

Panasonic to expand solar cell, 3-D TV production

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Panasonic president Fumio Otsubo, seen here in 2009, said the electronics giant will aim to be Japan's top maker of solar cells within about three years as part of an increased focus on environmental technology.

Panasonic Corp. said on Friday it aims to be Japan's top maker of solar cells within about three years as part of an increased focus on environmental technology.

The company also sees three-dimensional (3-D) televisions as a new core of its thin-screen TV business, Panasonic president Fumio Otsubo told a new year press conference.

The company will expand its solar cell business by incorporating the technology of [Sanyo Electric](#), which joined the Panasonic group last year.

Panasonic will invest 100 billion yen (1.07 billion dollars) by early 2016 to increase production of Sanyo's 'HIT', one of the world's most efficient [solar cells](#), Otsubo said.

As well as setting its sights on being the leader in Japan, the company aims to become one of the world's top three solar cell makers within about six years, Otsubo said.

Otsubo stressed the need to explore new business areas amid tough global competition against foreign rivals such as South Korea's Samsung.

Samsung is so big that it will remain difficult for [Panasonic](#) to compete with its existing products, Otsubo said.

"Rather than chasing the sales volume, we must look to competing in quality," he said.

"I think the most significant factor will be 3-D TV," he said.

"With 3-D TV and its related products, including camera recorders and editing tools, we will strengthen our television operations to make it one of factors to go against Samsung," he said.

The company is expecting a net loss of 140 billion yen for the year to March 2010.

The group said it will further expand its effort to go after global customers while exploring new business areas in bids to return to profit, he said.

Production will also be shifted to foreign countries, he said.

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