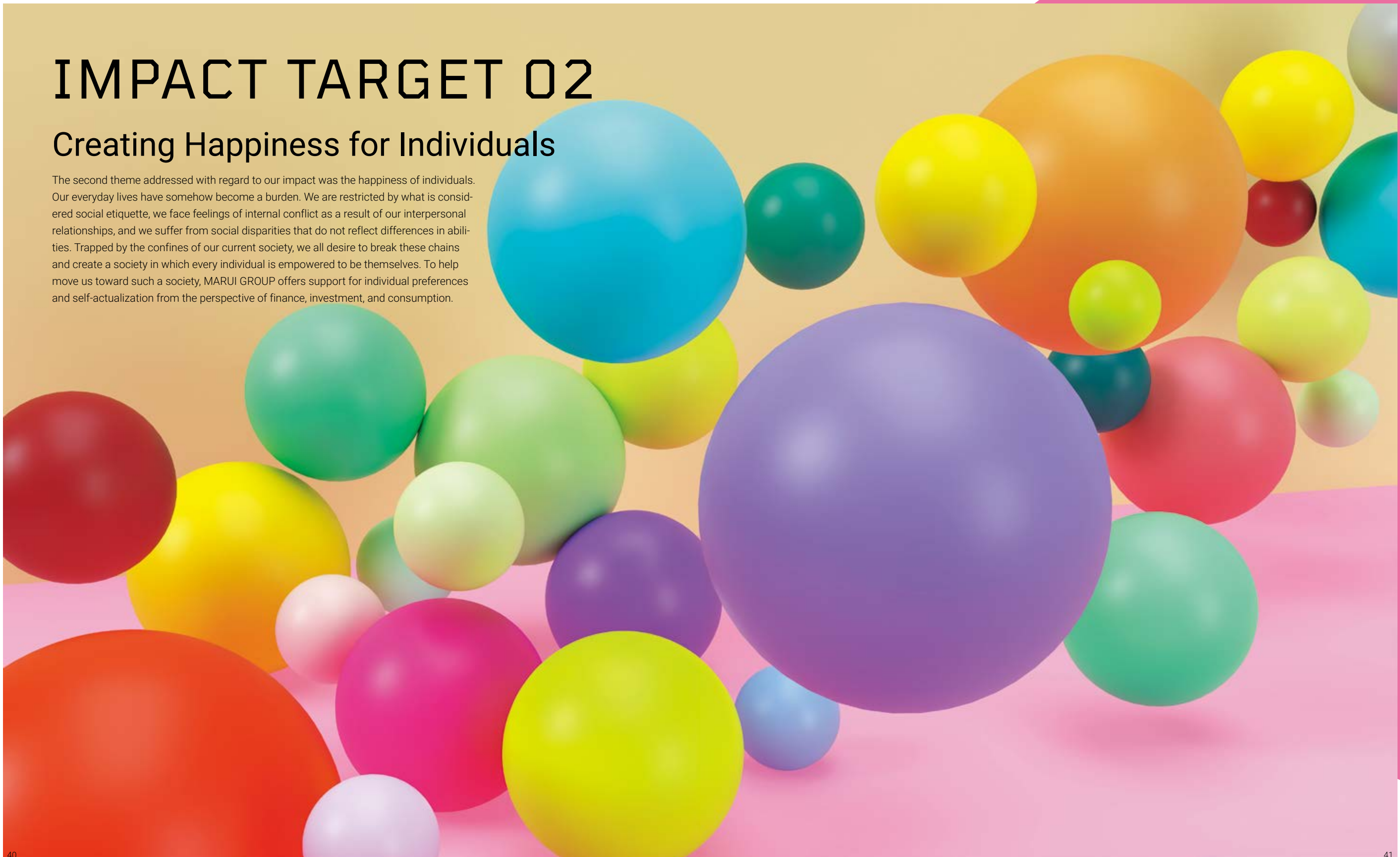


IMPACT TARGET 02

Creating Happiness for Individuals

The second theme addressed with regard to our impact was the happiness of individuals. Our everyday lives have somehow become a burden. We are restricted by what is considered social etiquette, we face feelings of internal conflict as a result of our interpersonal relationships, and we suffer from social disparities that do not reflect differences in abilities. Trapped by the confines of our current society, we all desire to break these chains and create a society in which every individual is empowered to be themselves. To help move us toward such a society, MARUI GROUP offers support for individual preferences and self-actualization from the perspective of finance, investment, and consumption.





Yasunori Nakagami

Yasunori Nakagami is the representative director and CEO of Misaki Capital Inc. and has served as an external director at MARUI GROUP since 2021. He is a self-proclaimed management enthusiast, placing the management of companies even above eating. Nakagami made his management consulting debut immediately after graduating from university. He also acts as a long-term investor dedicated to an emerging Japan based on the belief that management emphasizing partnership between managers, employees, and shareholders will contribute to improved corporate value.
www.misaki-capital.com/en/index.html

Arata Sekimoto

At only 13 years of age, Arata Sekimoto is already an unrivaled expert on *yokai* (traditional Japanese mythical creatures). His love of *yokai* extends beyond his research to the sale of books and merchandise on *yokai*. In 2020, he produced and sold keychains of a *yokai* known as *amabie* and used the proceeds from these sales to buy 4,000 hygienic masks, which he donated to local physician associations and healthcare centers. Moreover, he established a company called *Omori wo Tsukuru* ("Shaping Our Sentiments") when he was in the fifth grade of elementary school, and he currently oversees this company as president.
egaku.thebase.in/ (in Japanese only)



Hikari

Hikari refers to herself as a "financial economist cosplayer" committed to connecting the world through cosplay. In addition to acting as a fund manager at financial institutions both in Japan and overseas, she has visited more than 60 countries around the world as a backpacker and sometimes as a guest at overseas events, and her fans can be found across the globe. The number of self-made costumes she has worn over her 19-year career as a cosplayer surpasses 200. In 2017, she started up her own clothing brand centered on the Japanese view of "cuteness" (*kawaii*) with plans for overseas expansion.
www.instagram.com/hikari_green/

Shoki Takahata

Shoki Takahata is an unstoppable master of radio-controlled (RC) cars. First grabbing the "wheel" when he was 10, his storied racing career includes three consecutive wins at the Japanese national championship as well as a victory at the 2019 IFMAR World Championship for 1.8 IC Off-Road Cars, a world championship event held in California. The envy of RC car racers worldwide, this meticulous craftsman carefully selects the tires and components to be used for each race based on the course and weather, tuning his racing vehicle with millimeter-level precision. When not busy with his day job as an office worker, Takahata will look to broadcast his love of RC cars to the world via social media.



SUPPORTING EVERYONE'S HAPPINESS AND SELF-EXPRESSION

DIALOGUE 03 — YASUNORI NAKAGAMI — ARATA SEKIMOTO
— HIKARI — SHOKI TAKAHATA

Younger Generations Seeking the Pinnacles of Their Passions

The following is a discussion with Arata Sekimoto, a *yokai* researcher who started his own company while in elementary school; Hikari, an anime and manga cosplayer active around the world who has experience as an institutional investor and markets her own clothing brand; and Shoki Takahata, an RC car lover and world champion racer. These individuals, each seeking the pinnacle of their passions, were met by Yasunori Nakagami, an institutional investor and self-proclaimed management enthusiast who also serves as an external director at MARUI GROUP, who asked them about their respective passions.

Yokai, RC Cars, Cosplay, and Management—To Each Their Own Passion

Nakagami: We have asked for you to be here today because each of you is a member of the younger generations who has reached the pinnacle of your passion. I am not young, but I too pursued the pinnacle of my passion—management. In fact, I see myself as a management enthusiast, and I would place managing companies even above eating (laughs). After graduating from university, I joined a management consulting firm. I proceeded to help clients improve their management ability to the greatest degree possible over the next two

decades. I then moved on from consulting to get into investing some 15 years ago. Previously, I had not dreamed that I would eventually start my own company. In June 2021, I became an external director at MARUI GROUP. I am pleased that we were able to arrange such a forum today at which we can discuss the dedication we have each committed to our respective passions. Please start by introducing yourself.

Sekimoto: My name is Arata Sekimoto and I am a *yokai* researcher. I have loved books since I was a little kid. My house is filled with manga, novels, and encyclopedias. Back then, I would often get hooked on something, like insects or dinosaurs, but would quickly lose

interest later. However, this trend stopped when I reached *yokai*. *Yokai* are supernatural elements spoken about in the stories of old. I find the stories of these creatures incredibly interesting as I can sense how they were born out of people imposing their own thinking and imagination on things that happen. I even created my own *yokai* encyclopedia when I was in fifth grade, which was actually published by a major publisher.
Takahata: I am Shoki Takahata, the RC car racing world champion. I first got into RC cars when I was 10. Initially, it was because of my parents' influence. We had RC cars at home, and they asked if I wanted to try them out. I have never liked losing, and racing, which

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Yokai are supernatural elements spoken about in the stories of old. I find the stories of these creatures incredibly interesting as I can sense how they were born out of people imposing their own thinking and imagination on things that happen.



involves receiving a clear numeric rank, thus fit my personality. I also really enjoy tuning my car in preparation for each race. RC car racing entails blazing around tracks 600 to 700 meters long at speeds of up to 120 kph, where a difference of a thousandth of a second can be the difference between winning and losing. This means that precise tuning is crucial to ensure the car drives the way you want it to. A change in how tight one screw is can alter how a vehicle rolls, or leans, around corners. These kinds of small details are addicting. In 2019, I won the IFMAR World Championship for 1:8 IC Off-Road Cars event held in California. This competition uses 1:8 scale cars, the largest class of cars in RC racing. Just like in F1 and other automobile races, RC racing involves teams and sponsors. The world championship takes place once every two years, and the 2021 championship was scheduled to be held in Japan but was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I was looking forward to claiming my second consecutive championship win in my country, so this outcome was a bit disappointing.

Hikari: Hi, I'm Hikari. I am currently working at an investment fund, and I have been active as an anime and manga cosplayer for 19 years. I love visiting other countries; I have gone on backpacking trips in 60 countries, all while continuing my cosplay activities. I am the type of person who strives for perfection in the things I love. When preparing costumes, I explore various items, including complex wigs and outfits, as I try to express various two-dimensional characters in three dimensions. I upload the pictures I take in these costumes onto social media, and this has gained me a following overseas. One time when I was invited to an overseas cosplay event, I met people who said that they started cosplay a decade ago after learning about me. I was even asked for an autograph for someone

who still had one of my photo books from 10 years ago. I keep doing cosplay because I love how sharing my passion with other cosplayers allows me to connect with people both in Japan and around the world.

Takahata: I too have made a lot of connections and had a wide range of experiences due to my love of RC cars. When I won the world championship, even the rival racers were happy for me. This experience changed how I see things: We may be rivals on the track, but off of it we are all the same RC car lovers.

Sekimoto: The *yokai* researchers and folklore specialists I have come to know are almost all older than me. Even so, I can talk with these people for hours, and it is always a lot of fun. Still, as there are no *yokai* lovers my age, I do wish I had friends my own age who are also interested in *yokai*.

Nakagami: Hearing your stories, I realized two things that all four of us have in

common. The first is the need to research what we are passionate about. I can definitely relate as a management enthusiast. The inability to stop ourselves from getting to the bottom of the things we love is an important part of following our passions. The second thing is the need for comrades with similar interests. At first, it is fun to research by ourselves, but in the end, we want to share our passion with others to enjoy these activities together. Everyone feels this way. Talking with comrades from around the world allows us to surpass the boundaries of space, our age group, and even time.

Ways to Turn One's Passions
into a Business

Nakagami: I understand both Mr. Sekimoto and Ms. Hikari have started your own businesses. Could you please tell me a little about your businesses?

Sekimoto: When I was in fifth grade, I founded Omoi wo Tsukuru and became

the president of this company. I was even able to acquire a patent through this company. This story goes back to when I was in third grade. Basically, I wanted to invent something for my homework assignment over summer break, and I wanted my invention to be something that would help people. I started by asking my mom about the issues she faced. She told me that she was having problems with how long it took bath towels to dry after she washed them. To fix this problem, I invented a cylinder that would increase the area of the poles used to hang laundry out to dry to allow for faster drying of even larger items. This was the invention for which I took out a patent. They started selling my invention at ¥100 shops (the equivalent of dollar stores in the United States) in 2021. This made the decision to start a company worth it.

Hikari: I started up a clothing brand based on the Japanese view of "cuteness" that offers clothes people can

either wear on regular occasions or use as cosplay items. It used to be that one would have to make their cosplay costumes themselves, which made this a very difficult hobby to get into. I started out knowing nothing about sewing, but I learned by doing. To date, I have made more than 200 costumes. Today, however, one can find low-cost costumes to buy, which has made cosplay a more accessible hobby.

Nakagami: You are both turning your passions into businesses. What about you, Mr. Takahata? Do you have any interest in starting a business?

Takahata: Right now, I just want to focus on racing, but I am interested in starting up a business in the future. I want to provide services that RC car lovers will like. A little while ago, the racing community was a lot larger. The Japanese championship would see participation by more than 100 people. Today, the participation number is like half that. RC cars is a hobby that requires a lot of time



I keep doing cosplay because I love how sharing my passion with other cosplayers allows me to connect with people both in Japan and around the world.



Right now, I just want to focus on racing, but I am interested in starting up a business in the future.

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and money. As a result, we are losing many racers to video games, which you can play from the comfort of your own home. After I won the world championship, a local TV program asked to do a feature story on me. This story was broadcast on YouTube, where it has been viewed more than a million times. This reminded me that there are still a lot of people who love RC cars.

Nakagami: If you were to start a business, it seems like it might be a good idea to use your name as your brand. You are the world champion after all.

Takahata: Thank you for the advice. Why did you decide to start a business, Mr. Nakagami?

Nakagami: After spending two decades helping companies chart a better course in a management consulting firm, I came to think that I could become an investor. I followed this inclination to join the investment industry. Starting a business is something that you cannot do if you overthink things; the fear of failure will stop you in your tracks.

Hikari: I work with some unlisted companies. A lot of companies suffered after the 2008 financial crisis. Companies started based on the passions of managers making amazing products, but there are often times when the managers are more like craftsmen and are not really good at managing. It is great to have a passion, but there are many managers who cannot turn their passion into corporate value.

Nakagami: During Japan's period of rapid economic growth, it was important to produce the things people wanted in mass quantities to ensure that everyone could buy them. Today, however, goods do not sell as much. Also, people don't go to stores as often because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone is looking for a way to keep their business alive, but no one has found a good answer. I think we can see a viable answer in MARUI GROUP's approach of supporting individual preferences. RC cars are not something that should be mass-produced for mass consumption, and there is

probably not a lot of demand for *yokai*. Regardless, the niche demand for such items is very strong among enthusiasts. People with niche interests want to immerse themselves in their interests and talk with people who share these interests as much as possible. A company could probably find success by catering to such niche demand and reflecting this in their corporate value.

Result of Spreading One's Passion

Hikari: What I was most impressed with when talking with you all today is how everyone is simply continuing to following their passion, rather than jumping on the latest bandwagon. Cosplay was not a common hobby back when I started, and no one could understand my passion. I got a lot of flak from people around me. Not even my family could understand. Luckily, I was able to find a few people who could understand, and we enjoyed our passion together. I just continued with my hobby, and eventually

things like manga, anime, and cosplay, which had been viewed as stuff for nerds, got widespread attention through the government's Cool Japan campaign. It is not like I was trying to make cosplay mainstream, I just kept on doing it because it was what I loved.

Takahata: I can relate. When I started RC cars at age 10, my friends just thought I was playing with toys, but today they are cheering me on. The same goes for the company I work at. My coworkers first saw my RC car racing as a hobby, but I started to receive a lot of support after I told them about my victories at the Japanese championship and other events. I sometimes have to take days off to go to races. Luckily, my company understands.

Nakagami: It is true that niche interests eventually become mainstream as more and more people become interested in them. The *yokai* that Mr. Sekimoto loves may still be only a small niche, but I am sure the number of people who share your interest will grow if you keep at it. As these allies increase, you will likely see more interest among those your age, and before you know it, *yokai* will be gaining attention on a global scale.

Sekimoto: My research has found that there is an astounding number of legends about *yokai* and other supernatural elements in Japan. In other countries, it is common for monotheist beliefs like Christianity to be the norm, with other supernatural elements being relegated to the domains of demons and fairies. Japan, however, has a lot of gods, and stories of supernatural elements are passed down in forms such as legends about *yokai*.

Nakagami: Japan is said to have eight million gods. These gods take the form of trees, mountains, and rivers. This belief system seems to be founded on the principle that there is not one main character in life.

Sekimoto: That's right. Japan even presents the belief that words have power, that everything in this world, even words and colors, can be inhabited by a heart, a soul, or a god. There was an ancient Shinto tradition of purifying oneself by washing off any dirt before presenting oneself before a god. We continue this tradition today in the form of bathing. I think that there is no other country in the world where people bathe as much as Japan. Such customs may

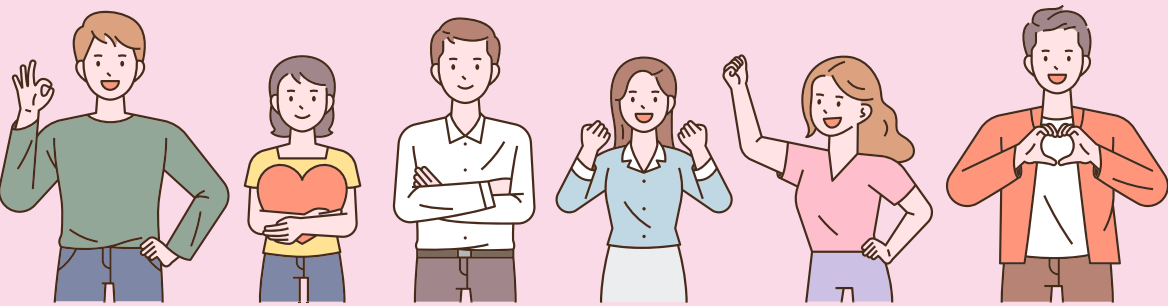
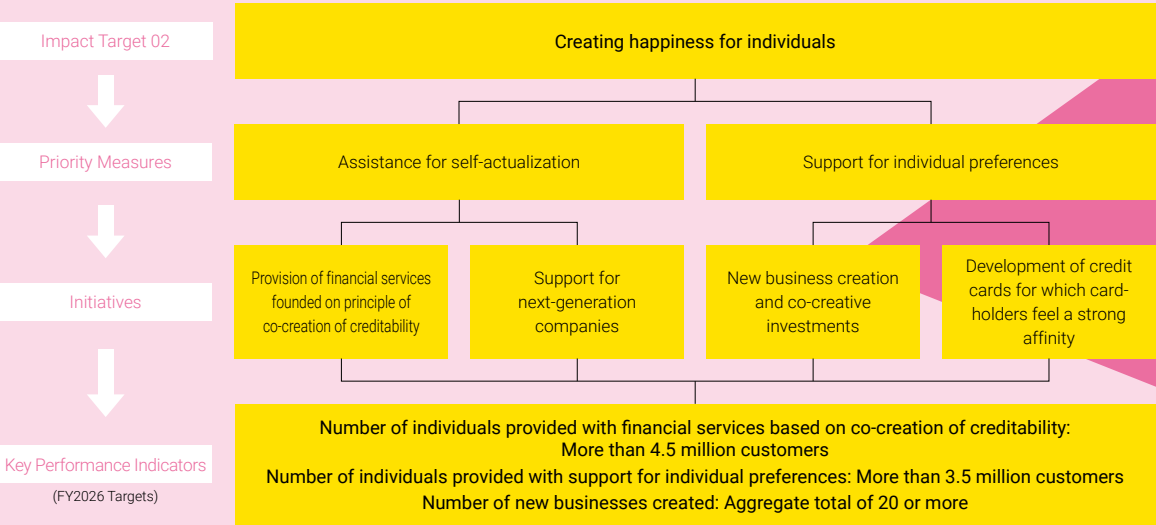
be unconsciously linked to culture and lessons handed down from the past. **Nakagami:** You surprised me with how knowledgeable you all are. Hearing you speak of your passions reminded me of a book about Kenichi Kato, editor of an old manga magazine. It is a critical biography of Kato, who published a manga magazine based on the belief that manga was beneficial to the development of youths. This magazine was published as a family business, and it started the tradition that would become the Japanese manga of today. In a now famous apartment building in Tokyo, he provided then popular manga artist Osamu Tezuka an apartment to work out of and housed various manga artists who had not yet found an audience. This building was a place where a wide variety of talent was cultivated. What I want to say is that even something like manga, which is now a major cultural cornerstone loved around the world, started from the passion, the love, of a single editor. Whether it be anime, cosplay, RC cars, *yokai*, or something else, when one's passion spreads, the result will be more people around the world becoming happy.



Creating Happiness for Individuals

People are plagued by as many instances of suffering as the number of dreams they pursue. However, no one should be forced to give up on their dream or have their dream denied because of the circumstances in which they find themselves. Every individual has limitless potential, and the optimistic outlook toward this potential that we should all be allowed to feel is the source of innovation. MARUI GROUP aspires to provide options that allow everyone to embrace their individuality and find happiness regardless of their age, gender, nationality, physical characteristics, or circumstances. In this manner, we are offering support for individual preferences and self-actualization and helping to accelerate the realization of a society that allows people to achieve individual empowerment.

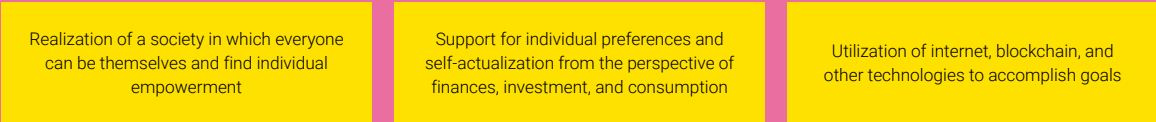
Overall Vision and Key Performance Indicators



WHO?



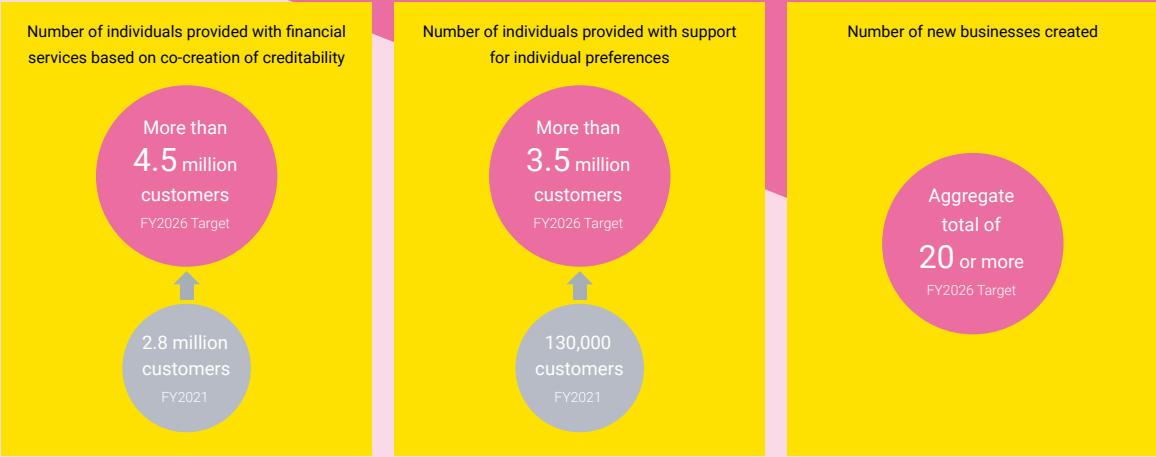
WHAT?



HOW?



OUR IMPACT



Support for Pursuing Interests

MARUI GROUP supports individuals with an endless range of interests, including anime, K-pop, veganism, cosmetics, art, cafes, camping, saunas, and do-it-yourself projects. The Anime Business Department was established in 2016, primarily with a staff comprising employees who were passionate about anime. The establishment of this department sparked the emergence of various other employee groups offering their support for a specific interest. When people with shared interests are able to gather together, it creates a positive atmosphere that is conducive to self-actualization and self-expression. In this section, we would like to talk about the passion employees devote toward supporting such interests.



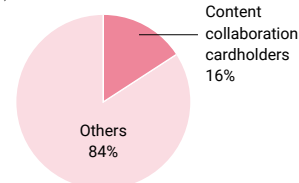
ANIME

Anime Boasting Global-Scale Popularity

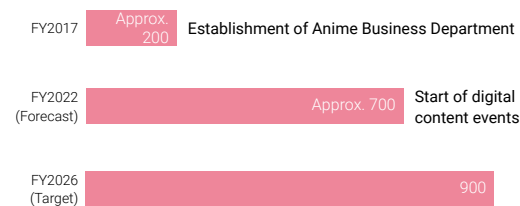
With global-scale popularity, anime is one of Japan's most well-known pop culture elements. Anime series often monopolize the top slots in the popularity rankings of video streaming services, and the impact of anime on society and industry is growing with each coming year.

MARUI GROUP's Anime Business Department was established with a staff centered on anime-loving employees passionate about supporting other anime fans. In addition, Marui stores have been holding anime events to give fans opportunities to better enjoy their passion. Our anime business sees a never-ending stream of new ideas for supporting this interest, including planning and selling original goods to help fans build their collections of merchandise based on their favorite anime series and the issuing of EPOS cards bearing anime-inspired designs. We have been witnessing a constant increase in the annual number of fans visiting event sites and in the number of events themselves, indicating the growth of the population of people who share this interest and our ideals.

Ratio of Content Collaboration Cardholders Among All New Cardholders (FY2020)



Annual Number of Events



Event based on increasingly popular *Tokyo Revengers*
Ken Wakui, Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo Revengers Movie Production Committee, 2020



Event based on highly popular *Jujutsu Kaisen*
Gege Akutami, Shueisha Inc., Jujutsu Kaisen Production Committee



Marina Takao
Sales Section 1,
Anime Business Department
MARUI CO., LTD.

I was able to create a collaboration card based on my favorite anime series!

A number of years ago, I visited a comic market event attended by the company that held the copyrights for my favorite anime series. I spoke with them a little at this event, and this sparked a series of other conversations that eventually culminated in the creation of a collaboration card based on that series. After I transferred from the Anime Business Department to a store, I found myself serving a customer with that card. When they said that they loved the design, it made me super happy. I returned to the Anime Business Department after two years working at the store to find that the department had branched out to also deal with YouTube, streaming apps, and other digital content. We are now able to support the interests of an even wider range of people!

Growing Assortment of Anime Cards Promising to Include Your Favorite

MARUI GROUP's anime-related collaboration cards began in 2014 with a card based on Otomate, a brand of video games aimed at women. In the years that followed, we proceeded to develop an ever-growing assortment of anime cards ranging from cards associated with popular anime series, such as *Gintama*, *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, and *ONE PIECE*, to lesser known series. We will continue to build upon our lineup of collaboration cards so that everyone will be able to find a card based on their favorite series and have that card occupy a permanent position in their wallet.



I want to support the interests of both players and fans!

The Anime Business Department is currently rolling out services aimed at supporting video game players on YouTube and streaming apps as well as their fans. For example, we are holding events at Marui stores that serve as opportunities for players to use to "show off their stuff" and earn a following. Fans can also build solidarity with their favorite players and other fans by attending such events. This is just one way we are allowing MARUI GROUP's media to be used as a stage in our efforts to promote co-creation with digital content. I hope to help make MARUI GROUP a platform holder that uses its assets to support people's interests in the future.

Nearly 300,000 Twitter Followers

The official Marui no Anime Twitter account celebrated the fifth anniversary of its creation with nearly 300,000 followers (as of December 1, 2021), and this number continues to grow. This Twitter account is used as a venue for providing information on limited-time events at Marui and Modi stores and items sold online as well as for conducting campaigns like fandom surveys. Attracting tweets lovingly crafted by fans pushing their favorite series, the account has become a bustling hub of activity. Marui no Anime Twitter will continue to function as a venue for new discoveries and encounters related to one's interests on into the future.

Official Marui no Anime Twitter account
(in Japanese only)
@marui_anime



Birthday event for popular multi-creator P-Marui Sama held at Marui store
© P.M.S.



First physical location of YouTube anime production and distribution company Plott Inc.
©Plott Inc. 2021



Kei Ogawa
Sales Section 1,
Anime Business Department
MARUI CO., LTD.

K-POP

K-Pop Enjoying a Passionate Fandom

K-pop is a genre of music that enjoys a passionate fandom around the world. Fans are so dedicated that they will be seen displaying signs advertising the birthdays and debut anniversaries of their favorite artists, preparing subtitles for television programs in which these artists appear, and otherwise expressing their passion in South Korea and countries around the world.

MARUI GROUP has set up a K-pop division with the goal of further catalyzing the immense passion that fans exert toward this interest. The activities of this division include online community forums and events at Marui stores.

Brief History of South Korean Media Boom

2004	Broadcast of <i>Winter Sonata</i> debuts in Japan, sparking an explosion in popularity of Bae Yong-joon and other South Korean actors
2010	Start of K-pop boom led by artists like TVXQ, Big Bang, Girls' Generation, and Kara
2015	BTS claims No. 1 spot on U.S. Billboard 200
2020	Video productions like the film <i>Parasite</i> and the TV drama <i>Itaewon Class</i> gain attention
2021	K-pop artists take to the global stage, making frequent appearances on overseas music programs

I hope to make fans thankful for the support MARUI GROUP offers for their fandom!

I fell down the K-pop rabbit hole after watching a BTS performance. K-pop fans are quick to move to support their favorite artists, and we hold events related to K-pop and South Korean dramas at Marui stores for the benefit of such fans. We have even started an online community called CHOA Comm to provide a venue for exchanges between fans. This community has recently been working to help out fans that were unable to attend certain events by having fellow fans post reports of these events. I am committed to developing fandom businesses that will make fans thankful for the support MARUI GROUP offers for their fandom.

Community Website for Linking People's CHOA (Likes)

CHOA Comm is a community website created to provide a venue through which lovers of South Korean culture can connect with those who share their passion regardless of time or place. As of December 6, 2021, this thriving online fan community had around 22,000 registered users enjoying the opportunity to tell others about their recommended South Korean dramas and dishes or to talk about their favorite K-pop idols and actors.

CHOA Comm community website (in Japanese only)
www.beach.jp/community/CHOA-0101/index

Check out the official CHOA Comm Twitter account for the latest event information.
[@choa_0101](https://twitter.com/choa_0101)



Commemorative photograph event where fans posed with tomato prop resembling tomato held by actor



Space for visitors to write freely about their favorite South Korean dramas or K-pop artists

Events Designed by Fans to Excite Fans

The most important thing to consider when planning an event is the emotional response it will produce, and MARUI GROUP employs a variety of techniques to excite fans at its events. For example, at an event commemorating the sale of a photo book of a popular actor, we prepared a tomato prop that resembled the tomato held by the actor on the book's cover for fans to use when taking photographs. For events related to K-pop idols, we distribute items that are must-haves for birthday events.



Mayu Hinohara
Sales Section 2,
Anime Business Department
MARUI CO., LTD.



K-COSMETICS

Support for
Pursuing Interests

K-Cosmetics at the Leading Edge of Beauty

K-cosmetics* are drawing global interest as they continue to set new trends in the field of cosmetics. The greatest appeal of these cosmetics is the high quality they offer relative to their affordable price, allowing them to capture the hearts of fans of all genders, ages, and nationalities.

To support this fandom, MARUI GROUP created KOREAJU, a service that offers a lineup of recommended K-cosmetic products to allow fans to shop for the product that fits them best with peace of mind through both physical and e-commerce venues.

* Korean cosmetics



Erika Yokoyama
K-Cosmetics Business
Department
okos Co., Ltd.

I want to evolve KOREAJU into a community of K-cosmetics lovers!

K-pop was the gateway through which I fell in love with K-cosmetics. At KOREAJU events, I have had the joy of chatting with customers about K-pop as I help them pick out cosmetic products, and these customers have mentioned that they wished we did these events all the time. I want to make KOREAJU more than just a place to buy products; I want to evolve it into a community of K-cosmetics lovers and to help create more fans of South Korea through this community.



Event at non-MARUI GROUP store

KOREAJU Lineup Promising Something for Everyone

KOREAJU offers more than 800 K-cosmetic products from 50 brands through its e-commerce website, and we offer new limited-time KOREAJU sets every month that provide discounts and special bonuses. KOREAJU events are periodically held at physical stores to offer customers an opportunity to shop while actually trying out products.

Official KOREAJU website (in Japanese only)
koreaju.0101.co.jp/
 Check out the official KOREAJU Instagram account for information on popular and staff-recommended cosmetic products.
[@koreaju_official](https://www.instagram.com/koreaju_official)

KOREAJU

Top 3 Recommendations from KOREAJU Staff

- No. 1 High cost performance face masks
- No. 2 Eyeshadow available in a wide assortment of types
- No. 3 Lip tint that won't get on your mask

I love seeing customers having fun picking out cosmetics!

I am a member of the KOREAJU Support Team, and I help out with the operation of events and with our official Instagram account. I continued to apply for this position through our internal open application system until I was eventually chosen, and I have even been selected to staff events twice. I love K-cosmetics as well as trying out cosmetic products with customers to help them find new likes and maybe even new favorites. Businesses that support interests allow us employees to use our interests to spread the interests of customers. I will continue working to deliver higher levels of service so that I can better give form to the input and desires of customers.



Shiori Yamaguchi
KOREAJU Support Team
Women's Shoes Sales Floor,
Machida Marui
MARUI CO., LTD.

VEGANISM



Support for
Pursuing Interests

New Lifestyle Option of Veganism

Veganism is garnering attention from both the perspectives of environmental preservation and health. The influence of this lifestyle is spreading, and we have recently seen a rise in brands that do not use leather products or conduct animal experiments in both the fashion and beauty industries. There might even be times when you are using a vegan product without even knowing it. Focused on food, the element of the vegan lifestyle that is easiest to incorporate into our everyday lives, our Vegan Business Department is developing and selling vegan confections that do not use animal products and sharing how to enjoy such treats via social media.



Setsuko Kaneko
Vegan Business Department
okos Co., Ltd.

I really get the feeling that we are delivering the joy of choice to our customers.

We launched the vee ga boo vegan confection mail order service in May 2021. Since the start of this service, I have been able to see the joy it brings to customers while receiving input expressing this joy, and these outpourings have become my source of motivation. At events, I have seen the eyes of children with allergies light up when they are told that they can eat anything we offered, and this makes me really happy. However, I realize that eggs and dairy products are not the only things people can be allergic to; they can have wheat and soy allergies too. We therefore offer a wide variety of vegan brands and foods, really giving me the feeling that we are delivering the joy of choice to our customers.



Brands rotating on a monthly basis let customers enjoy new treats every month.

Sets Offering the Excitement of Trying Various Delicious Vegan Confections

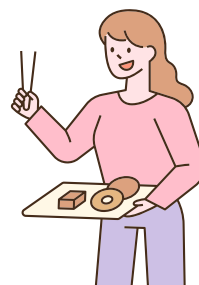
Launched in May 2021, vee ga boo is a mail order service through which users receive sets containing a different assortment of meticulously selected vegan confections every month. Each month, users will be treated to confections from three to five different brands, meaning that everyone is sure to find something they like.

vee ga boo website (in Japanese only)
vee-ga-boo.jp/

Instagram Account Offering Up-to-the-Minute Information

Followers of the official vee ga boo Instagram account will be treated to up-to-the-minute information on our monthly confection sets, recommended brands, and events. We also arrange live broadcasts with the producers of these brands to give followers a behind-the-scenes look at the origins of these brands and the production of their confections. You can even get exclusive coupons and other bonuses.

Official vee ga boo Instagram account (in Japanese only)
[@vee_ga_boo_official](https://www.instagram.com/vee_ga_boo_official)



EMPOWERMENT

Flagship Shops of Brands Supporting Individual Empowerment Opening at Marui Stores

MARUI GROUP continues co-creation with brand holders that resonate with our ideal of supporting individual preferences. Here, we will look at two such companies that have recently opened flagship shops in Marui stores: DINETTE inc. and BULK HOMME Co., Ltd.

Both of these brands have won strong support from customers for the high levels of craftsmanship they devote to their exquisite products as well as for the overall narrative associated with these brands. The flagship shops are steeped in the aesthetic of their respective brands, and their knowledgeable staff are reliable sources of beauty advice. Both shops are sure to offer something that you will love.

Brand Offering Items That Women Have Always Wanted

DINETTE is a company charged with a mission of creating a happier world through the power of women. This company's beauty-related social media accounts supply the latest cosmetics information users seek along with insight and other content to help users become even more beautiful. Moreover, DINETTE's private PHOEBE BEAUTY UP brand has been shaped by information on user needs acquired through various media venues. This commitment to user needs is the reason this brand is loved by so many.

Official PHOEBE BEAUTY UP website (in Japanese only)
phoebbeautyup.com/lp?u=gold

Official DINETTE Instagram account (in Japanese only)
[@dinette_inc](https://www.instagram.com/dinette_inc)



PHOEBE BEAUTY UP shop providing an environment for taking photos to post on social media (Yurakucho Marui)



BULK HOMME THE STAND shop that uses the latest technologies to recreate the brand's aesthetic (Shinjuku Marui Main Building)

Empowerment of Men Worldwide through Men's Beauty Products

BULK HOMME defines its mission as earning the No. 1 share of the global men's skincare market. Inspired by this mission, BULK HOMME is supporting the lifestyles of men around the world through men's beauty products. Expanding into Asia in 2017 and then into the United Kingdom and France in 2020, this company has continued to steadily grow its fan base. BULK HOMME only offers products with assured quality verified through a process of repeated inspections. Its physical flagship shop allows customers to try out cosmetic products and feel the actual textures of skin products while talking with staff members.

Official BULK HOMME website (in Japanese only)
bulk.co.jp/

Report on MARUI GROUP's employee visit to BULK HOMME THE STAND shop (in Japanese only)
www.to-mare.com/news/2021/bulk-homme.html

VOICE



Takuya Noguchi
CEO and Representative Director,
BULK HOMME Co., Ltd.

Our new flagship shop has seen positive reception.

BULK HOMME is a brand founded on the goal of capitalizing on Japan's acute talent for research and development on beauty and skincare products to earn fame around the world. We decided to set up shop in a Marui store after developing a line of cosmetic products for men, as it is important to have a place and services that allow people to try out products, especially cosmetics. Fortunately, our new flagship shop has seen positive reception from a wide variety of customers, ranging from those who have previously purchased our products online to those who had their first experience with our products at the shop.



Vegan Baking with 8abliſh

EIGHTABLISH

Baking of Vegan Treats That Are Friendly Toward People and the Planet

Vegan foods have recently been drawing attention for reasons other than environmental preservation benefits. However, the lack of stores dealing in vegan foods in Japan means that they are still not easily available to everyone. In May 2021, MARUI GROUP launched its vee ga boo service, which delivers meticulously selected vegan treats to customers on a monthly basis, to make vegan foods feel more accessible. Seeking to further communicate the appeal of vegan treats to a wider range of people, we employed the guidance of EIGHTABLISH INC. (8abliſh), a company that supplies products for the vee ga boo service, to hold a baking session in which we made vegan treats that are friendly toward people and the planet together with children who will help shape the future.

Recipe for Gluten-Free Chocolate Chip Muffins (Batch of Six)

A	Baking rice flour	160 g
	Soy flour	40 g
	Almond powder	50 g
	Baking powder	10 g
B	Canola oil	70 g
	Soy milk	170 g
	Maple syrup	80 g
C	Chocolate chips	40 g

Select toppings based on preference
(chocolate chips, almonds, etc.)



Ingredients free of eggs and other animal products



Mix ingredients from group A and pass through a sieve



Pour soy milk and then maple syrup into the canola oil from group B and stir thoroughly



Pour ingredients from group B into the mixed ingredients from group A and mix with a spatula



Add chocolate chips from group C while powdery texture still remains



Use spoon to transfer dough to muffin molds with diameter of 7.0 cm and depth of 3.5 cm, bake in baking cup as soon as possible after measuring dough volume (muffins will rise less if too much time has passed)



Add toppings like chocolate chips or almonds



Preheat oven to 180°C and bake for 30 minutes

A delicious treat is
a reward for a job
well done!



Masazumi (age 5) and
Ako (age 7) enjoyed their
first time baking.

What are vegan baked goods?

Vegan baked goods are confections made using only plant-derived ingredients and without using honey, eggs, dairy products, or other animal products. These treats can be enjoyed by children and adults alike, even those with allergies or who have embraced diets that are friendly toward the environment.

A video of this vegan baking session is available on MARUI GROUP's community YouTube channel (in Japanese only).
www.to-mare.com/ytube/

8abliſh

Established in 2000, 8abliſh is a company that provides vegan confections based on its slogan of UNIVERSAL PLEASURE FOR EVERYONE. They are committed to providing treats that can be loved universally by people of all ages and that offer peace of mind for both producers and eaters regardless of the dietary restrictions they may face based on their physical conditions, religion, or beliefs. In August 2021, 8abliſh opened its latest store in Toyama Prefecture, adding to existing locations in the Minami-Aoyama and Ginza areas of Tokyo.

8abliſh website (in Japanese only)
www.8abliſh.com/
8abliſh online shop (in Japanese only)
8abliſh.shop/



Parlor 8abliſh

vee ga boo service offering a chance to enjoy various vegan confections
Official vee ga boo website (in Japanese only)
vee-ga-boo.jp
Official vee ga boo Instagram account (in Japanese only)
www.instagram.com/vee_ga_boo_official/



ASSISTANCE FOR ACHIEVING SELF-ACTUALIZATION

MARUI GROUP has launched two programs for the purpose of accelerating open innovation and creating new businesses. These programs are drawing participation from members of younger generations boasting innovative ideas as well as from young entrepreneurs driven by their convictions to build a more prosperous society through business. Through these programs, MARUI GROUP's assets and expertise are being used to offer assistance for achieving self-actualization.



Future Accelerator Gateway Program for University and Graduate School Students

Together with IT education program operator Life is Tech, Inc., MARUI GROUP launched the Future Accelerator Gateway program in October 2020. This program solicits new business ideas from university and graduate school students (or from people in the equivalent age range of 18 to 24). Participants whose ideas are selected form teams with MARUI GROUP employees to refine their business ideas under the guidance of entrepreneur mentors over a period of three months. The mentor for the first iteration of the program was Life is Tech CEO Yusuke Mizuno, while second iteration participants were mentored by BASE CEO Yuta Tsuruoka and TSUKURUBA CEO Hiroki Murakami. Presentations were judged by well-known entrepreneurs together with MARUI GROUP President Hiroshi Aoi. This robust support network aided the young participants in shaping their passions toward the businesses they envisioned.



The passion of younger generations rekindled our spirit of entrepreneurship.

It was amazing watching the students participating in the Future Accelerator Gateway program put their heads together to come up with their ideas and having fun while giving their absolute all amid the tense atmosphere on the day of the presentations. The open-minded, unfettered ideas produced by the participants were truly stimulating, and it rekindled our spirit of entrepreneurship. I hope that the students will remain conscious of the importance of being proactive and initiating action so that they will not be hesitant to embark on the first step of new ventures.

*"Im La Floria" brand of care products for delicate areas, developed by Mellia Inc. (in Japanese only)
im-official.com/

Comments from Judges of First Program Iteration



Yuki Hara
Representative Director
and CEO
Mellia Inc.



Yuki Wada
Representative Director
and CEO
Mellia Inc.

Marui Co-Creation Pitch Program for Start-Up Companies

Marui Co-Creation Pitch is a program for soliciting business ideas from start-up companies created jointly with SAMURAI INCUBATE INC. in February 2021. SAMURAI INCUBATE conducts venture capital businesses in which it invests and supports the growth of relatively young start-up companies and promotes open innovation with large companies and municipal and other government agencies. The first Marui Co-Creation Pitch event saw the proposal of business ideas for 10 companies selected from among 35 applicants via written and interview screening. Each of the proposals exuded a strong sense of passion and sparked a lively back-and-forth of questions with judges. In the end, four companies were selected for the grand prize. Co-creation is already underway with some of these companies, like HERALBONY, winner of a grand prize as well as the audience prize, with which we are issuing collaboration cards.

Four Grand Prize Winners

Name	Business Activities
Ellie Inc.	Development of SILKFOOD, a next-generation food product made from silkworms
ShareWing, Co., Ltd.	Operation of OTERA STAY service for staying overnight at temples and CLOUD HOTEL online service for experiencing pilgrims' quarters
DATAFLUCT, Inc.	Provision of solutions for resolving corporate and social issues using data science
HERALBONY	Social measures based on the theme of combining art with disabilities (sale of artworks, fabric art, space production)



HERALBONY EPOS Card



Pop-up shop opened to commemorate launch of HERALBONY EPOS Card (Yurakucho Marui)
Photograph by Shinsuke Sugino

HERALBONY EPOS Card Moving Society
Forward with Each Purchase
Committed to its mission of helping people express their unique color, HERALBONY is a start-up company that works with artists with disabilities across Japan to create a new culture focused on welfare. MARUI GROUP partnered with this company to launch the HERALBONY EPOS Card in November 2021 through which 0.1% of every purchase is donated to welfare facilities via HERALBONY. By using this card, customers are able to donate to art creation, gallery operation, and welfare facilities when they do their everyday shopping.

I want to help produce MARUI GROUP's crowning co-creation success stories.

MARUI GROUP cannot achieve its vision and mission alone; it will need to create new value through open innovation. The Marui Co-Creation Pitch program was born out of this recognition as we searched for ways to develop a program that could create new businesses through open innovation by combining the assets and experience of start-ups with those of MARUI GROUP.

We have received a number of unique ideas for co-creation through this program, and I was proud to help initiate our first co-creative undertaking through this program. I want to help evolve the Marui Co-Creation Pitch program so that it can keep producing MARUI GROUP's crowning co-creation success stories.



Sho Osawa
New Business Development
Corporate Planning Division
MARUI GROUP CO., LTD.

Behind-the-scenes discussion about Marui Co-Creation Pitch 2021 (in Japanese only)
www.to-mare.com/tf/2021/005.html



NEW BUSINESSES BORN OUT OF IDEAS FROM YOUNGER GENERATIONS

DIALOGUE 04 ——— KIMIHIRO KATSUMI ——— YUTO TOMITA
————— YUSUKE MIZUNO ——— HIROYA NAKAMURA

New Businesses Created from the Ideas of Younger Generations

Future Accelerator Gateway is a program through which members of younger generations are invited to propose business ideas with the potential to change the future. Those ideas selected are refined over a period of roughly three months through collaboration with the presidents of start-ups and employees of MARUI GROUP. The first iteration of this program was held over the period from December 2020 to March 2021. We met with two representatives of younger generations who participated in this iteration of the program to hear about their experiences in the program, what they learned from it, and the possibilities for the future.

Please refer to the following website for more information on Future Accelerator Gateway 2020 (in Japanese only).
www.0101maruigroup.co.jp/future/archive/001.html

Futures Shaped by Program Participants

Nakamura: It has been a while. In Future Accelerator Gateway, I participated as a MARUI GROUP mentor in the Allesgood team led by Mr. Katsumi. Mr. Mizuno, meanwhile, attended to all teams, offering valuable input as an entrepreneur mentor. Today, I wanted to hear about your perspectives on the program. Let's start by introducing ourselves. Would you like to go first, Mr. Mizuno?

Mizuno: Sure. My name is Yusuke Mizuno. I started an educational technology venture company called Life is Tech in 2010. This company teaches junior high and high school students about IT and computer programming. We are not only about teaching, though. We have set a medium-term target of fostering 1.2 million innovators by 2025. By fostering such innovators, we hope to cultivate a capacity to change society and support people's happiness. Life is Tech shares MARUI GROUP's vision: We want our business to contribute to a better society for future generations.

Katsumi: I am Kimihiro Katsumi, CEO of Allesgood. This company offers

ETHICAL SHUKATSU, a job-hunting platform designed to introduce companies actively addressing climate change, poverty, and other social issues to students looking to work at such companies. My decision to start such a company was based on the struggles I personally faced finding a job. I had wanted to choose a company from the perspective of social issues, but there was no effective means of searching for such companies at the time. This experience led to the idea for ETHICAL SHUKATSU. I like to think I am quick to act, and when the idea sprung into my head, I immediately registered it as a company. It was around that time that I learned of the Future Accelerator Gateway program, and I jumped on the opportunity.

Nakamura: I understand the ETHICAL SHUKATSU platform is already in service.

Katsumi: It has only been about three months since we launched the platform, and we have just now reached the phase at which we are identifying and addressing user issues. Our mission is to accelerate the move toward sustainability in industry, in businesses. Human resources are a crucial management resource. By

matching companies dedicated to resolving social issues and bettering the future with human resources who look to do the same, we hope to foster innovators who can achieve the desirable impacts advocated by Mr. Mizuno and MARUI GROUP.

Mizuno: Your presentation for the Future Accelerator Gateway program was really impressive, and you yourself have a certain appeal. At first, you seemed to lack the skills to implement the idea for ETHICAL SHUKATSU, but the idea itself was really good as it coincided with the times.

Katsumi: Thank you. Despite your kind words, it was not me, but Mr. Tomita's team that took first place.

Nakamura: That makes for a good segue; Mr. Tomita, would you like to introduce yourself and explain your business idea and reason for participating in the Future Accelerator Gateway program?

Tomita: Yes. My name is Yuto Tomita. I am looking to develop a textbook distribution service for students who are unable to purchase textbooks due to economic reasons. In Japan, there is currently a move to digitize junior high and high school textbooks. I see no reason why we can't do this for university textbooks, and I therefore plan to develop a service that will allow for textbooks to be viewed via a smartphone or computer. I found out about



Kimihiro Katsumi
 Representative Director and CEO
 Allesgood Inc.
 Born in 1998, Kimihiro Katsumi founded Allesgood Inc. in response to issues he saw with the existing job-hunting process in Japan. This company operates ETHICAL SHUKATSU, a more social issue-oriented version of a LinkedIn-type platform designed to introduce ethical companies seeking to resolve social issues to talented students.

NEW BUSINESSES BORN OUT OF IDEAS
FROM YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Future Accelerator Gateway because my two teammates and I were working as mentors for junior high and high school students at Life is Tech. We decided that we wanted to try to create something, and this led to our decision to enter the program.

Nakamura: How far has your service come along?

Tomita: At the moment, we are working with a university accelerator program to build connections with publishers. Our service is dependent upon the cooperation of the publishers who hold the copyrights to the books we hope to digitize and distribute. However, there are many people in publishing who still are averse to digitizing books. Even if we are able to launch this service, the first issue we will need to address will be the fact that a large number of students lack the credit cards necessary to use subscription services. In the Future Accelerator Gateway program, we advanced discussion based on the assumption that we would be collaborating with MARUI GROUP. This gave rise to the ideas of linking the service to EPOS cards or issuing prepaid cards that could be used with the service.

Freedom of Youth

Katsumi: Aside from missing out on first place, there is something else that really

stuck with me from the program. Two days before the final presentation, I had the chance to give a preliminary presentation to Mr. Mizuno. At the same time, we had already received a contract for our service from a customer, and we had a rough date of when we would start to record sales. I was therefore sure that we would get first place. However, Mr. Mizuno said our preliminary presentation was “boring.”

Mizuno: I don’t recall saying that (everyone laughs).

Nakamura: From my standpoint as a mentor, I thought “this is bad.” However, when we looked back at the presentation materials, I could see what you were talking about. The presentation looked like one that a major company would do to try and secure a budget. It really was boring. The problem could be traced back to us, the members of the team from MARUI GROUP. Based on our own preconceptions, we had suggested that the presentation be made more logical.

Katsumi: I cannot remember a time when I have felt more unnerved. Then, Mr. Mizuno told me that the presentation just didn’t seem like me. It was then that it hit me. I had focused so much on rational explanations that I had inadvertently stripped the passion out of the presentation. We completely reworked the presentation over the next two days to better communicate our passion. This



Yuto Tomita

Born in 1999, Yuto Tomita acted as a programming mentor at Life is Tech while he was in university. He established iisa to develop a textbook distribution service for university students, and he is currently working to commercialize this service.

experience taught me the importance of looking forward when we fail.

Mizuno: If you had given up there, you would have failed as an entrepreneur. I made a point of speaking my mind with no concern about how you would react to it. If you cannot respond appropriately to criticism, you are not cut out to be an entrepreneur. People grow not with time, but rather through an ongoing process of responding to criticism. You, Mr. Katsumi, are here today because you were able to respond appropriately to such criticism.

Tomita: I too took a very orthodox approach toward the program. Luckily, Mr. Mizuno helped me amend my approach. There is a law that says digitized books cannot be borrowed or lent, so I was convinced that we would have to distribute printed books. However, there was no way we could make that profitable. After struggling with this quandary for about a month, Mr. Mizuno told me that I should try and free myself of preconceptions. He also suggested that I start by making a product I could show publishers. We made this product over the course of two weeks. I was shocked at how many publishers were now willing to take us seriously after we came up with a product.



Yusuke Mizuno

Representative Director and CEO
Life is Tech, Inc.

Yusuke Mizuno was born in Hokkaido in 1982. During his time at graduate school, Mizuno spent two years as a part-time physics teacher at a high school. After completing the graduate program, he joined a human resource consulting firm. It was in July 2010 that Mizuno founded Life is Tech, Inc., and this company formed a capital alliance with MARUI GROUP in 2019. Through this company he started up Life is Tech!, a programming and IT camp and education program for junior high and high school students that employs the IT education methods used in Silicon Valley.

Nakamura: I was surprised by your swift ability to transform your idea into an implementable form. At MARUI GROUP, it is a shared assumption that developing an app or some other product requires a significant amount of time and money.

Mizuno: Students can get it done in two weeks (laughs). Companies tend to be predisposed to underestimating the abilities of students, but they are often impressed when they actually see them in action. A major benefit of youth is the freedom that allows you to tackle challenges that large companies tend to shy away from.

IT and Programming Skills That Help
Make Lives Better

Katsumi: IT and digital technologies have made it easier for a single person, even a student, to take action to resolve social issues. ETHICAL SHUKATSU is a digital job-hunting platform that matches companies with students. If we had to match people in the same way without IT and digital technologies, it would be super expensive.

Tomita: I agree. Launching a business or service is something that has been made much more accessible thanks to IT and digital technologies. The idea of just starting with a prototype is still applicable today, and it would not be an exaggeration to say that this type of thinking changed my life.

Nakamura: The MARUI GROUP employees that took part in Future Accelerator Gateway as mentors felt the same. We realized that we too could make something new. In fact, after the program, I made an app for the new business I oversee. I surveyed and interviewed customers while showing this app. The response was 100% different from the ones I was used to getting with paper proposals.

Mizuno: This is what digital transformation means. People learn programming to make products, and those products have the potential to change someone’s life for the better or to lead to the

creation of more convenient services. In Japan, information technology will become a required course for high school students in April 2022, and it is slated to show up on the shared first-phase university entrance exam in 2025. This means that a future in which all students will have basic programming knowledge when they join the workforce is not far off. Programming will become a basic work skill just like English.

Katsumi: The part of participating in Future Accelerator Gateway I am most thankful for was the opportunity to hear about the feelings and success stories of people who are truly committed to changing the world like Mr. Mizuno and President Aoi. In the future, I hope to use what I have learned to help junior high and high school students with a similar drive to chase their ambitions.

Mizuno: I hope you will do just that. Junior high and high school students are generally not moved by the words of adults. This is why Life is Tech employs mentors in their 20s to teach students. Rather than being taught by a 40-something with teaching skills, learning from someone in their 20s, who seems cool and relatable, is more valuable in terms of changing a student’s life. This is true even if the mentor lacks teaching skills.



Hiroya Nakamura

Co-Creative Media and Business Management Officer
D2C & Co. Inc.

Hiroya Nakamura joined MARUI GROUP in 2015, and in 2020, he was charged with overseeing a new business as the co-creative media and business management officer of D2C & Co. Inc. He has also been involved in the launch and operation of 5PM Journal, Japan’s first D2C brand curation website (in Japanese only).
5pmjournal.com/

Nakamura: Future Accelerator Gateway is a program brimming with potential. It creates businesses that we would have never imagined. I see the possibility for us to change the future of MARUI GROUP through synergies with these businesses. I also want to increase the number of co-creative partners we have among younger generations, like you two. The more such partners we have, the more force we will have propelling us toward our desired impact.



TELL US WHAT YOU LOVE

Nitobe Bunka Gakuen, located in the Nakano area of Tokyo where MARUI GROUP was founded, has defined its goal of fostering happiness creation and is cultivating individuals with the capacity to help resolve social issues. This school also has the facility VIVISTOP NITOBE, which is a creative space that is not bound by the traditional conventions of schools and that allows teachers and students to learn together. VIVISTOP encourages students to freely create based on their interests. In fact, children are able to use this space to pursue their own interests. VIVISTOP resonates with MARUI GROUP's goal of developing spaces for co-creation. We sat down with four students from Nitobe Bunka Gakuen and Yusuke Yamauchi, a teacher at the school and core member behind the operation of VIVISTOP, to discuss the interests that they are using this space to pursue.



The students are pictured sitting on chairs created at VIVISTOP NITOBE by fifth graders of Nitobe Bunka Gakuen together with a designer. These chairs were awarded with the Prime Minister's Award in the 15th Kids Design Awards.

Unstructured Environment to Pursue One's Creative Interests

Mr. Yamauchi: I teach art at Nitobe Bunka Gakuen. After school, I engage in creative activities together with students at VIVISTOP NITOBE. Here, we have access to upcycled materials made from scraps as well as laser cutters and state-of-the-art tools. Both adults and kids work together to create whatever we think is possible in this environment. At VIVISTOP, we do not tell kids what to do. No, VIVISTOP is a place where everyone can do what they like and make what they want.

Hikari: You're not like other teachers! You sound just like a regular guy (everyone laughs).

Mr. Yamauchi: You're right, I'm not really teaching anything, am I? Anyways, how about you all tell us what you are doing at VIVISTOP? Hikari, I saw you painting a gradation pattern on some paper. It didn't seem like you had planned anything ahead, and it was more like you were just enjoying painting.

Hikari: Yep, I just did it, and it ended up looking pretty good!

Mr. Yamauchi: That's amazing. I am always so impressed at how you just have this natural understanding, this talent for making things look good.

Hikari: I put a little water in my paint, and then dunked this piece of paper in it. When I pulled it out, it had this pretty pattern on it. I tried all of the colors I

hadn't used yet and experimented to see what patterns I would get when I dunked the paper.

Mr. Yamauchi: Schools give us paper scraps that they would have normally thrown away, and we see what we can do with them. What we do at VIVISTOP is more like an extension of play.

Miri: There are a lot of wood scraps at my school. I am trying to make a swing

set together with two of my friends. I want to make a swing set because the kids at Nitobe Bunka Preschool and Childcare don't have swings. I have asked the preschool if it is okay for me to make a swing set. I want to make one with a long seat, like a couch, that you can relax on. I hope to give it to them as a Christmas present.

Mr. Yamauchi: You might not be done in

time for Christmas, but you could give them a model, you know, to show them what the finished product will look like.

Miri: No way, you can't swing on a model (laughs).

Ryotaro: I made a car that can move. I got the idea when I saw Yusei and Mr. Yamauchi playing with RC cars they had made, and I wanted to make one too.

Mr. Yamauchi: What is so cool about

Ryotaro's car is that he programmed it, built the controller, and made it so that the car could be controlled by himself.

Ryotaro: The hardest part was making the motor. I had to ask other people how to do things like make holes for the screws.

Yusei: I love trains, so I made things like a station platform and suspension bridge from wood. I used the laser

cutter, the machine that cuts wood with lasers, to cut the wood for the pillars and then ran kite string between the pillars. I was somehow able to get the balance right so that the rails are supported without the bridge falling over.

Mr. Yamauchi: Yusei won first prize in a robot contest the other day.

Yusei: Yep. If I mess up my program, I can't fix it by myself. So, I needed to get help from Mr. Yamauchi and other people. To tell the truth, I was actually aiming for a different prize.

Miri: What was that?
Yusei: The technology award. I just wanted to win some prize. When my name was called, I was like "huh, I won?" (everyone laughs)

Growth through Creativity

Mr. Yamauchi: Yusei, it has been about a year since you started coming to VIVISTOP. What do you think has changed over this year?

Yusei: Maybe how I use the laser cutter. I use wood to make stuff like desks and shelves.

Mr. Yamauchi: That's true. I have seen you using the laser cutter as well as a bunch of other tools, and the range of things you make has gotten much larger. What about you, Ryotaro? You joined us in the summer, but you seem to have learned a lot.

Ryotaro: I learned how to use the laser cutter and the electric saw.



Mr. Yamauchi: I've seen that. The laser cutter is something you would never use in class. You were quick to pick that up and to start using the electric saw, which I recall you initially putting off until you were more used to things. Now you are really good at using them by yourself. How about you, Hikari?

Hikari: I don't know. I just do what I want to do.

Mr. Yamauchi: You are really true to your feelings. If you want to do something, you do it. Miri, you have been with us for about half a year. Is there anything you have learned in that time?

Miri: I learned how to use a lot of the machines.

Mr. Yamauchi: Were there any tools or machines that you wanted to use before coming here?

Miri: Nope (laughs).

Mr. Yamauchi: So, you didn't think about it at all (laughs)? Do you prefer to make things by yourself, or with others?

Miri: It's more fun to make things with other people. If I'm by myself, I just think too much and never get started. If I'm with my friends, we can talk about what we're making while we do it.

Yusei: I think about what I want to make next at VIVISTOP when I am home, but everything is a prototype (laughs).

Mr. Yamauchi and other people give me ideas and advice on things like balance and stuff while I make things.

Mr. Yamauchi: It is natural to make a lot of mistakes. Not even I know what's best. It is probably common for everyone to find themselves scratching their heads while making things.

Space Where You Can Make Anything You Want

Mr. Yamauchi: What do you all like best about VIVISTOP?

Ryotaro: I like crafts and how I can make whatever I want, especially using the laser cutter!

Hikari: I don't like to study, but I love arts and crafts, and making pictures. I like how I can do almost anything I want. VIVISTOP is a magical place. I come here at least once a week.

Miri: I want to come to VIVISTOP every day. If I don't know how to do something, I can get help from Mr. Yamauchi and other grown-ups. Even if I make a mistake, they will give me advice on how I can fix it.

Yusei: I like the freedom, and how I can make whatever I want. I wish that VIVISTOP was open from 7 a.m. to midnight every day, even on weekends (laughs).

Mr. Yamauchi: Until midnight? (laughs)

Miri: I also wish we had a 3D printer.

Ryotaro: Yeah, we need a 3D printer!

Mr. Yamauchi: I will put that on the list of things we need to buy next year. It sounds like VIVISTOP is a place where you can give form to your imagination, where we can make our dreams a reality together. I am so happy that you all love VIVISTOP.



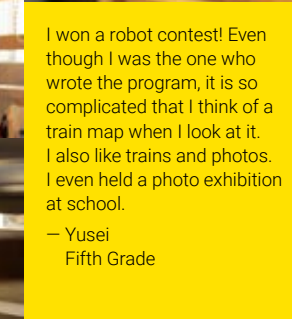
I want to make a swing set and give it to Nitobe Bunka Preschool and Childcare as a Christmas present. I have asked the preschool if it is okay. I hope to make a wooden swing set with a long seat, like a couch, that you can relax on.

— Miri
Fifth Grade



I won a robot contest! Even though I was the one who wrote the program, it is so complicated that I think of a train map when I look at it. I also like trains and photos. I even held a photo exhibition at school.

— Yusei
Fifth Grade



I like pretty things. Lately, I have been having fun pouring ink into water and seeing the gradations. When I color the paper scraps I get at school, they all have different patterns. I have made so many!

— Hikari
Fourth Grade



I made my first RC car with help from kids older than me. I didn't know how to write the program at first, but I somehow got it running. It was hard, but fun.

— Ryotaro
Third Grade