

Omotenashi Design Patterns

A Pattern Language for Creative Hospitality

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In this paper, we present the Omotenashi Design Patterns, a pattern language for designing your own way of hospitality. The Japanese word “omotenashi” means hospitality, especially traditional Japanese hospitality, such as that you would experience at a *Ryokan*, a traditional Japanese-style inn. Although this kind of traditional *omotenashi* is still great, we need to adjust according to the current global situation. Hospitality is required for business and services in various domains where the type of customers encountered is diverse. With this in mind, we studied the act of hospitality and created a pattern language describing how stakeholders in the hospitality industry can design their own styles of hospitality to fit their situations. This pattern language was published as a book in Japan (Iba & Nakagawa, 2019). This paper gives an overview of the pattern language, consisting of 28 patterns, and presents full descriptions of 4 patterns: *Creative Hospitality*, *Friendly & Polite*, *Whole Community in Mind*, and *Fresh Eyes*.

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1. INTRODUCTION

When people travel or eat out, they experience not only the activity itself but also the service provided by hotels, shops, and restaurants. In these situations, hospitality is critical. However, hospitality is often considered as an innate trait of each person or traditional way of behavior, acquired after long training, and therefore how to design a unique form of hospitality is seldom discussed. In this paper, we present a pattern language for designing your own way of hospitality.

2. OMOTENASHI DESIGN PATTERNS

The Omotenashi Design Patterns consists of 28 patterns, 1 core pattern and other 27 patterns, which are divided into three categories: (A) how to develop good relationships that feel comfortable with your guests, (B) how to draw out the appeal of the region or field, and (C) how to create the future of the region or field together. Each category consists of 9 patterns (Fig. 1).

We will present 4 of 28 patterns: *Creative Hospitality*, *Friendly & Polite*, *Whole Community in Mind*, and *Fresh Eyes*. The patterns underlined in red in Fig. 1 will be introduced in this paper. Summaries of other patterns are listed in the appendix. Each pattern is in the same format: Pattern Name, Introduction, Pattern Illustration, Context, Problem, Force, Solution, Action, and Consequence (Fig. 2).

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1. Creative Hospitality

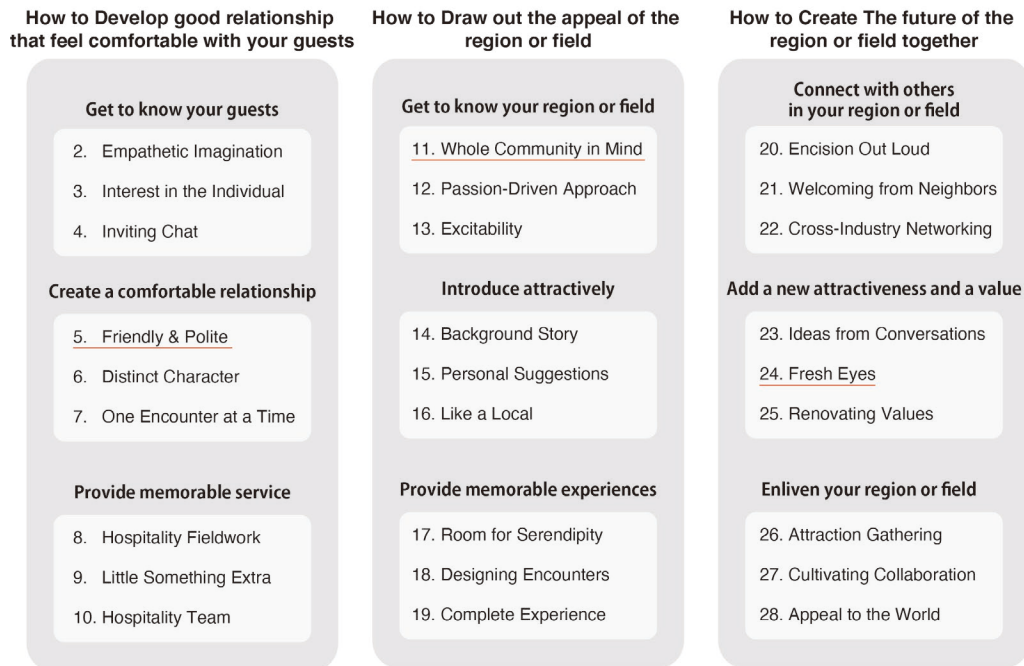


Fig. 1. Overview of Omotenashi Design Patterns

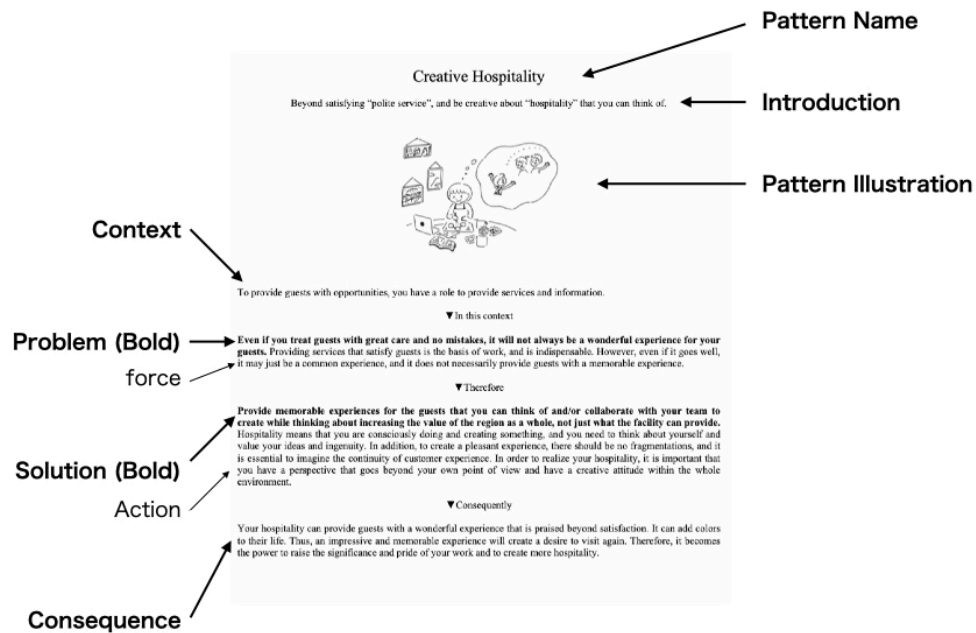


Fig. 2. Pattern Form of this Pattern Language

2.1 Creative Hospitality

Creative Hospitality

Move beyond providing only “polite service,”
and be creative about “hospitality” in any way you can think of.



To provide guests with opportunities, your role is to provide services and information.

▼In this context

Even if you treat guests with great care and make no mistakes, it may not always be a wonderful experience for them. Providing services that satisfy guests is the basis of hospitality work, and it is indispensable. However, even if it goes well, the experience that guests have may be unremarkable, not necessarily memorable.

▼Therefore

For guests, think of or collaborate with your team to create memorable experiences for your guests, while thinking about the value of the region as whole, not just what your facility can provide. Hospitality means that you are consciously doing and creating something; you need to think about yourself, and value your ideas and ingenuity. In addition, to create a pleasant experience, the customer experience should not be fragmented, and it is therefore essential that you imagine the continuity of customer experience. To realize your hospitality goals, it is important that you have a perspective that goes beyond your own point of view and have a creative attitude within the environment as a whole.

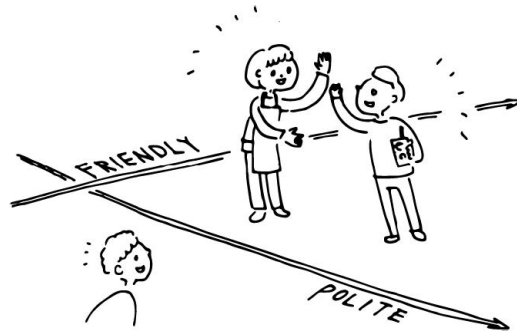
▼Consequently

Your hospitality can provide guests with an experience that is wonderful and praiseworthy, not merely satisfactory. The experience that you provide can add color to their life. An impressive, memorable experience will make guests desire to visit again. Providing a great experience gives you the power to increase the significance of your work, create more hospitality, and be proud of your work.

2.2 Friendly and Polite

Friendly & Polite

Try to blend friendliness and politeness in the communication.



You want to build a pleasant relationship with each guest.

▼In this context

If you try to treat guests with care to avoid seeming rude, you may end up with an uncomfortable atmosphere, because using excessive honorifics and very formal wording can create a sense of distance and hardness. On the other hand, being too frank and familiar would be rude to the guests. Another difficulty is that because the tone of comfortable communication varies from person to person, it is impossible to establish a universal standard of polite communication.

▼Therefore

Based on the desire to be friendly and polite, find a comfortable balance of appropriate degrees of politeness for each individual guest. While creating a vibrant atmosphere through brightness and intimacy, we aim to incorporate both well-balanced ways of respecting the other party and of acting politely. “Being friendly” and “being polite” mean that there is no such thing as being positioned opposite to each other on an axis, but on a continuum, so you can adjust it for each guest. You will always have your own classic style based on your position and your personality, and in conversation, it is natural to adjust interactions based on the guests’ responses or reactions.

▼Consequently

You can interact with guests using a pleasant tone and creating a comfortable atmosphere. In this way, a good relationship can be easily developed into a one-to-one relationship, creating a sense of security and trust. A place with such characteristics will be more like “home,” somewhere that guests want to visit and return to often.

Whole Community in Mind

Have the intention of welcoming the community in which you are based.



You want to think about the value you provide and what you can do.

▼In this context

Even if you try to make use of your strengths and characteristics and focus on polishing them, if you are disconnected from the surroundings, you may not be able to benefit from your efforts. You do not exist in isolation, but in the environment surrounding you. For example, in your region and community, guests rarely experience only the services you provide, but see them as an element of the region and community. For this reason, if you do not have a good relationship with the community around you, the services you provide will be partially fragmented.

▼Therefore

Be aware of the entire region and community where you are located, and consider whether you can take advantage of the locality. The regions in which we are based are the platforms for our work. Recognizing this is indispensable to increasing the value of a visit, because you can incorporate the history and culture of the region and connect with the people there. By doing this, we will be able to strengthen the connection with the region and community. It is a good idea to explore your surroundings, connect with the people there, and look for learning opportunities.

▼Consequently

You can identify your unique characteristics by looking at your surroundings, thinking about your role in the context, and incorporating your unique characteristics. In addition, trying to create such activities and exchanges will deepen your relationship with people in the region and community. This will eventually become the foundation for cooperative relationships that enhance the attraction of the entire community and region.

Fresh Eyes

Make use of the perspectives from the outside while staying inside.



You want to make plans and disseminate information that emphasizes the attractiveness of the region or field.

▼In this context

Only people who are familiar with the region know the details of the place, such as the beauty, history, and uniqueness of the region, but sometimes it is difficult for long-term residents to recognize these attributes. Even if it is really unique, people who live there for a long time have become desensitized and may not realize the uniqueness. Also, since uniqueness is revealed by comparison with other regions, it is difficult to understand how your region is unique if you do not *know* about other regions. However, it is also difficult for people from outside to identify the attractiveness and uniqueness without knowing the region.

▼Therefore

While staying in the region, having an outside perspective would bring out the attractiveness and uniqueness of the region. If you have an outside experience, make use of both the “eyes from inside,” which are fully immersed in your region, and “eye from outside.” Then, you can compare the way it is now with the way it was in the past and with other regions to determine what is attractive and unique about your region. Also, if you are already in the region, consciously make opportunities to explore or have people outside the region participate in your events to gather outside viewpoints.

▼Consequently

It will be possible to discover the charms, attractions, and unique characteristics of the region that are difficult to notice by people who have been living or working there for a long time. In this way, the hidden and unique goodness of the region can be discovered. New perspectives can lead to new services and values and new revitalization of the region.

3. CREATION PROCESS

The proposed pattern language was created by following the standard process development by Iba Lab (Iba and Isaku, 2016). We first conducted dialogical mining interviews. To discover what the important points about hospitality were, we interviewed six members of UDS Ltd., among them hotel staff, a concierge, a restaurant manager, and a director

(Fig. 3): Kaoru Yamamori, Director of Okinawa UDS Ltd.; Kazuhiro Takata, fisherman and front desk manager at Hotel Locus; Akiko Sakura, concierge and manager of Hotel Kanra Kyoto; Masako Ueda, art curator and manager at Hotel Anteroom Kyoto; Yuichiro Ueda, manager of Restaurant Public; and Shizuka Tanigawa, manager of Hotel Management Division, UDS Ltd. Each interview took about 2 hours. We asked them about their hospitality practices in hotels and restaurants.

We then conducted clustering to analyze what we obtained in the mining interviews, using the KJ method (Kawakita, 1967; Iba et al., 2017), which was invented by Jiro Kawakita, a Japanese cultural anthropologist, as bottom-up method that summarizes the results of fieldwork (Fig. 4).

Thereafter, we built the structure of the pattern language. We created groups each consisting of three patterns related to each other and then identified three categories, comprising three groups of patterns each (Fig. 5). After thorough discussion, we finally arrived at the structure we present in this paper. Then, we wrote the full description of each pattern in our simple form and drew pattern illustration.



Fig. 3. Dialogical Mining Interview



Fig. 4. Clustering with using KJ Method

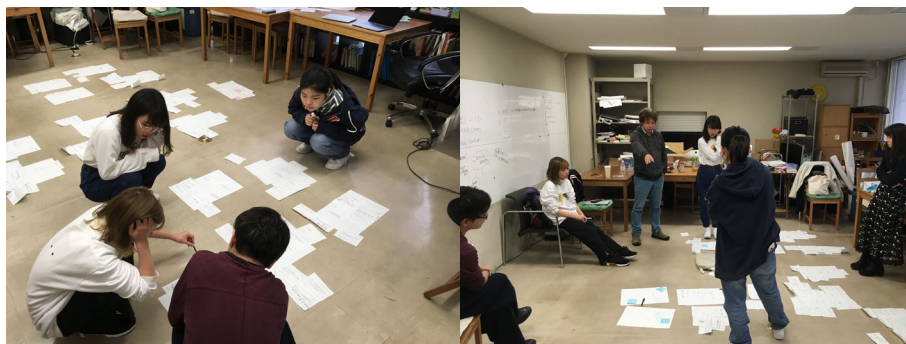


Fig. 5. Building Structure of the Pattern Language

4. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we presented 28 patterns of the Omotenashi Design Patterns, a pattern language for designing your own unique way of hospitality. This pattern language was published as a book in Japan (Iba & Nakagawa, 2019) and also as

a card set for use in workshops. Several applications of this pattern language have started, such as a dialogue workshop for hotel concierges, school classes on career design, and in-company events to present their practice and experience of hospitality (Fig. 5). The analysis of application is our future work.



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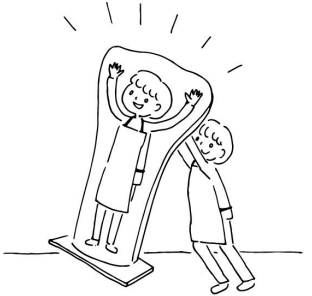
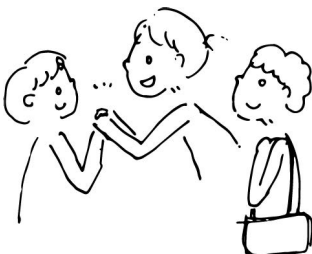
APPENDIX: Summary of Omotenashi Design Patterns



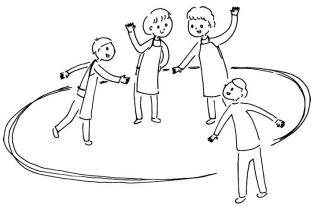
CORE: Designing “Omotenashi”

No.	Pattern Name	Pattern Illustration	Context, Problem, and Solution
1	Creative Hospitality		To provide guests with opportunities, your role is to provide services and information. In this context, even if you treat guests with great care and make no mistakes, it may not always be a wonderful experience for them. Therefore, for guests, think of or collaborate with your team to create memorable experiences for your guests, while thinking about the value of the region as whole, not just what your facility can provide.

A: How to develop good relationships that feel comfortable with your guests





No.	Pattern Name	Pattern Illustration	Context, Problem, and Solution
2	Empathetic Imagination		You want to provide such good omotenashi to your guests that they praise you. In this context, just offering goods or services which you have confidence in may not be enough to please your guests. Therefore, think about things from their point of view and try to understand their feelings to determine what they want and what you can do to please them.
3	Interest in the Individual		There are guests to whom you wish to provide omotenashi. In this context, if you think of yourselves as the “deliverer” and the guests as the “receiver,” you may take a one-sided approach to delivering what you can do, and you may not consider each guest individually. Therefore, two-way interaction with each guest is important, and build up an understanding of the guests by talking to them and taking an interest in what kind of person they are.

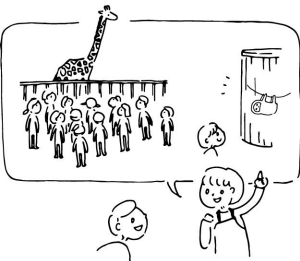



4	Inviting Chat		You want to understand your guests more deeply. In this context, asking too many questions in an attempt to learn too much can give the impression that you are collecting information or that you are being interrogative. Therefore, take a cue from the guest's belongings or a glimpse of their emotions, and create an opportunity for them to naturally want to talk about themselves.
5	Friendly & Polite		You want to build a pleasant relationship with each guest. In this context, if you try to treat guests with care to avoid seeming rude, you may end up with an uncomfortable atmosphere. Therefore, based on the desire to be friendly and polite, find a comfortable balance of appropriate degrees to suit each individual guest.
6	Distinct Character		You want to build such great relationships with guests that you remain in one another's hearts. In this context, when you learn how other people do omotenashi well but try to imitate <i>them</i> , you may end up with an impersonal interaction which has none of your personal touch. Therefore, try to use your personality, strengths, and attributes to interact with your guests.
7	One Encounter at a Time		You are in touch with various guests every day. In this context, as you gain experience, you become more skilled and adaptable, and you may lose the feeling that you will only meet the guests once in a lifetime. Therefore, be aware that you and the guests in front of you are sharing a single moment in time, here and now, and cherish the moment.

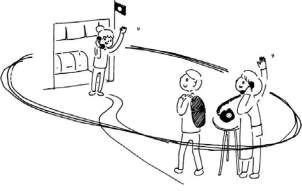
8	Hospitality Fieldwork		You want to improve the omotenashi that you provide. In this context, you may not be able to truly feel or bring excitement to your guests if you are always on the giving end of hospitality. Therefore, sometimes try to be on the receiving end of omotenashi, and try to increase your sensitivity to omotenashi by realizing what it means to be welcomed by hosts and by studying pleasant communication.
9	Little Extra		You have received a question or request from your guest. In this context, if you simply respond to their question or request, you will lose a chance to offer them a pleasant surprise or move them emotionally. Therefore, give your guests a little bit more than what they asked for by adding a bit of information they would definitely enjoy or doing one more thing that you can in response to a request.
10	Hospitality Team		You want to continue to provide your guests with good experiences. In this context, if only you build a good relationship with a particular guest, they may not experience the amount of omotenashi they expect from other employees. Therefore, connect your whole team to give your guests good experiences by sharing what you learn about your guests when you interact with them with your team members and making sure that every member takes it in as something related to them.

B: How to draw out the appeal of the region or field




No.	Pattern Name	Pattern Illustration	Context, Problem, and Solution
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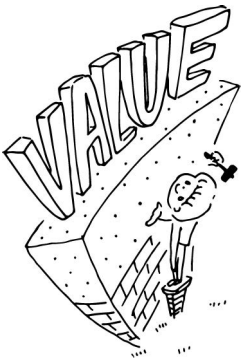

11	Whole Community in Mind		You want to think about the value you provide and what you can do to enhance it. In this context, even if you try to make use of your strengths and characteristics and focus on polishing them, if you are disconnected from the surroundings, you may not be able to benefit from your efforts. Therefore, be aware of the entire region and community where you are located, and consider whether you can take advantage of the locality.
12	Passion-Driven Approach		You want to learn a lot about your region. In this context, if you only engage with your surroundings through your work, it is easy to remain in the content of your professional encounters and interactions and difficult to get to know a region or field in depth. Therefore, connect with people in your region and field through their hobbies and interests, and you will create your own networks and learn more about the region and field.
13	Excitability		You want to learn widely about your region and field. In this context, if you learn only because it is necessary for your job, it will be difficult for you to build the motivation to actually learn. Therefore, adopt a point of view that interests you and use that to learn about your region and field.
14	Background Story		You are trying to recommend things or places to your guests. In this context, your guests may not be excited about the information you recommend if you prioritize presenting it only in a way that is easy to understand. Therefore, introduce not only the recommended objects and places themselves but also a bit of background and the story of their origins.



15	Personal Suggestions		You want to be able to give your guests valuable information or introductions. In this context, if you just tell them generally known information, it will not be worth guests' while to ask professionals. Therefore, in addition to the basic information, tell guests your personal viewpoints, experiences, and thoughts when recommending something to them.
16	Like a Local		You want to give your guests information that enables them to better appreciate the atmosphere of your region or field. In this context, most of the information introduced in the media tells guests about unusual activities and places they can enjoy, but this is not how the locals enjoy themselves. Therefore, provide information to guests about how people who live there or visit often experience the region's attractions.
17	Room for Serendipity		You are trying to suggest a way to enjoy the atmosphere of the region to your guests. In this context, if you propose an itinerary that is tightly packed, your guests will not be able to cherish the sudden awareness that they felt or the interest that arose at that time. Therefore, propose a plan with enough time to allow guests to fully experience the feelings of the moment, enjoy the impressions and surprises, and feel the fun of choosing what to do on their own at that time.
18	Designing Encounters		You want your guests to have a great time that they can remember after they leave. In this context, even if your guests enjoy themselves, they may forget about it after they have returned home. Therefore, introduce guests to people in the local community and help them connect with each other.

19	Complete Experience		<p>You want to provide a memorable experience to your guests. In this context, even if you are able to provide the best omotenashi while you are directly involved, it may only provide a fragmentary experience. Therefore, think of the guests' entire experience as a continuous thing, and take into account the improvement of all omotenashi when making connections and arrangements for them.</p>
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C: How to create the future of the region or field together

No.	Pattern Name	Pattern Illustration	Context, Problem, and Solution
20	Envision Out Loud		<p>You want to create your own unique value that exists only in your region or field. In this context, if you use your resources to benefit only yourself and keep your ideas secret, you will gradually become isolated from your surroundings. Therefore, tell your concept to the people in the local community and communicate with them to develop a great relationship so you can bring value together.</p>
21	Welcoming from Neighbors		<p>You want to enliven your region or field by making a new move. In this context, if you focus only on creating new value and become narrow-minded, people in the area may not be receptive and may be negative. Therefore, always be aware of whether what you are doing benefits the local community and think what you can do to achieve that for them.</p>
22	Cross-Industry Networking		<p>You begin to have connections with people in your region or field. In this context, even if you connect with people and strengthen relationships in the closed community, what you can provide will be limited. Therefore, expand the network by connecting and collaborating with people from various communities without closing off within your own community.</p>

23	Ideas from Conversations		You want to provide new services in your region or field. In this context, even if you are trying to make a good plan for the community, it may not be really meaningful for them. Therefore, work to create a project that you can work on with the people around you, and pick up the ideas of what you want to do, or problems you want to solve, by having a casual conversation with them.
24	Fresh Eyes		You want to plan and disseminate information that emphasizes the attractiveness of your region or field. In this context, only people who are familiar with the region know the details of the place, such as the beauty, history, and uniqueness of the region, but sometimes it is difficult for long-term residents to recognize these attributes. Therefore, while staying in the region, having an outside perspective would bring out the attractiveness and uniqueness of the region.
25	Renovating Values		You want to plan a project that makes your region or field more attractive. In this context, if you bring in new ideas and disregard something that has been around for a long time in the area because it does not look as attractive in modern times, you may risk losing its valuable potential as an attraction. Therefore, identify the value hidden in the existing things and make use of them to add a new attractiveness your projects.
26	Attraction Gathering		You want to disseminate information about the new attractiveness of your region or field. In this context, even if you try to find the new attractiveness of the region or field, you might not be able to escape your very personal perspective or a general selling point of which everyone is already aware. Therefore, share your favorite places, favorite things, and moving episodes with people around you, and rediscover the attractiveness together.

27	Cultivating Collaboration		<p>You want to enhance the value of your region or field as a whole. In this context, if only certain people try to revitalize the area, they may feel overwhelmed, and there will be a gap between those who are involved and those who are not. Therefore, find ways to work together with people in the region or field so that various people can cooperate and become as one.</p>
28	Appeal to the World		<p>You are working together with the community in your region or field to make an attractive project. In this context, no matter how attractive it is, unless everyone knows it, the value of it will not increase. Therefore, disseminate what you are working on both domestically and internationally, alongside the attractiveness of the region or field.</p>