

Auto BUSINESS OUTLOOK APAC



In Step with the Future

NICHIRIN

CENTURY-LONG GRIP ON THE FUTURE OF MOBILITY





Nichirin



**TOP
AUTOMOTIVE
HOSES PIPING PARTS
MANUFACTURER
IN APAC
2025**

This award is in recognition of **Nichirin's** stellar reputation and trust among customers and industry peers, evident in the numerous nominations we received from our subscribers. **Nichirin** emerged as the **Top Automotive Hoses Piping Parts Manufacturer in APAC 2025** after an exhaustive evaluation by an expert panel of C-level executives, industry thought leaders, and our editorial board.

Awarded By



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On any given morning in Kobe, Japan, Nichirin's headquarters hum with the quiet precision of a company that has made engineering excellence routine, extending across 15 factories in 10 countries.

It's a scene that reflects both discipline and reach. Founded in 1914, Nichirin has evolved from a domestic hose manufacturer into a global leader in automotive hoses and piping systems. It supplies the lifelines inside motorcycles,

passenger cars, commercial vehicles, and even household appliances. These are parts that are usually hidden but play a big role in performance, safety and comfort.

Nichirin's path has been shaped by a deliberate balance of global scale and local grip. It has mastered the ability to serve diverse markets with uniform quality while tailoring products to the specific needs, tastes and regulations of each region. This dual focus set the stage for its international journey.

Overseas expansion began in the 1980s when it launched local production in North America. By the late 1990s, it had factories in mainland China and ASEAN (Thailand). In the early 2000s, it planted roots in Europe. Each move was focused on proximity to customers and their distinct requirements.

"We've grown by establishing local production around the world," says Hiroyuki Soga, president and CEO. "It's not just about exporting parts but about embedding ourselves in each region's needs, regulations and culture."

This decentralized yet coordinated footprint allows Nichirin to provide various products of uniform quality at competitive prices on a global scale. It also gives the company unusual agility when markets change, whether it is due to consumer preferences, safety regulations, or technological shifts.

Customization as Core DNA

Nichirin's approach to product development is grounded in customization. In North America, for example, the motorcycle market demands durability and aesthetics. Nichirin designed brake hoses that deliver both a sleek appearance matched with high durability while complying with FMVSS standards.

In Europe, regulatory change created a different kind of challenge. When the EU mandated ABS systems for motorcycles in 2016, Nichirin was prepared with a compliant hose design. At the time, it was a pioneering company in the industry that initiated development at an early stage. The result was a quick surge in sales and a strengthened reputation for technical agility.

It is this ability to make small but crucial adjustments that align with how a product feels in use—what riders call "brake feeling"—that Nichirin has learned to deliver with precision.

That sensitivity to subtlety is now guiding it into the EV era, where quiet cabins make every vibration noticeable,



and battery efficiency depends on precise thermal management. Building on this awareness, Nichirin has directed its R&D efforts toward next-generation solutions, with a strong focus on heat pumps and battery cooling systems for electric vehicles.



Automation enhances our processes, but the human element, the judgment, the creativity, the customer connection, remains irreplaceable

"We see great potential in heat management systems. We've already embarked on joint development with customers to make a foray into this area," says Soga.

In parallel, it is developing hose arrangements with enhanced vibration-absorbing capacity, ensuring comfort in the absence of engine noise. This is more than a product adaptation. It's a redesign of function for a fundamentally different kind of vehicle.

Innovation includes new materials, exploring hoses compatible with emerging refrigerants such as R744 and R290, and experimenting with recyclable resin piping. These efforts align with both environmental regulations and customer sustainability goals, positioning Nichirin as a proactive partner as opposed to a reactive supplier.



Speed as Strategy and Global Standards for Quality

In fast-moving markets, customization alone is not enough. Speed matters. Nichirin has compressed its development cycle so that a product, from design through prototyping and testing, can be ready in as little as a month.

The process starts with intent listening. Customer requirements are gathered through meetings, comparative product analysis, and even competitive intelligence. A customer once warned that a competitor was about to launch an ABS-compliant hose. Nichirin responded by redesigning its own, which called for reducing the diameter from 10 to 8 millimeters for significant weight savings, without compromising safety or compliance.

This responsiveness has helped retain market share and build long-term trust with customers who value partners that can move as quickly as their own innovation cycles.

Speed, however, never comes at the expense of quality. Nichirin enforces a group-wide Quality Management System (QMS) that standardizes methods, equipment and evaluation processes across all factories.

Quality performance is measured in defect rates, on-time delivery, and production efficiency, and is tracked in every

location. Data flows back to Japan’s “mother factory,” where annual quality meetings identify best practices and share them across the network.

Certification under IATF16949 further ensures that each product, whether made in Tennessee or Thailand, meets the same standards. This consistency has earned Nichirin multiple supplier excellence awards from major clients.

Digital Transformation on the Factory Floor

In 2024, it celebrated its 110th anniversary by opening the five-story Nichirin Workshop, a facility dedicated to automation and robotics. Inside, production engineers test AI-powered imaging systems, integrate robots into assembly lines, and train employees to operate in increasingly automated environments.

By 2027, Nichirin plans to deploy 500 robots across its global operations. In North America, drones are already conducting inventory counts. Younger employees are encouraged to lead digital transformation projects, building skills that will define the company’s next generation.

“Automation enhances our processes, but the human element, the judgment, the creativity, the customer connection, remains irreplaceable,” states Soga.



Expanding Market Horizons

Nichirin’s ambitions are not limited to passenger cars and motorcycles. Through an acquisition in North America, it is moving into the large truck and bus markets, aiming to replicate its success in segments where durability and maintenance efficiency are paramount.

In emerging economies, it collaborates with local partners and suppliers to tailor its product lineup, ensuring relevance in markets with varied performance expectations and price sensitivities.



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Recent business wins underscore this strategy. Nichirin now supplies brake hoses for premium motorcycles made by Harley-Davidson and BMW. For Tesla, Inc., it provides formed hoses for air conditioning systems since 2021.

Nichirin’s ability to win and retain business is rooted in feedback loops that connect its engineers directly with customer concerns. Regular joint development meetings, competitive benchmarking, and technical networking events keep its team ahead of shifting requirements.

Changing a Cultural Blueprint

Perhaps the most striking transformation it is bringing to the table is not technological, but cultural. Japanese suppliers in Nichirin’s sector have long been stereotyped as

risk-averse, slow to adopt change and reluctant to embrace new technologies. Soga has made it a personal mission to rewrite that script.

He encourages his workforce, especially younger employees, to embrace “Fail Fast & Run with STRATEGICALLY, SPEEDY, and SINCERITY.” It’s a strong philosophy that values trial and error as the path to long-term success. Much of the younger staff now speak English and Chinese, enabling smoother communication with overseas customers and partners.



Driving the Legacy Forward

Nichirin’s hoses are made to endure extremes, from high pressure and wide temperature swings of -40°C to 120°C, to relentless vibration. Yet the company itself has shown a resilience that reaches far beyond materials science. Over the decades, it has adapted to technological revolutions, navigated regulatory upheavals, and weathered market shifts, all while preserving its identity.

For more than a century, Nichirin’s true strength has been its ability to keep moving forward. With a blend of local insight, engineering precision, and global reach, it continues to meet customers where they are and guide them to where they need to be.

As it looks to the future, Nichirin’s mission remains clear; to listen, to adapt, and to deliver. **AB**



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