



[Website about Japan | Toyoshi Satoh](#)

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

I wrote some blog posts that describe the typical behaviors and ideas of Japanese consumers which are not easily understood by non-Japanese.



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Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.1: Japanese personality

Japanese personality

Japanese people value our hospitality to our customers, that we call *Omotenashi*. We, Japanese want our customers to be happy with it. Even if they do not specifically request anything, we try to sense their feelings and respond to it. Because we make very detailed attention, they are sometimes surprised by our reaction that they never expect.

Also, Japanese people are particularly friendly to foreigners. We think that there are many inconveniences in Japan for foreigners. However, we are not good at listening and speaking English although we can read and write English to some extent, so we sometimes put a little distance to them.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.2: Japanese sense

Japanese sense

As a sense of the Japanese, it is hardly supposed that the system that is in operation, especially online system, will go down during the daytime. It is quite common sense that services are always provided at the time we want to use and it is a service provider's problem if the system cannot be used even for any reason. Especially we think that it is essential that the Internet can be used 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, 24 x7.

Also, even for real stores, as the number of stores with no holidays throughout the year is increasing recently, so it is very disappointing if the store we want to go is closed. I think that it is because we consider only our own convenience and do not care much about the circumstances of the service provider on the other hand.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.3: Japanese sense – 2

Japanese sense – 2

To the Japanese, looks are very important, especially for goods to be sold.

Any scratches or any fray on looks are considered to be bad goods, even if it is very small. The Japanese will notice even a few scratches.

As for fruits and vegetables, if their shape is not good, we treat it as a bad food. We sometimes judge things by looking, not by contents. Even if there is no problem in quality, it seems to the Japanese that it has a problem if it looks bad.

I think that goods to be sold in the Japanese market have to be good looks at least.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.4: Japanese sense – 3

Japanese sense – 3

The Japanese sometimes want to finish shopping in one place even if some goods are expensive.

Price does not matter if we are convinced about the quality of the goods that we stick to, because we pay our much attention to their quality, not price.

We always ask for a professional response to our inquiries.

We often inquire about anything to the clerk even if it is a little problem.

We expect professional behavior to any store clerk.

We assume that the store clerk should know much more than the customers.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.5: Japanese sense – 4

Japanese sense – 4

The Japanese suppose that any business cannot do things slowly.

We expect any reply from a business today or tomorrow and cannot wait for a long time.

We assume that business should do anything necessary for us.

We cannot be satisfied that business forces us to do something for ourselves.

We want 100% perfect goods and services.

We never suppose that any goods would be broken immediately after we get them,

We will not tolerate the same mistake occurring again.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.6: Japanese sense – 5

Japanese sense – 5

If goods are cheaper even at 1 yen, the Japanese often go buy even if we have to go far.

Japanese housewives are very sensitive to the price of goods.

We tend to buy too many goods if they are cheaper.

We are also very sensitive to the freshness of foods.

We always check the best-before date of foods.

We sometimes do not buy foods even within the best-before date, if the date is very close to today.

We buy from items with far best-before date

Fish and vegetables are always judged by looking at the freshness of appearance.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.7: Japanese culture – 1

Japanese culture – 1

The Japanese people's eyes will always go to new products/services.

In Japan, the boom for new products/services often ends in a short time.

We often even get tired quickly of the products/services getting popular.

In Japan, consumers are always right, and the customer is even God.

Speed is quite important, so we are not patient to wait for even a few days, not hours.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.8: Japanese culture – 2

Japanese culture – 2

If public transportation is delayed, it would impact on living and working of the Japanese people.

Trains are usually driven accurately in time at defined intervals.

How to solve problems is often important, not only if it is solved, or not.

We want a permanent good quality, not a temporary good quality.

We are always supposed not to repeat the same mistake.

The normal condition is quite natural.

We are not accustomed to an abnormal condition.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.9: Business/service in Japan

Business/service in Japan

The Japanese young people are good customers for convenience stores.

A convenience store is a living hub, especially for young people.

We always expect new products at convenience stores.

The goods sold at convenience store usually changes in a few months.

At convenience stores, only the goods long sell will last as a standard.

Commodity goods compete with only a price.

There is no profit in commodities.

In commodity only large-scale sales become business.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.10: Business/service in Japan – 2

Business/service in Japan – 2

The Japanese try to respond to customer's request as much as possible.

It is the basics of business in Japan to respond to customer's requests.

We flexibly adapt to customers.

We always aim for 100% and are not satisfied with less than 100%.

We respect quality better than cost.

Goods/services are a high cost due to quality priorities.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.11: Business/service in Japan – 3

Business/service in Japan – 3

The Japanese want a polite and friendly manner of business.

Close communication is important for Japanese customers.

It is sometimes important for a business to pick only good customers.

Not only the quality but also the story is important for goods/services.

Japanese customers sometimes give up on a company without complaints.

We will not even complain if it is too bad quality.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.12: Overseas culture from the Japanese eyes

Overseas culture from the Japanese eyes

If they solve the problem in any way, it is OK overseas.

They do not understand exactly the Japanese feeling.

They overseas do not stick to quality as much as Japanese.

Even over 80% is good overseas.

They do not understand why even over 80% is not good for the Japanese.

They do not spend time abroad to aim at 100%.

The balance between cost and quality is important overseas.

They first judge where to go before they aim at 100%.



Something typical for the Japanese consumer – Summary

Something typical for the Japanese consumer – No.13: Direct sales business in Japan

Direct sales business in Japan

Customer's voice reaches directly to business.

Customer's voice leads to rewarding in business.

Consumer's voice is franker than corporate customers in Japan.

A call center is a very tough job in Japan.

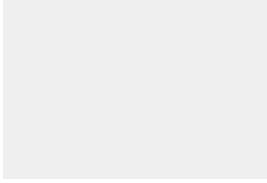
There are some voices of scolding but sometimes some compliments.

There is someone who always calls for complaints.

There are not always appropriate complaints from customers.

Mental care of the call center operator is necessary.

The anger of customers at trouble is sometimes terrible.



Epilogue

From my experience working with people overseas, I feel that it is not easy for them to understand Japanese consumers. So, I wrote about the characteristics of Japanese consumers that I think are important and would be useful. I hope that it will be helpful for those who want to do business with Japanese consumers. If you have any feedback, I'd appreciate a comment.

Contact us



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