Overview of the facility
The company was established in 2005 by the Central Shopping District Association, the Matsuyama Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Matsuyama City and so on, to revitalise the city centre of Matsuyama.
In addition to various town planning projects, the company runs advertising and video projects, parking service ticket businesses, urban infrastructure development projects, event planning, production, a childcare and civic interchange support project and a shopping arcade information centre.

1) Direct damage and the situation in neighboring villages
Traffic in the shopping district has drastically decreased, and some shops have decided not to participate in the Saturday night market too.

Because many people who live in Matsuyama are volunteering in the disaster areas, the volume of traffic has decreased drastically, as well as the number of consumers in the shopping arcades. In addition to the heavy rain this year, I think the unusually hot summer had an impact, and there was a downward trend all through May, June and July. It was a tough time. There were several shops
that didn’t take part in the Saturday night market, and sales are somewhat lower than last year.

2) Reconstruction efforts

We gave the donations collected in the shopping districts and by Machizukuri Matsuyama to Matsuyama City as reconstruction assistance.

3) Regional reconstruction efforts

Revitalising the shopping districts with new initiatives such as collaborative events with department stores for inbound visitors

The department stores and shopping arcades want to work together on shopping events for foreign visitors. We plan to join Hanazono Dori, Gintengai and Okaido with Ropeway Street, and then connect Mitsukoshi and Takashimaya department stores on these routes.

The number of foreign visitors has increased, including individual customers and families, and more people are visiting the shopping districts. In order to respond to these customers, we distributed texts to all stores in four foreign languages — traditional and simplified Chinese, English, and Korean. We also made pocket-sized leaflets introducing restaurants, souvenirs and clothing stores that can be enjoyed by tourists as well, on Okaido and Gintengai. They also show rest areas, ATMs and popular photography spots. Since quite a few young couples from China and South Korea visit the Saturday night market in summer, we’re also promoting this. Last year we provided free Wi-Fi in the shopping district near the castle. With Mitsukoshi’s cooperation, we installed a large touch panel, and there’s also one in the rest area on Gintengai. Inbound visitors are no longer just visiting sightseeing spots — they’re starting to visit shops and restaurants that local people use. This means they’re visiting shopping districts, and from now on we’ll see their strength growing.

To make things more attractive for domestic customers, we need to provide various content and enable cashless shopping with electronic money. Originally, Matsuyama City had a lot of population inflows from the surrounding area during the day. I think for such a wide area, it’s best to have a “two nucleus and one mall” layout that offers everything, and where visitors can spend a whole day. Also, from now on our city planning should focus on walkability and health. So I’d like to issue health points for activities such as walking, and make good use of electronic money and universal points programs.

President Kato is also working on collaboration with the major department stores as part of the measures to revitalise the shopping district, so we talked to two people from the department stores.

Iyotetsu Takashimaya
Masashi Takaoka, Deputy General Manager and Sales Planning, Advertising, and Decorating Group Manager

Enhancing services for inbound customers
There were cases where employees’ homes were cut off or flooded due to the heavy rain, but there was no direct damage to the company.

As support for those affected by the heavy rain damage, we collected donations in the store, and held a fundraising event in the Sky Dome with enka singer Hiroshi Miyama, where all of the CD sales went to support reconstruction. We also provided our stock of bottled water to the Prefecture.

Inbound business is steadily growing, and since September 2018, we’ve made the Chinese mobile payment services Alipay and WeChat Pay available in the store. In our store, we also offer discount services for foreigners visiting Japan and you can ride the Kururin Ferris wheel free of charge if you show your passport, so please come and shop with us.

Mitsukoshi Matsuyama
Yasuo Kamemoto, Director and Sales Department Manager

To improve the vitality of the city, we’re also working to become a gateway to Matsuyama tourism.

Our Ozu office was flooded with about one metre of water, and the PCs and copier couldn’t be used. Since it was Saturday and our employees weren’t at work, there were no injuries, but some customers’ property kept in the office got soaked. Nobody expected the water to reach a metre. As part of our reconstruction effort, we’ve set up donation boxes in the building. Also, we arranged events scheduled after the disaster to include reconstruction aspects. At the opening event for the Ehime Mandarin Pirates second half, we set up a donation box and asked for donations. We provided our stock of bottled water to the Prefecture, and when we visited customers in southern Ehime, we took water with us.

Next year during the Asian spring festival period of February 2019, the Matsuyama Shopping Festival for foreign travelers visiting Japan will be implemented by an organizing committee comprising the local shopping districts and department stores participating in Machizukuri Matsuyama, Matsuyama city office, and nationwide shopping and tourism organizations. I believe that inbound tourism is indispensable for enhancing the vitality of the city. As we’re actively involved in shopping tourism and our company is located in the area where there’s a lot of tourist traffic near Matsuyama Castle, I think we can play the role of gateway to Matsuyama tourism as well as selling goods. I’d like to set up something like a tourist information desk in shops to provide tourist information not only for Matsuyama but for Ehime Prefecture too. I’d like to take this approach not only for inbound tourism but also for domestic visitors so that they want to come back to Ehime again.

4) Regional attractions
The castle town of Matsuyama offers some of the best food in the country, with top-class hospitality.
The food of Matsuyama is characterised by its slight sweetness. In human terms, it’s a conservative city, but hospitality is one of our strengths. Matsuyama has a wealth of history and culture, and it’s referred to as a city of tourism and spa culture. Besides Dogo Onsen Honkan, there are many onsen ryokan, which are a good place to enjoy food with a slightly sweet seasoning. There are many unique foodstuffs available here, including the small fish of the Seto Inland Sea, delicious mountain produce, and river fish. The unchanging scenery of the castle and castle town is the pride of Matsuyama. I’m proud to be able to work in sight of the castle. Whenever I’ve been away, I always feel that I’m back in Matsuyama when I see the castle.

Slightly sweet nabeyaki udon is a popular dish with the common people of Matsuyama. The long-established restaurants Asahi and Kotori are adjacent, and each has its ardent local faction.

Matsuyama Castle
Matsuyama Castle, one of Japan’s twelve remaining original castle towers. From the main enclosure at the top of the castle hill (Katsuyama) at an altitude of 132 m you can see the castle town of Matsuyama. It's a huge flatland-mountain castle with the Ninomaru Historical Garden and Horinouchi at its base. It was ranked third in TripAdvisor's 2018 Japanese Castle Ranking.

Matsuyama Ropeway Street
From Gintengai via Okaido and all the way to the Shinonome cable car station for Matsuyama Castle, a barrier free shopping arcade stretches for about 500 metres, one of the longest in the country. In 2014, it was selected by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry as one of the nation’s 30 most vibrant shopping districts, and in 2016, it received first prize in the Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport's Urban Landscape Awards.
5) Message of regional vitality
We hope you'll enjoy Matsuyama and Dogo Onsen at a relaxed pace

We're doing just fine as usual. I'd like travelers to stroll around Matsuyama. You're sure to make many discoveries, and there are also delicious things that you can only taste here. I wonder if there are many people who come to Matsuyama and only go to Dogo.

When people from distant places refer to the “shopping arcade”, they’re often talking about Dogo shopping arcade, but I hope you'll try visiting Matsuyama too.

At the Matsuyama Shopping Festival for foreign visitors next spring, I hope everyone will visit both central Matsuyama and the Dogo area in order to enjoy the shopping and sightseeing attractions. There are various other events as well, and I’d like visitors to see the local people enjoying themselves.