

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kao Included in the World's Most Ethical Companies® List for a Record 17th Consecutive Year

TOKYO, March 14, 2023—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.



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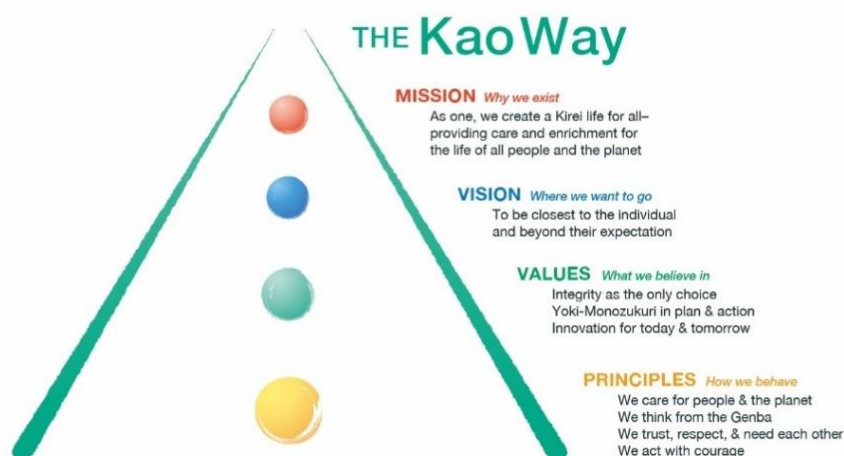
The Ethisphere Institute develops and shares best practices in business ethics and corporate social responsibility. The World's Most Ethical Companies list recognizes companies which have demonstrated outstanding performance in transparency, integrity, ethics, and compliance. The Institute surveys and 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, Representative Director, President and Chief Executive Officer, said: "We are honored to have been selected as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for 17 consecutive years. Our business has always been based on walking the right path, so external evaluations such as this are very important to us. In 2021, we renewed our corporate philosophy—The Kao Way—which includes principles such as 'We act with courage.' In order to become a company that leads the industry in a society that will continue to evolve, we have reaffirmed our determination to continue to take on challenges toward high goals."

Ethisphere’s Chief Executive Officer, Erica Salmon Byrne, said: “We are, once again, delighted to honor Kao as one of the World’s Most Ethical Companies. Kao is one of only six companies to have received this recognition from its inception – 17 times. This achievement is a testament to Kao’s dedication to continually advancing best practices for ethics, compliance, and governance. We look forward to seeing Kao’s continued leadership in furthering business integrity across the industry and globally.”

In April 2019, the Kao Group established the Kirei Lifestyle Plan, an ESG strategy. 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. Since its start in 2021, the Kao Group Mid-term Plan 2025 (K25) has proclaimed “protecting future lives” and promoting “sustainability as the only path” as its vision. The Kao Group will continue to integrate its ESG strategy into its management practices, and by maintaining and practicing a high level of ethical awareness, aims to develop its business, provide better products and services for consumers and society, and work toward its purpose, “to realize a Kirei world in which all life lives in harmony.”

The Kao Group upholds the founder’s value of “walking the right path” at the core of all corporate activity. As such, this is the first item in the fundamental values that form the basis of its corporate philosophy, “The Kao Way.” This signifies acting in accordance with the law and ethics, and conducting honest and sound business activities. Using opportunities such as when personnel join the company, Kao conveys the importance of returning to basics and considering once again what it means to “walk the right path”; the reason why one works and what should be valued during times of change in the world or in the business. In addition, leaders taking initiative and implementing this way of thinking in the workplace allows each and every employee to embody it themselves.



Corporate Philosophy—the Kao Way

About the Kirei Lifestyle Plan

Over the past 130 years, Kao has worked to improve people's lives and help them realize more sustainable lifestyles—a Kirei Lifestyle. The Japanese word 'kirei' describes something that is clean, well-ordered and beautiful, all at the same time. The Kao Group established its ESG strategy, the Kirei Lifestyle Plan in April 2019, which is designed to deliver the vision of a gentler and more sustainable way of living. By 2030, Kao aims to empower at least 1 billion people, to enjoy more beautiful lives and have 100% of its products leave a full lifecycle environmental footprint that science says our natural world can safely absorb. For more information, please click [here](#).

About Kao

Kao creates high-value-added products and services that provide care and enrichment for the life of all people and the planet. 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 business, which contributes to a wide range of industries, Kao generates about 1,550 billion yen in annual sales. Kao employs about 35,400 people worldwide and has 135 years of history in innovation. Please visit [the Kao Group website](#) for updated information.

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Related Information

- [World's Most Ethical Companies® 2023](#)
- [Kao launches new ESG Strategy “Kirei Lifestyle Plan” to support consumer lifestyle changes](#)
- [Kao's New Challenges for the Future: Accelerating Purposeful Business Commitment with ESG](#)
- [Kao sustainability website](#)