



## Interview: Revitalization of local economies through "Marugoto Nippon" in Asakusa, Tokyo (summary)

Yu Mizushiro

Representative Director, good mornings Co., Ltd.

Interviewed by: Shigeru Oe

Composed by: Yuya Toda

### Treasures of local regions gathered at "Marugoto Nippon" in Asakusa



I interviewed Yu Mizushiro, who was involved in the opening of "Marugoto Nippon" in Asakusa on December 17<sup>th</sup> last year.

**– Please tell us how you came to be involved in the development of "Marugoto Nippon."**

I had a personal attachment to Tokyo Rakutenchi Co Ltd, which is a developer of "Marugoto Nippon." I wanted to help Tokyo Rakutenchi employees who were willing to return a favor to the local regions of Japan. This is how I came to be involved in the project.

**– Please tell us the concept of "Marugoto Nippon" by floor.**

**1F Rakuichi - Nippon Food Market:** Many of the shops here we cannot otherwise visit without

travelling to their part of Japan. The developer personally visited regions all over Japan in search of their treasures. Our first-floor enterprises hope to promote not only their shops but also their regions. “Marugoto Nippon Kura” ('cellar'), where locally renowned products are gathered, is managed by the developer, enabling it to sell a wide variety of products in small quantities, which is difficult for retailers and supermarkets.

**2F Waraku – Everyday Tool Shop:** This floor carries interesting items directly related to everyday life. They are selected through the discerning eyes of the developer and cannot be bought by mail order.

**3F Asakusa Nippon District:** This floor is a place to create community and a source of information. This is the floor which requires skill to attract customers. There is also exhibition space for local municipalities from all over the country. The regions selected for this space include not only those which have had a long term relationship with us, but also communities which are enthusiastic in promoting themselves and their products.

**4F Furusato Diner - Green Road:** This is not just another food court but a collection of carefully selected purveyors of quality food representing regions across Japan.



– **What sort of relationship is “Marugoto Nippon” trying to build with local regions?**

As a result of an explosion of interest about Japan in Dubai and other Middle East countries, the reputation of Japanese shops is growing. A shop in “Marugoto Nippon” results in increased popularity among foreign tourists in Tokyo. At the same time, the shop gains greater repute in its own region, restoring local pride in the knowledge that their shops are highly valued by foreigners. As with tourism in France, we are focusing on a shift to consumption of intangible values from consumption through purchases. It is important that people in Tokyo become interested in our local regions and come to admire their lifestyles.

“The reinvigoration of local economies is something that should be promoted for people in Tokyo. Tokyoites need an emotional heartland beyond the place where they grew up. By having a “second hometown”, people can go forward with a lighter heart.

**- good mornings Co., Ltd. opened its café in “Marugoto Nippon”?**

We opened our café as a place to link people in Tokyo with interesting local regions. We hope that

they will then consider these locales good places to visit in the future.

### **- How do you cope with foreign tourists?**

While inbound tourism is attracting a lot of attention, those in the industry should not limit themselves to the dualistic thinking that tourists coming here are either on shopping sprees or otherwise. That way we cannot gain a clear understanding of tourism.



We have found it essential that a place be loved by its residents if we wish to attract foreign tourists. Unless deeply loved by local people, we will not be able to interest tourists.

### **- If you want to vitalize local regions, what kind of measures needs to be taken?**

If you want to make miracles happen in a local region you only need someone with a unique perspective and three supporters. The synergetic effect produced by “an outsider, a young blood, an idiot and a region” plays an important role in revitalization.

Everyone has ideas, but only 1 in 1000 ideas will become a reality. If only those which seem worth investment of time or money are chosen, they will be narrowed down to 1/10. Then, only 1/10 of those can clear the administrative hurdles. Finally, only 1/10 of those ideas are financially feasible.

The keys to revitalizing regional economies include 1) administrative procedures, 2) earning the love and trust of locals and making the most of them, 3) enhancing through PR and promotion, and 4) fundraising. The steady implementation of these measures is the way to success. It is also important to take measures to draw the attention of young women who are trend-conscious if you want to attract a lot of customers.

In terms of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, tertiary industrialization and informatization must be promoted. If tourists want a truly enjoyable experience, they must go out to local regions to see and experience them in person. Local regions in Japan have a high potential for this approach to tourism. Willingness to go into action—that is the key to success!

Special thanks to: Yu Mizushiro, Representative Director of good mornings Co., Ltd.

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## Yu Mizushiro

Representative Director of good mornings Co., Ltd.  
Launched cafés and organized events during his former career at the interior firm IDEE.

Founded good mornings Co., Ltd. in 2012. The company's main businesses are to develop local community values by setting up creative spaces and society with good food and attractive design. In addition, good mornings offers consulting and media creation including web magazines, etc., to transmit information on fine products of local Japanese regions to the world.



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