

## REPORT | **TMIP REPORT “CHANGE to HOPE 2022”**

Ayako Mogaki from the DMO TOKYO Marunouchi office had an interview with the Tokyo Marunouchi Innovative Platform (TMIP).



How was it possible to use the entire Marunouchi area to

hold such a large CHANGE to HOPE 2022 business festival?

Cooperation between large companies and business startups throughout the area

While the popularity of online events has bloomed during the pandemic, in-person events are slowly coming back. Lately, people may be questioning the reasons for choosing a physical location over online platforms.

One recent large in-person event was NewsPicks' CHANGE to HOPE 2022, called a major "business festival." Held in October 2022 across the entire Marunouchi area, the event brought in about 2,000 people.

CHANGE to HOPE 2022 is an in-person business conference that is a fresh departure from the growing trend toward online-only programs. The key to succeeding in the bold challenge of using Marunouchi for the event was a collaboration between NewsPicks, OMY Area Management Association (known as Ligare), an NPO working to revitalize the Otemachi, Marunouchi, and Yurakucho (collectively called "Daimaruyu"), and TMIP that supports the generation of innovation through cooperation in the Daimaruyu area between large companies, business startups, government, and academic institutions.

This article takes us through the collaboration process of three companies with different strengths that helped achieve success in the unprecedented major business festival.

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**Natsuko Atsumi, CEO Office Connector, Uzabase, Inc.**

After graduating from university, began working for Sendai Television Incorporated. Worked as a reporter, covering politics and economics, and then in development of new business. After working for Recruit Co., Ltd., joined NewsPicks in 2016 when the company was launching its advertising business. After her valuable work in business expansion, she supported human resource development, organizational development, and business development. Transferred to Uzabase, Inc. in 2023 to take up her current post.

**Ayako Mogaki, DMO TOKYO Marunouchi, Ligare (MITSUBISHI ESTATE)**

Joined a trading company specializing in IT immediately after graduating from university in 2008. Worked on developing the Japanese market for network security products from a Silicon Valley manufacturer as a sales promoter. Moved to Canada for three years in 2014. After working in outbound tourism programs for the Japanese branch of Destination Canada (the Canadian tourism agency), joined MITSUBISHI ESTATE CO., LTD. in 2018. She now works on the DMO TOKYO Marunouchi project to attract and support the holding of area-wide MICE tourism at OMY Area Management Association (known as Ligare) that advances the use of soft infrastructure in the Daimaruyu area.

**Hiroyuki Okuyama, TMIP Office (MITSUBISHI ESTATE)**

After completing graduate school in 2001, joined an energy company. Worked primarily in energy device specification formulation and development, and then joined MITSUBISHI ESTATE CO., LTD. in 2012. His current work involves energy conservation measures for office buildings and community development using AI, IoT, robotics, and other latest technologies (ecosystem formation).

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**“It must be Marunouchi” —What was NewsPicks’ ardent wish from the start?**

Why did NewsPicks choose Marunouchi for the location of its area-wide event?

It began with the bold move in July 2022 of the head office of Uzabase Group, which includes NewsPicks, from Roppongi to Marunouchi.

Natsuko Atsumi of Uzabase explains how the relocation was an undertaking to fuse the culture of major companies and business startups—what would in the United States be a fusion of east coast traditional companies centered in New York and the west coast business startups centered in Silicon Valley.

**Atsumi:** “The move of the head office to Marunouchi was long desired by our staff. In 2016 when NewsPicks was just starting out, people said our service was an app that was trendy with startups in places like Shibuya, Ebisu, and Roppongi.

To achieve our true objective that was to change the world with economic information, we needed to involve not just people in west coast-style business startups, but also people in east coast-style major companies. Relocation of the head office to Marunouchi that is Japan’s equivalent of the east coast was a demonstration of our clear commitment to integrating the two business sectors.”



Natsuko Atsumi, CEO Office Connector, Uzabase, Inc.

Holding CHANGE to HOPE 2022 in Marunouchi can be seen as one indication of that intent. “If we hold it in Tokyo, it must be in Marunouchi.”

The fusion of east and west coasts resulted in an event that was not typical for a business district like Marunouchi, in a good sense. For example, Marunouchi Naka-dori Street was renamed HOPE Street and closed to vehicles to create a pedestrian-only zone. Corporate offices in neighboring buildings that cover the area were also used for part of the venue. Atsumi remembers how visitors were expressing surprise at the holding of an event in such a place and were clearly impacted in a big way.





(Photo source: Uzabase)



(Photo source: Uzabase)

## Transforming Marunouchi into a hub for creation

Some key supporters in NewsPicks' move to Marunouchi and of operations for the huge business festival were OMY Area Management Association (Ligare) for which MITSUBISHI ESTATE serves as the secretariat and DMO TOKYO Marunouchi.

Ligare is an organization that aims to create vitality in neighborhoods, with a focus on the Daimaruyu area. Day to day they use the strengths of this area that is a hub for people, industry, and technology to boost added value of the neighborhoods by planning projects using local resources like roads and public spaces and through soft infrastructure measures, and develop the Daimaruyu area into a place of familiarity. Ligare then established DMO TOKYO Marunouchi in 2017 to stimulate activities within its scope where people are working together to create something, revitalize the local economy, generate new innovation, and drive further development.

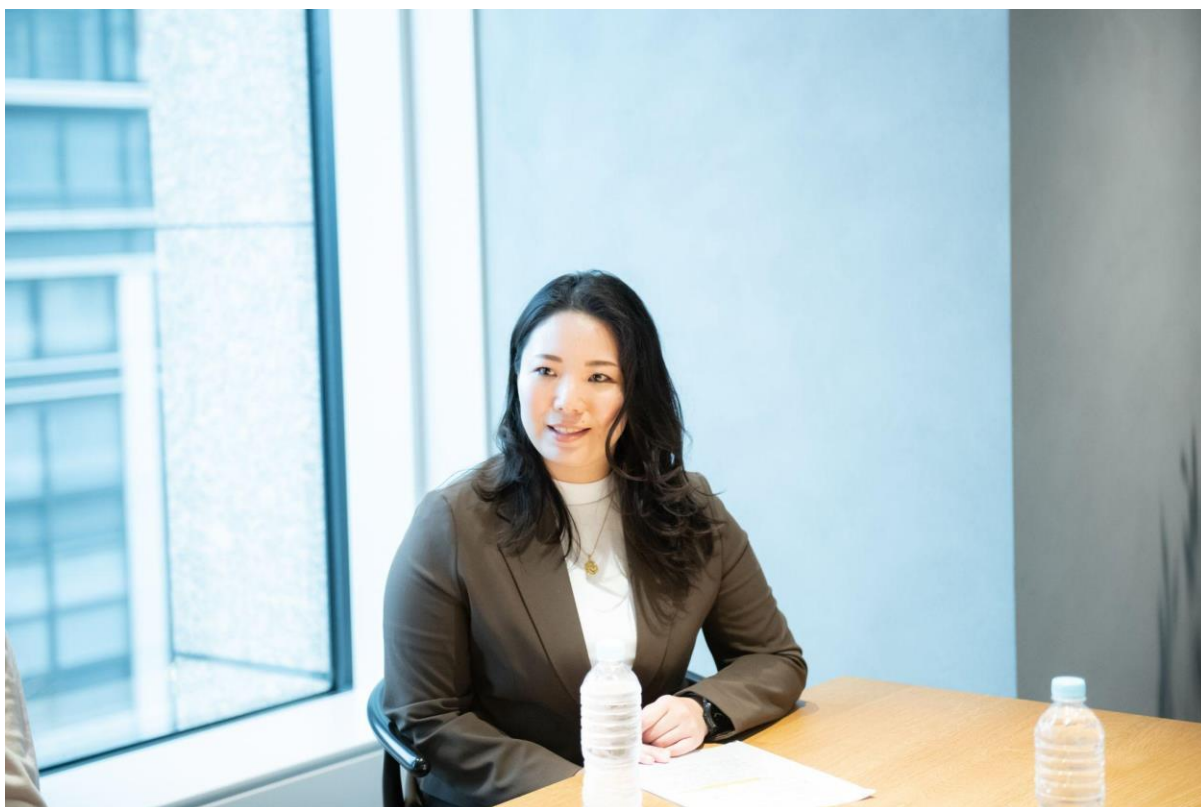
The concept of the CHANGE to HOPE 2022 method of using the entire Marunouchi area is "area-wide MICE" that was proposed by DMO TOKYO Marunouchi. Ayako Mogaki of Ligare explains that MICE is an acronym for meetings, incentive travel, conventions, and exhibitions/events. In the area-wide MICE style of holding MICE programs, the conference hall is not confined to a single building, but rather encompasses an entire area using all the diverse facilities and resources it possesses.

**Mogaki:** "We want to use the area's hard and soft infrastructure to the maximum extent to support programs being held through area-wide collaboration, allowing MICE organizers and participants to fully experience Marunouchi. We also incorporate aspirations to develop the community by enabling the entire area to enjoy the benefits of embracing MICE that bring in diverse human resources from around Japan and the world, create economic ripple effects and innovation, and boost the urban competitiveness of the Daimaruyu area.

That's why, when NewsPicks came to us with the idea of promoting CHANGE to HOPE 2022 as a 'super-participation' style business festival, we thought it was the perfect match for the area-wide MICE concept we are pursuing."

Wedge between Tokyo Station that is Japan's gateway and the Imperial Palace, Marunouchi is occupied by about 280,000 workers and over 4,000 diverse offices. Mogaki talks of how using this area to hold an event that actively drives fortuitous encounters among the wide range of people who gather, including not just the participants who have paid money to learn there, but also local workers and sometimes even visitors passing by, is very significant as an example of area-wide MICE in Japan.

**Mogaki:** "With this many companies, workers, and technologies gathering in Marunouchi, it has a great potential for huge synergies. We will transform Marunouchi into a place where companies from various industries cross paths and interact, creating new innovations and cultures. This is why Ligare and DMO TOKYO Marunouchi wanted to fully cooperate with NewsPicks."



Ayako Mogaki, DMO TOKYO Marunouchi, Ligare (MITSUBISHI ESTATE)

## Is Marunouchi an "inorganic" business district?

Another key point backing CHANGE to HOPE 2022 was a capital and business alliance between Uzabase and MITSUBISHI ESTATE that was [announced](#) in March 2020.

Combine the content that the Uzabase Group is famous for with the community building that is the MITSUBISHI ESTATE's key talent to make Marunouchi an even more attractive place that continuously pumps out innovation—this was the objective of the alliance, and it all began in 2018 with an event called Marunouchi Business Pub held jointly between NewsPicks and TMIP. Atsumi tells the story.

**Atsumi:** “MITSUBISHI ESTATE invited NewsPicks to create a pub using a portion of the space on the first floor of the old Marunouchi Building and hold talk sessions with experts like Takafumi Horie who appear in NewsPicks. It was genuinely a lot of fun.

Holding a crude pub-style event in a proper place like the first floor of the Marunouchi Building is uniquely interesting in and of itself. It was a moment that imparted a sense of the potential of an alliance between MITSUBISHI ESTATE with its hard infrastructure capabilities and NewsPicks with its soft infrastructure capacity.

The start for the collaboration between MITSUBISHI ESTATE and NewsPicks was a recognition of the land problem of Marunouchi. Hiroyuki Okuyama from the office of TMIP that works to form



innovation and ecosystems in the Daimaruyu area talks about the company's commitment to creating a platform in Marunouchi.

**Okuyama:** “Marunouchi has a related population of about 280,000 but little interaction, and we thought it was important to create opportunities for such interaction. Through soft infrastructure initiatives like holding business events and hard infrastructure initiatives like creating a physical space for people to dine and relax, we thought we could utilize the strengths of this place where people and companies converge.”



Hiroyuki Okuyama, TMIP Office (MITSUBISHI ESTATE)

**Mogaki:** “At Ligare as well, we do not feel that it is enough for the Daimaruyu area to be simply a business district full of people and companies. We are dedicated to transforming the area into one that promotes spirited communication among the people there and new innovations, offers daily business and lifestyle ideas on a personal level, and generates a new dynamic culture.”

The desire is to change Marunouchi from an inorganic business district to a warm place through which vitality flows. Putting that desire into practice has brought gradual results. Atsumi, who experienced the relocation of the Head Office to Marunouchi and the area-wide MICE event using all of the Marunouchi area as the venue, says the image of the area has changed.

**Atsumi:** “My initial image of Marunouchi was of a tough place full of business people in suits. When the office actually moved here, though, it was surprisingly warm. On Naka-dori Street, there are often activities like a tug-of-war competition for businesses and group morning calisthenics. I learned that there is a sense of unity in the local community.”

## **Only 5 months remaining until the scheduled event. How success was achieved in such a short time.**

CHANGE to HOPE 2022 was truly an event where you could feel the area's vitality.

Preparing for the event, however, would take two and a half years. The main reason for this was the COVID-19 pandemic, which began soon after the conclusion of the 2020 capital and business alliance.

Many events went online. They look back at the insistence on CHANGE to HOPE 2022 being in-person.

**Atsumi:** "Holding events and seminars online became the norm, and it became possible for anyone to easily listen to talks by distinguished people. We were thinking about what special value in-person events hold and came to the idea of this event using the whole area."

Then, in May 2022, the plan that had been postponed twice because of the pandemic was scheduled for action. At the time, however, there were only five months until the event date. "We realized that we would not make it in time unless we worked at an unprecedented speed."

**Mogaki:** "For this event, we predicted a huge turnout, and we prepared nine venues in four blocks mainly in the road spaces on Marunouchi Naka-dori Street. We needed to get permission from various parties like landowners, the Chiyoda City government, and the police to restrict vehicles on Marunouchi Naka-dori Street, set up event balloons to create a welcoming atmosphere, and collaborate with food trucks to create an event cafe. Being adjacent to the Imperial Palace, there are many landscape regulations and restrictions for Marunouchi on road use and outdoor advertising, and coordinating with the government was not an easy task. It really was a battle against time."

**Atsumi:** "NewsPicks had just come to Marunouchi. It was because of all the expertise that Ligare had and the relationships of trust built with the government and local people that we were able to successfully hold the event. For example, Uzabase alone would not immediately have known which police station to contact. As an area management organization, Ligare already had a relationship with the local police and government and could talk to those parties, providing total backup support and ensuring coordination went smoothly."





## **Synergistic effects of collaboration that are impossible with a single company**

CHANGE to HOPE 2022 was held without a hitch despite the fast pace of preparation and ended in triumphant success.

What was most memorable to Atsumi was the closed session for about 50 people held in collaboration with TMIP. This session at the Uzabase office outside of the programs for general visitors brought business startups in the Web3 sector invited by NewsPicks and the Web3 community run by TMIP, primarily employees of major companies, to one place.

**Atsumi:** “We were able to experience a place where entrepreneurs of business startups and people from major companies discussed ideas together and came up with new ones for business. I was impressed that this was a real manifestation of the fusion of east and west coasts that Uzabase was imagining.”

Hearing this, Okuyama agreed, saying, “Thanks to NewsPicks, we were able to successfully hold an event that brought together totally different types of people.

**Okuyama:** “If we only had the connections that are focused on people from major companies, which is TMIP’s strength, there would be a higher degree of similarity among participants. Thanks to NewsPicks, we were able to bring in people involved in business startups and others who TMIP would have difficulty finding. I believe that the participants included a good number of university

students and others of all ages and from all different places. NewsPicks was a spark that enabled diverse people to come together, network, and create synergies.”



(Photo source: OMY Area Management Association)

Mogaki says that CHANGE to HOPE 2022 gave her a feel for what policy a place like Marunouchi should follow going forward.

**Mogaki:** “I think that area-wide MICE helped Ligare and DMO TOKYO Marunouchi come one step closer to the ideal vision to which we strive. That ideal vision, described differently, can be thought of as making Marunouchi a world-class diverse global urban area that is thriving with creative energy. A place that you can go to for new encounters, discoveries, and change. That is the Marunouchi I envision.”

“We could not have done it alone”—all three say in unison. Uzabase with its appealing content and links to business startups, Ligare with strengths in expertise in area management and networking, and TMIP that has assets in the Daimaruyu area and a community of major companies. This unprecedented huge business festival blurred the boundary between business startups and major companies and was achieved through a collaboration that maximally utilized the strengths of the Marunouchi area.

