

Special Feature

02

Development of Products and Services that Solve Social Issues

Tokai Rika and its history of solving social issues

Tokai Rika has a history of addressing social issues with the founding spirit of “Do what others won’t do.”

In 1962, we were among the first to pay attention to legislation in the United States and developed the two-point seatbelt, contributing to a reduction in the number of casualties in traffic accidents.

In 1963, we contributed to safer driving by concentrating the switches on the instrument panel around the steering column to minimize the driver’s eye movement.

In 1994, we focused on the requirement to install devices to prevent unauthorized use of vehicles due to the rapid increase in car thefts in Europe, and commercialized an immobilizer system, contributing to help reduce theft.

In this way, we have been among the first to address social issues related to the automobile industry.



Think Scrap: An upcycled brand born from scrap materials

In 2020, we held an internal call for new business ideas for all Tokai Rika employees. We carefully narrowed down the 1,904 submitted ideas and categorized them into 10 themes. Many of them included the idea of contributing to the SDGs by utilizing seatbelt scraps.

At our plants, approximately 300 kg of seatbelt scraps are generated every day. The idea of “using scrap materials to create valuable products” led to the creation of Think Scrap. At Tokai Rika, we were at a loss because we could not do the complicated sewing work for seatbelts; then we met Maruka Inc. Thanks to their understanding of Tokai Rika’s idea, we were able to begin manufacturing products that involve complex sewing.

Further, when we thought that our product lineup was not enough with just seatbelt scraps, we came up with the idea: “Aren’t manufacturers in other industries also struggling with how to utilize scraps generated during their production process?”. So, after reaching out to various companies, we were able to receive scrap materials from Team Like Co., Ltd., which manufactures vinyl curtains. We have also developed tote bags with cute designs based on ideas from local university students.

We contribute to SDGs by collaborating with local companies and students, even though product development is difficult for our company to do alone.

Think Scrap

<https://www.thinkscrap.jp/>



“Think Scrap” various products
*Collaboration with Maruka Inc., a local sewing factory in Aichi Prefecture



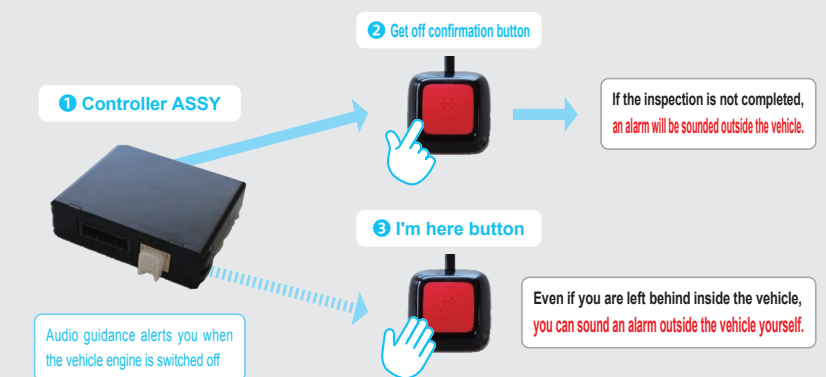
Some of the tote bag products developed with students

Support system for preventing people from being left behind in vehicles: Commercialized in an extremely short lead time after a tragic accident

In September 2022, a tragic accident occurred in which a kindergartener was left behind on the school bus. Faced with this news, and with the belief that such a sad accident should never happen again, all our relevant divisions worked together to develop countermeasures. We made a presentation to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, introduced our product to Toyota and Nissan, and worked closely with outside parties to successfully commercialize the product at an unprecedented speed, with sales beginning as early as March 2023.

By having developed products based on mass-produced products, we were able to develop them in a short period of time and ensure in-vehicle quality. Additionally, the device can be started and stopped using only

the vehicle’s ignition signal, making it easy to install in existing vehicles. Furthermore, the in-vehicle alarm with audio guidance makes it easy to operate even for first-time users.



Future products and services that solve social issues

Tokai Rika has the spirit of challenge of “Even if nobody wants to do it, somebody has to.”

While adhering to this spirit, we have produced products such as switches with complex structures that make it difficult to ensure profitability, keys and locks that are facing increasingly sophisticated theft techniques, and seatbelts whose performance

requirements are increasing year by year as laws and regulations are updated regularly.

We will continue to focus on social issues and collaborate with other industries as necessary to develop products and services that help solve social issues.