

Feb. 24, 2021

Kao Included in the World's Most Ethical Companies® List for a Record 15th Consecutive Year

TOKYO, February 23, 2021 The Ethisphere Institute, a leading US think-tank, has named the Kao Corporation one of the World's Most Ethical Companies. Kao is a leading consumer goods company and the only Asian company to have made the list every year since Ethisphere began its ranking in 2007. Thoughtful, purposeful consumption is at the heart of Kao's business and this continued recognition by Ethisphere, reflects this commitment.



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The Ethisphere Institute develops and shares best practices in business ethics and corporate social responsibility. The World's Most Ethical Companies list recognizes companies which have demonstrated outstanding performance in transparency, integrity, ethics, and compliance. The Institute surveys and evaluates companies worldwide across five categories covering: ethics and compliance programs, corporate citizenship and responsibility, culture of ethics, governance, and leadership and reputation.

Commenting on the accolade, Yoshihiro Hasebe, Kao's President and CEO, said: “We are honored to have been recognized as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for 15 consecutive years. Our business has always been based on walking the right path—a core value of our founder. Outside evaluations are therefore an important indication we are indeed going in the right direction. However, we should never be satisfied with the status quo. What has worked for us today may not work in the future, so we should always strive for improvement. As CEO, I am determined we continue to make ethical decisions in this ever-changing world.”

Ethisphere’s Chief Executive Officer, Timothy Erblich, said: “We are, once again, delighted to include Kao in our World’s Most Ethical Companies list—the only Asian company we have honored every year since the award’s inception. This is a testament to Kao’s dedication to advancing ethical and ESG management best practices. We believe Kao will continue to be at the forefront of setting ethical standards in the industry globally.”

Kao’s purpose is to create a Kirei life for all. The Japanese word ‘kirei’ describes something that is both clean and beautiful. For Kao, Kirei not only encapsulates appearance, but also attitude—to create beauty for oneself, other people, and for the world around us. Kao Group’s ESG strategy—the Kirei Lifestyle Plan—aims to integrate ESG as the foundation of its management to accelerate business growth and create products and services of better value for consumers and society. Additionally, Kao’s corporate code of conduct—the Kao Business Conduct Guidelines—guides our everyday business and is tailored to the special characteristics of Kao’s operations in different countries and regions.

With the world still gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic, Kao has taken a series of actions to support industry initiatives to promote good hygiene and handwashing, increasing production capacity for hand sanitisers, and making charitable donations across the world. Kao also took immediate action to ensure employee safety at an early stage of the pandemic, which included encouraging employees to work from home and providing them with the company’s products such as hand soap and sanitizers.

About Kao

Kao creates high-value-added products that enrich the lives of consumers around the world. Through its portfolio of over 20 leading brands such as *Attack*, *Bioré*, *Goldwell*, *Jergens*, *John Frieda*, *Kanebo*, *Laurier*, *Merries*, and *Molton Brown*, Kao is part of the everyday lives of people in Asia, Oceania, North America, and Europe. Combined with its chemical division, which contributes to a wide range of industries, Kao generates about 1,400 billion yen in annual sales. Kao employs about 33,000 people worldwide and has 130 years of history in innovation. Please visit the Kao Group website for updated information.

<https://www.kao.com/global/en/>

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<Related Information>

■ World’s Most Ethical Companies® 2021

<https://www.worldsmoethicalcompanies.com/>

■ Kao>Sustainability

<https://www.kao.com/global/en/sustainability/>

■ Kao launches new ESG Strategy “Kirei Lifestyle Plan” to support consumer lifestyle changes

<https://www.kao.com/global/en/news/sustainability/2019/20190422-001/>