

Successful Branding: Imabari Towel

Extract from presentation by
Imabari Towel Industrial Association

TSUDA Shingo

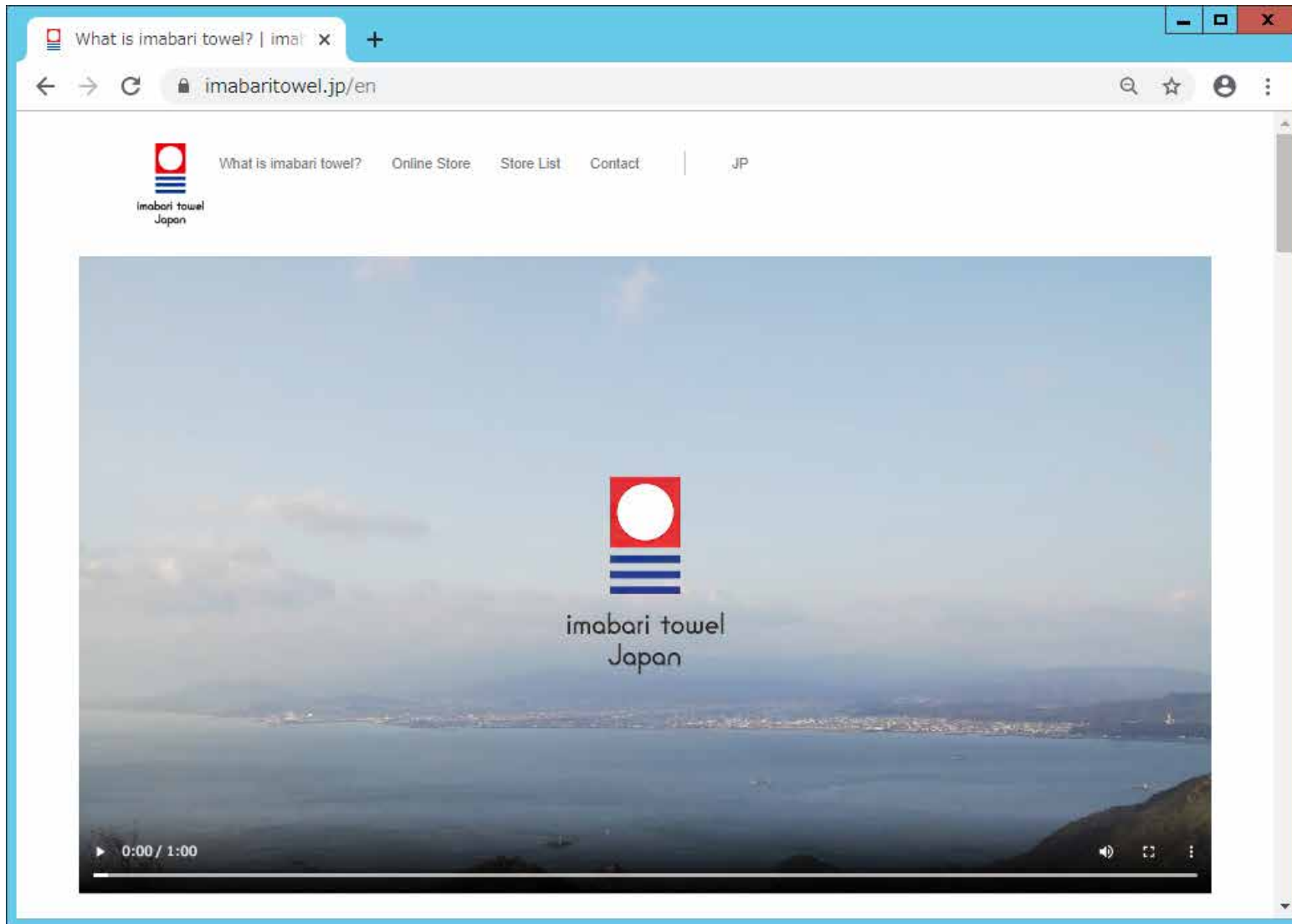
Deputy Director
International Cooperation Division
Japan Patent Office (JPO)

Imabari Towel



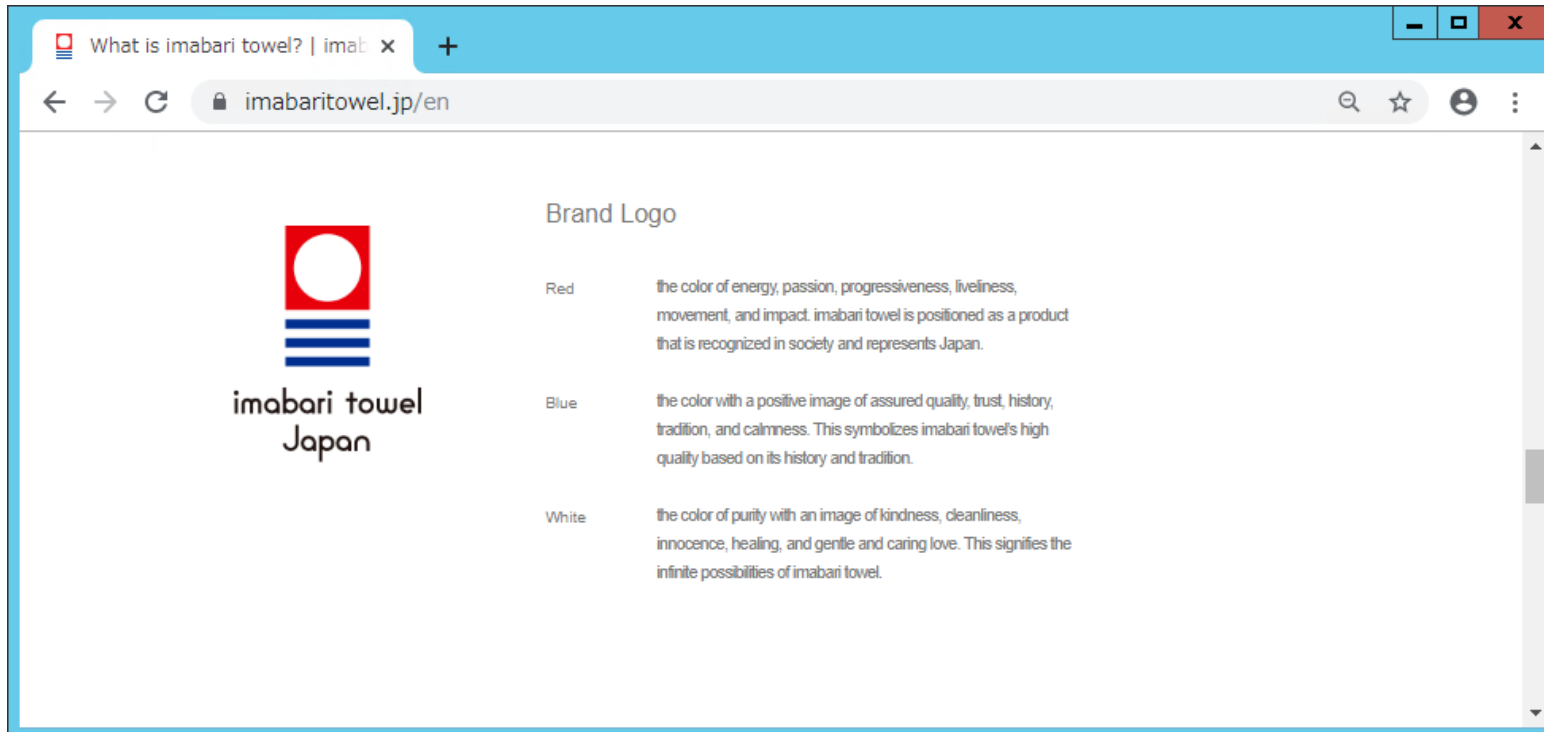
Photo: Imabari Towel Industrial Association

n <https://www.imabarityowel.jp/en>



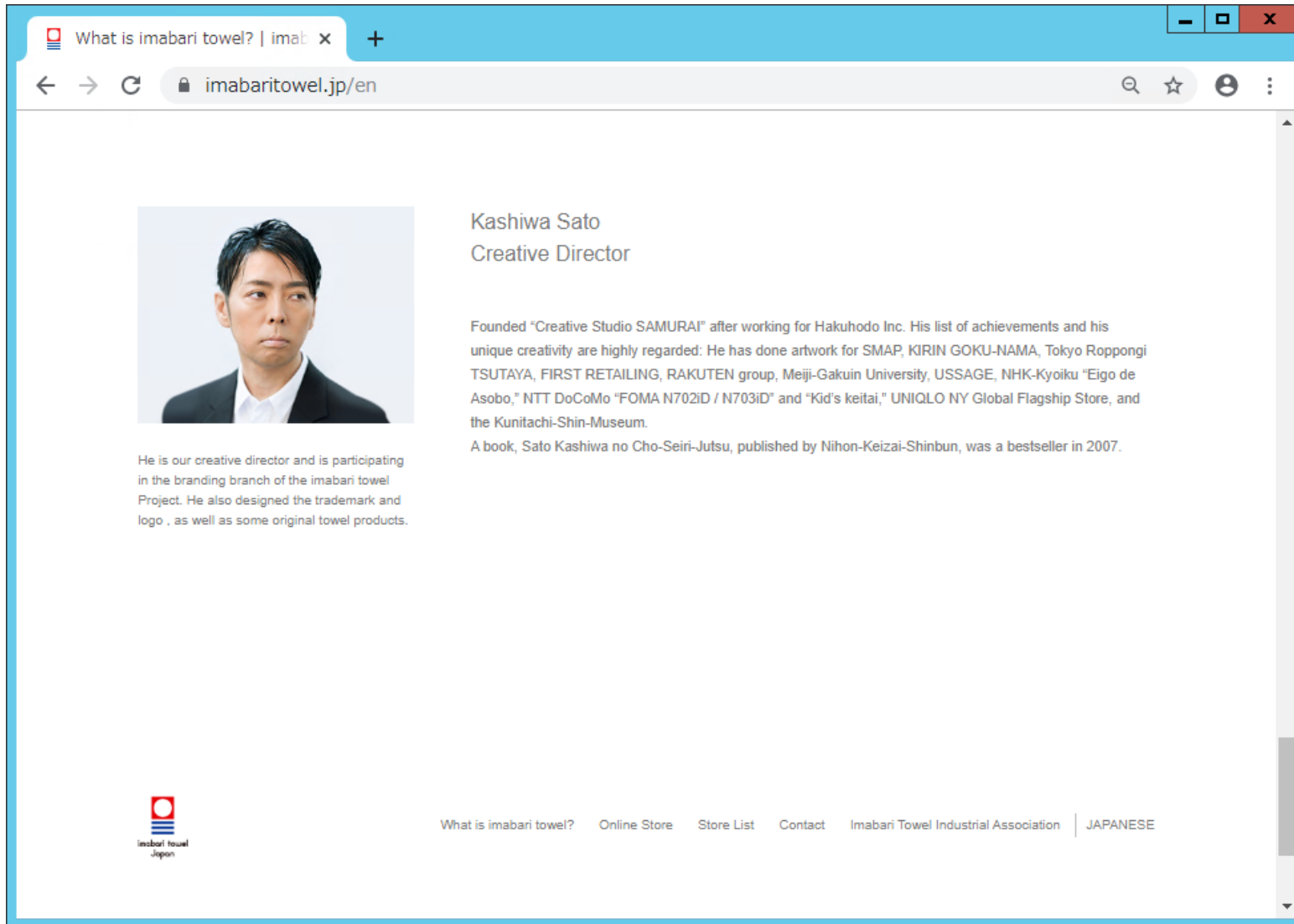
n Motifs from Nature

n Colors symbolizing Imabari Towel: “Red” × “Blue” × “White”





Designed by a famed Creative Director

n Mr. SATO Kashiwa



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the following content:

- Browser Tab:** What is imabari towel? | imabari towel
- Address Bar:** imabaritowel.jp/en
- Profile Section:**
 - 
 - Kashiwa Sato**
Creative Director
 - Description:** He is our creative director and is participating in the branding branch of the imabari towel Project. He also designed the trademark and logo, as well as some original towel products.
 - Bio:** Founded "Creative Studio SAMURAI" after working for Hakuho Inc. His list of achievements and his unique creativity are highly regarded: He has done artwork for SMAP, KIRIN GOKU-NAMA, Tokyo Roppongi TSUTAYA, FIRST RETAILING, RAKUTEN group, Meiji-Gakuin University, USSAGE, NHK-Kyoiku "Eigo de Asobo," NTT DoCoMo "FOMA N702iD / N703iD" and "Kid's keitai," UNIQLO NY Global Flagship Store, and the Kunitachi-Shin-Museum.
A book, Sato Kashiwa no Cho-Seiri-Jutsu, published by Nihon-Keizai-Shinbun, was a bestseller in 2007.
- Footer:**
 - 
 - Navigation links: What is imabari towel? | Online Store | Store List | Contact | Imabari Towel Industrial Association | JAPANESE



n “City of Towel and Shipbuilding”

n Population: 161,000 (2018)

n Area: 419 km²

n Total shipment value of
manufactured goods:

857,200 million yen (2016)

n Transport equipment industry
294,800 million yen

n Textile industry
47,800 million yen

Source: Census of manufactures (2017)

- n Imabari City is a grand center of towel production of near 200 factories.
- n Its towel industry has a long history of 120 years.
- n Surrounded by a beautiful nature of Seto Inland Sea, the warm climate and the abundant water resources nurtured the towel industry.
- n Abundant underground water of Sojagawa River is soft water suitable for towel-making.

Founded in	1952
Annual revenue	678 million yen (2018)
Member companies	104 (2019)
Number of employees	2,543 (2019)
Annual production	10,768 tons (2019)

- Education about towel-making
- Collection and dissemination of information about towel-making
- Survey and research about towel-making
- Joint procurement
- Promotion of Imabari Towel Brand

- n In the 90s and 2000s, Imabari's towel industry was threatened by an upsurge in imported towels.
- n In 1976, the domestic market share of imported towels was mere 6.4 %. It was still 13.4 % in 1991. By 2006, it soared up to 79.4%.
- n Imabari Towel was revitalized as a regional brand by Imabari Towel Recovery Project. The project started in 2006.
- n The project was led by Imabari Towel Industrial Association and guided by a famed creative director Mr. SATO Kashiwa.

- n 28% increase of annual production (2016 in comparison with 2009)
(Domestic market share increased from 9% to 12%: 3% increase from the bottom.)
- n Distinguished from imported towels (elevated price range)
- n Increased price negotiation capability
- n Improved recruitment
- n Increased corporate value -> mergers and acquisitions
- n Active capital investment
- n Recovery of the whole production region (active capital investment and restored profitability)

- n Share the sense of crisis and unite as one.
- n Clarify the intrinsic value of Imabari Towel and define it precisely.
- n Build a mechanism for communicating the value of Imabari Towel to a wider audience.
- n Develop business of the association that yields profits by leveraging the brand strength and conduct promotional activities continuously.

- n The intrinsic value of Imabari Towel is **“safe, secure, and high quality” comfort of use.**

Definition of Imabari Towel Brand Product

- Manufactured by a member company
- Weaved and dyed in Imabari production region
- Towel products sewn / processed in Japan
- Passed the association’s own quality standards test including excellent water absorbance (*five-second rule)

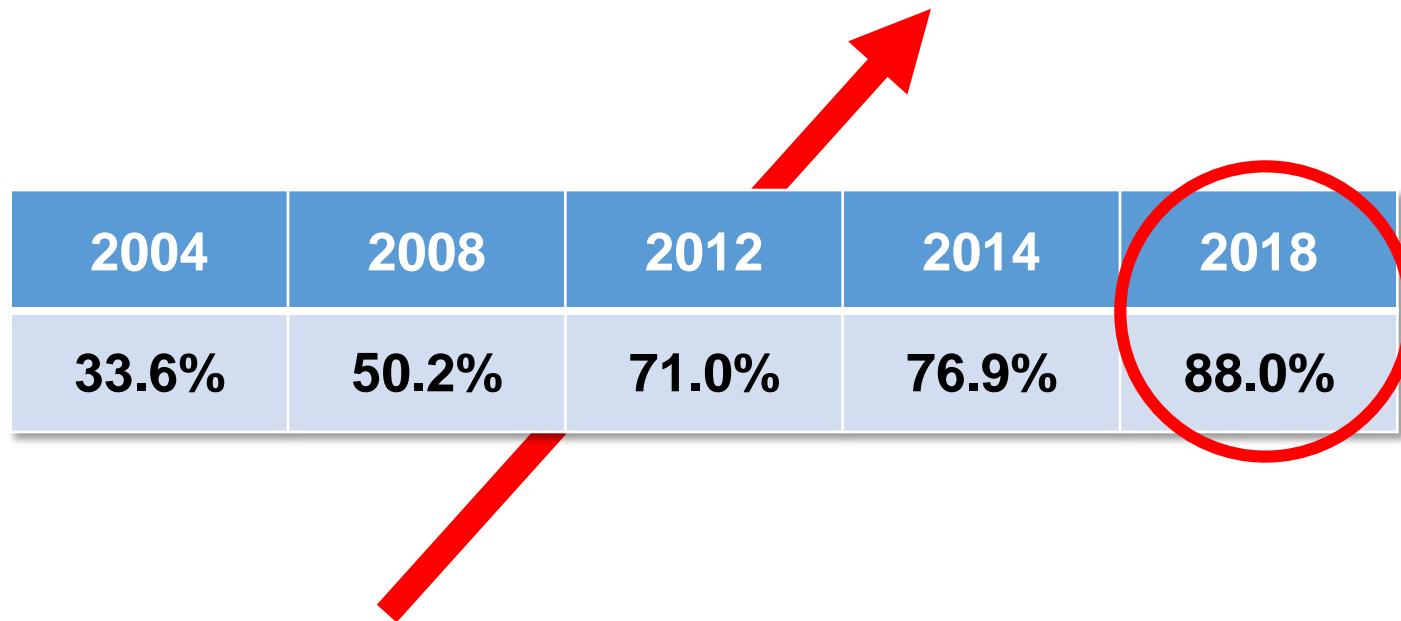
* Five-second rule tests whether a towel sinks under the water within 5 seconds when placed on the water surface.

- n Logo is essential as an “icon” necessary for communication
- n Brand manual
- n “White towel” as the key product - simple communication strategy
- n Promotion by an advertising company
- n TV coverage
- n Official shop in Tokyo allowing the brand to interact with customers
- n Participation in international trade fairs

- n Develop business of the association that yields profits by leveraging the brand strength and conduct promotional activities continuously.
- n Joint procurement of tags
- n Sales commission for the official shop

Brand awareness of “Imabari Towel” in Japan

n Imabari Towel has become well-known in Japan.



n Regional Collective Trademark “Imabari Towel”

Reg. No. 5060813

Date of registration: July 6, 2007

n Brand Logo

Reg. No. 5064795

Date of registration: July 20, 2007



Reg. No. 5341974

Date of registration: July 30, 2010

