

The First Tourism Strategy Study Group- Takeshi Kiroku, CEO of Huber.Inc

As a part of the Tourism Strategy Study Group, the Tokyo Metropolitan Public University Corporation invites people from the industry who have supported the project to study tourism in a new world in a wide range, multifaceted, and depth. This year, which is the final year, we will hold study groups on the theme of "How to Revive the Post-pandemic Tourism", given that the tourism industry has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic and is still in a difficult situation.

The first tourism strategy study group of this year was held online on Thursday, July 30, 2020. Mr. Takeshi Kiroku, CEO of Huber. Inc., was invited as a lecturer and spoke on "Inbound Tourism in the Coronavirus Pandemic".

Lecturer: Mr. Takeshi Kiroku, CEO of Huber. Inc.



Profile:

Joined SOFTBANK BB Corp. in 2004. In 2010, he took office as a director of sales and new business as a founding member of Yotsuba Production inc. In 2013, he won the new business proposal of Softbank Academia and engaged in the development of new healthcare business of Softbank as a business planner. In 2014, he left Yotsuba Production inc. and became a PJ leader for a new business at DENTSU INC. Founded Huber. Inc. in

Kamakura in 2015 and has continued to the present.

About Huber. Inc.

Since 2015, Huber. has been operating a matching platform for guides specializing in inbound tourism. Since last year, their main business has been shifted to operating the tourist information centers and public relations of local area and promotes the business with the following three pillars.

- 1 Operating tourist information centers for foreign visitors to Japan
- 2 Public relations business for local area
- 3 Guide service for foreign visitors and residents to/in Japan

10 tourist information centers have opened nationwide (as of spring 2020). Huber.'s information centers are oriented to network-type management that across the regions. In addition to the traditional sightseeing guide that was limited to offering information, they are arranging in-depth experiences in Japan that are beyond the reach of foreign tourists.

Also, since the guide notice the potential demand of foreign visitors to Japan by accompanying them, they are working on a method of translating the guide into marketing.

Foreign visitors stay for 2 to 3 weeks, and it was found that 70% of them changed their destination during their stay. Therefore, by soliciting foreign visitors to Japan and inviting them to an unforgettable experience by the Huber. guide, they have succeeded in making travelers fans of the area and producing good reviews.

Transformation of the Tourism Industry in the Coronavirus Pandemic

Huber. has been traditionally promoting business for inbound tourists from Europe, the United States and Australia. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the return of visitors to Japan is uncertain, and it is considered that the next 1-2 years will continue to be a period of patience that cannot rely on inbound tourists. Huber. has also switched its service from inbound tourists to foreign residents in Japan and Japanese people.

From Vacation to Workation -the Leading Role of Tourism is in Rural Areas-

Coronavirus pandemic has brought a major change to the lifestyle for many people. A flat-rate multi-base living service (a subscription-type housing service) for remote works called ADDRESS (<https://address.love/>) and HafH (<https://www.hafh.com/>) is steadily growing even tourism industry goes down due to a feeling of dislike for travel.

Since companies widely recommend remote work, about 90% of office workers are now suggested to work from home. In addition, in a survey conducted on 10,000 residents of the Greater Tokyo Area, more than 15% of people have a "strong interest" in moving to rural areas (rises by 50% answered "with some interests"), and there are major changes in employment awareness.

- Avoiding crowded places
- Having distance of home and workplaces by telework/remote work
- Attitude focusing on lifestyle
- Changes in occupational awareness

Due to the convenience of urban residents (lifestyle transformation) such as above, it is considered that an opportunity has come to increase the number of local supporters in a short period of time.

Huber. is considering providing a service of "Spokesperson with Enjoyment" that will assume public relations of the town while doing workation/remote work. It is a service that the spokespersons have some time to enjoy themselves in the area while working remotely and transmit information about the area via SNS.

Huber. will look for remote workers who live in the central Tokyo and are interested in moving to the rural area in their ages between 20s and 40s, then match them with the coverage area after interviews/training by Huber.

The followings are considered as benefits on the local government:

- Capturing domestic demand for workation
- Accumulate high-quality reviews on SNS and contribute to continuous public

relations of local area

- Possibility for PR as dual residence
- The “Spokesperson with Enjoyment” him/herself becomes a fan of the town and lower the bar for moving to the rural area

Fusion of Real World and Online - Online Tour x Product Sales -

The remote trip to Ama Town, Shimane Prefecture (<https://bit.ly/31PgMc9>) by SHIMA FACTORY INC. is an ambitious attempt that combines online tours and product sales. Tour participants will purchase an assortment of oysters and turban shells from Ama Town in advance and share the experience of eating oysters together while traveling online. More than 90% of the 30 participants in the first tour purchased an assortment of oysters for 7,000 yen. It is expected that the friendship between the participants and the guide will lead to actual visits to the town. I feel this is a suggestive case.

Shifting to Face-to-Face Tourism - Connection between People, Trust is Important-

It seems that it will be important for efforts that focus on "relationship" rather than traditional tourism that focuses on efficiency in the post-pandemic.

The efforts by Huber. in Totsukawa Village began with two staffs moving to the site. While they guided foreign visitors and developed their relationships with local people , the residents accepted them at an early stage.

As a result of such efforts and relationship establishment, we have created a relationship that residents recognize as "It is fine if Huber. does it." We believe that this relationship of trust is the key to everything in times when rural areas play a leading role.

Currently, we are doing something completely in analog and unsophisticated, but seriously thinking about how to mix new technology into it.