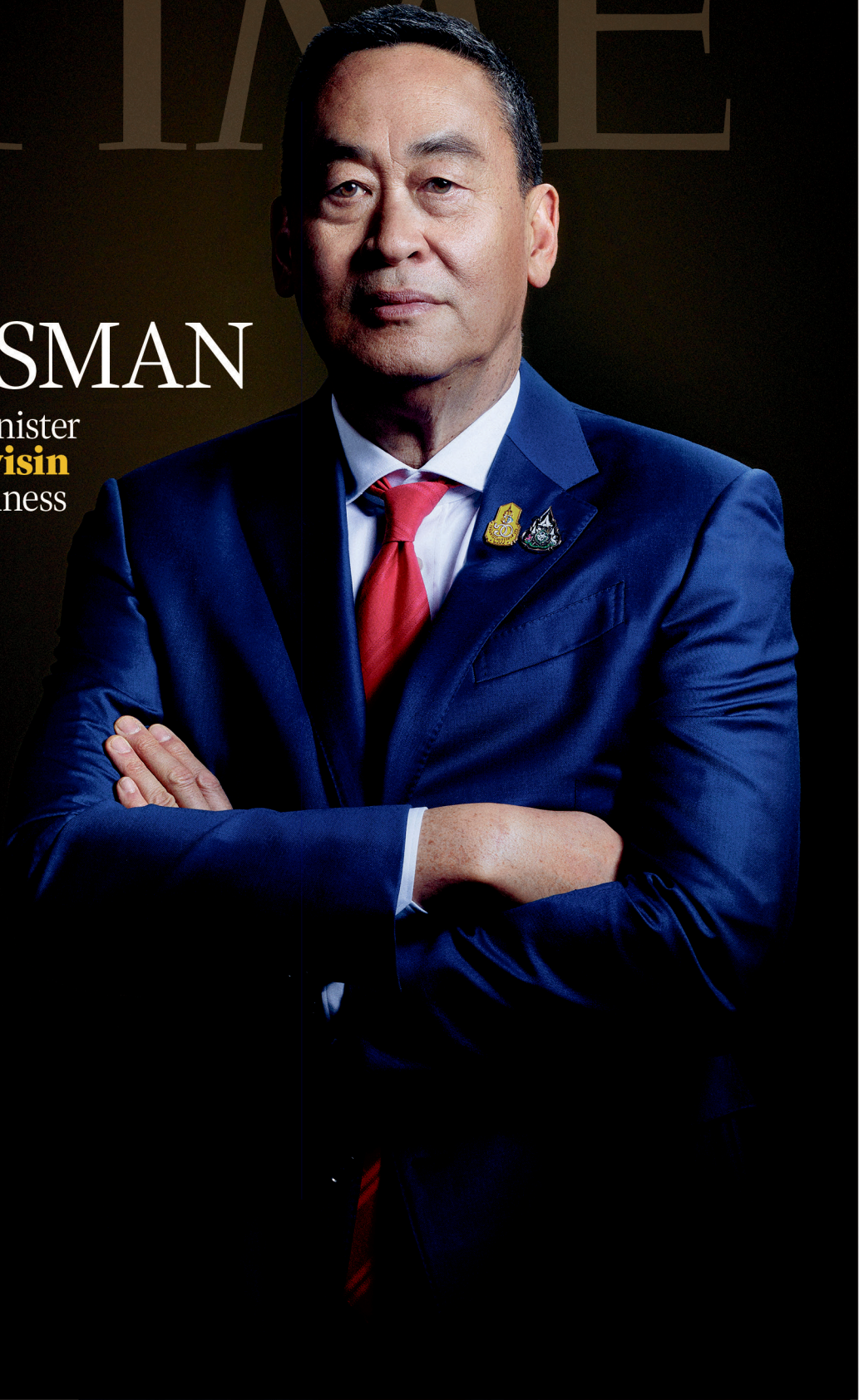


TIME

THE SALESMAN

Thai Prime Minister **Srettha Thavisin** is open for business in a country that feels shortchanged by his election

by CHARLIE CAMPBELL



Forging a Global Workforce for the Counterweight Market

Japanese firm Ondo Metal is looking to broaden its global horizons with more international recruits and overseas business.



—Noriyasu Ondo
President and CEO,
Ondo Metal Co., Ltd.

For many Japanese SMEs, recruiting foreign trainees as casual workers has been a tactic to mitigate labor shortages. However, manufacturing firm Ondo Metal Co., Ltd. is committed to integrating more overseas staff into its core team and believes a global workforce is critical to its future. The business has grown its international relations significantly in the last 50 years, from producing hundreds of tons of cast counterweights in Japan every month to importing over 3,000 tons. The firm plans to hire more foreign workers with the aim of bringing an international dynamic to the business. For future overseas expansion, President Noriyasu Ondo believes it's essential to create an environment where Japanese and international employees can work together. "I set a target of attaining 10% foreign workers as I had a strong ambition to breathe new life into the company. But the target now sits at 20%, and we are well on the way to achieving it," said Ondo.

Since 2008, Ondo Metal has been targeting science and engineering



Ondo Metal recruits overseas employees to invigorate its global operations.

graduates, in particular, as part of its efforts to increase its international workforce. Although these recruits could not speak Japanese at first, they were given a year of in-house language classes while training in each department. The strategy predates the current staffing crisis affecting Japan and was originally conceived in response to a trend of graduates gravitating to larger businesses over SMEs. This global recruitment experience means the company is well-placed to deal with the effects of Japan's aging population and labor shortage that have been causing personnel issues across the nation. The international workers have joined the company through the Asia Human Resource Project (AHRP), launched by TRANSCEND Co., Ltd., where the firm's president Nobuhiko Takeda is a long-time associate of President Ondo. At Ondo Metal, the president gathers overseas employees every quarter to hold a seminar on "next-generation management" that

"Our strengths include flexibility for client demands and environmental changes."

Noriyasu Ondo

includes guest lecturers from outside the company to discuss its strategy and management philosophy. The value of these meetings was shown by the impact of the seminar organized in December 2023. "When I announced the schedule for this training course, the heads of all departments told me that they could not do their jobs without the invited workers. This is proof that foreign staff play an important role in our company," Ondo said. The plan has made significant progress since the hiring of the first two employees from China. The company also currently has employees from Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar and the United States.

As much as possible, President Ondo visits these countries and personally conducts final interviews. The program has continued even in the wake of major global events of the last 15 years, such as the 2008 Financial Crisis, the Great Tohoku Earthquake and even the pandemic. The president believes that hardworking foreign employees will help determine the future of the organization. Some have already been promoted to managers in the China and Indonesia offices. "These days, they are appreciated more for their own skills on the production line or in the office, but I fully expect them to display management skills moving forward. I wouldn't be surprised if the next president, my successor, is selected from our overseas human resources," said Ondo.

Ondo Metal is looking to expand its business and staffing around the world.



音頭金属株式会社
Ondo Metal Co., Ltd.