



CondeHouse

## The Logic of a "Loss-prone Trailblazer": Why a 57-Year-Old Tradition Dared to Embrace a Digital Diva.

On the "Cruel Truth" of the Status Quo and the Art of Creative Destruction.

### 1. Despair over the "Transparent Existence" of Luxury Furniture

Ask anyone to name five car brands, and they'll likely reel them off in seconds. But ask, "Can you name a furniture brand?" and you'll inevitably be met with an **awkward silence**.

Living in Hokkaido, where a car is essential, I learned early on that without a car, you couldn't even dream of asking someone on a date. Back then, we twenty-somethings believed the car we drove dictated the success of our romantic endeavors. Yet, in all my years, I have never once heard of a date succeeding because of a piece of furniture.

Luxury furniture is a rare purchase—made perhaps once or twice in a lifetime. People are passionate during the selection process, but once it enters the home, it slips into the unconscious. It's like the human body; we only truly notice it when we feel pain. Unlike a car, furniture exists in a strictly private space, hidden from the public eye. It rarely serves as a tool for social validation, leaving furniture brands as "transparent existences," drifting away from memory.



***Roots of Tradition:** Hokkaido logs awaiting their transformation under the silent winter snow.*

Furthermore, we face the overwhelming first-mover advantage of Italian brands. They have spent decades planting beautiful showrooms in developing cities where a luxury market didn't even exist yet, tattooing the equation "Luxury Furniture = Italy" onto the global consciousness. For a Japanese brand



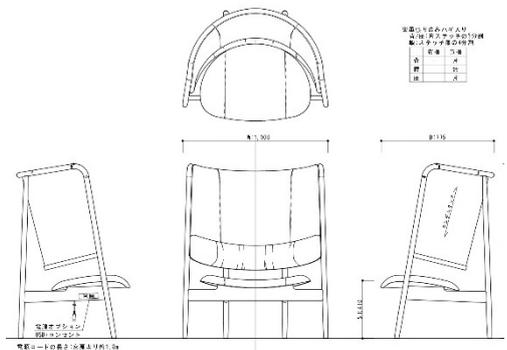
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to catch up through conventional means is virtually impossible. After 57 years of doing everything in our power, we at Conde House realized that to break through this wall of anonymity, we had to stand on the shoulders of a giant. That giant was Hatsune Miku—a cultural treasure of Japan, born in our own backyard of Hokkaido.

## 2. The Failed Passion and the One-Year Revenge

My first attempt at a collaboration with Hatsune Miku was five or six years ago. I was driven by raw passion, but I had no concrete plan when I visited Crypton Future Media, the creators of Miku. The result was a polite, diplomatic dismissal. Looking back, I don't blame them. If a man had burst into my office shouting vague concepts of "Hokkaido solidarity" without a single specific detail like I did, I too would have put the name **Shungo Ijima** (my name) at the top of my permanent blacklist.

I reflected deeply on this failure. In business, as in life, the ultimate courtesy is to provide an environment where the other party can easily make a decision. When I returned a year ago, I came armed with a meticulously crafted, concrete proposal. I received approval on the spot. It was a stark reminder of the power of an objective perspective.



*The Blueprint of Logic: Every "Creative Destruction" begins with a precise, calculated design.*

However, a different storm was brewing inside my own company. "This will damage the brand," some argued. I countered by asking, "Then what exactly is the 'Conde House' identity?". What emerged was the realization that we couldn't even put our own brand into words; we were simply hiding behind the word "tradition" to avoid the discomfort of change. We were paralyzed by **status quo bias**. As a relative newcomer to this organization, I knew I had to be the one to shatter that bias. This was the beginning of our "Creative Destruction".

I should mention that the reality of this destruction was a living hell. I was mocked as the man who "understands nothing about the company," and there were many days I was so exhausted I thought about quitting. But I told myself: "I'll quit tomorrow." And I've been saying that every day since. In business, staying still is a relative retreat. If the advocates for change must prove their case, then the defenders of the status quo should also be obligated to prove theirs. While I am technically an executive who should be applying the brakes, I found myself being the one stomping on the accelerator. Something is definitely wrong here.



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### 3. Elevation to Art and the Power of Daily Input



*Where Art Meets Life: The Hatsune Miku Art Chair, redefining the essence of luxury furniture.*

For the canvas, I chose our "FLAN" lounge chair. Its massive, curved backrest creates a personal sanctuary, designed so the user feels as though they are being **embraced by Hatsune Miku**.

This is not a piece of "merchandise". It is a 21st-century Japanese update of **1960s American Pop Art—a nod to the legacy of Andy Warhol**—designed to shine in a modern, high-end space.



I infused my convictions into the smallest details. The plates bearing the signatures of three artists are made of a bio-plastic derived from **scallop shells**. The idea came from a memory of **visiting the "White Path" in Wakkanai, Hokkaido**, where discarded shells were crushed to create a stunning white road. This reminded me that the seeds of a new business are not found in distant market research, but in the inputs of our daily lives.

***Sustainable Conviction:** A sign plate made from recycled scallop shells—a tribute to Hokkaido's "White Path."*

### 4. Technical Prowess and the Art of the "Reverse Pitch"

This project was made possible by Japanese craftsmanship. The fluid wooden frame of the FLAN chair is so seamless that people often gasp, "Wait, this is wood?". **Toray Industries (a leading global textile manufacturer and the world's top producer of carbon fiber)** provided the advanced printing technology and their luxurious Ultrasuede—a material that feels so much like the real thing it creates a seating experience unlike any other.



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During development, I looked at our project partner, Toray, and said, **"You should buy this chair."** My philosophy is that everyone we encounter—even the people who come to us for sales—is a potential customer. Because I pitched to the very people who were selling to us, a Miku chair ended up in Toray's office, which in turn caught the eye of a golf equipment manufacturer, leading to a new wave of orders. We must never allow ourselves to be blinded by rigid targeting.

### **5. Conclusion: A Hymn for the "Loss-prone Trailblazer"**

Through this project, I saw our promotion team break free from the shackles of "traditional luxury" and declare, "Let's give it a 'live' feeling!". I felt the undeniable growth of the organization.

Yet, there is no guarantee that such growth will translate directly into sales. Whether the Goddess of Fortune smiles upon us is often a matter of luck. But they say she only has hair on her forehead—you have to grab it before she passes. To swallow the fear of failure and **"leap before you look"** is the inescapable destiny of those who lead.

Objectively speaking, it's a bad bet. If you weigh the energy spent against personal gain, it's a "loss-making" endeavor. But the joy of seeing your organization grow beyond its previous boundaries is far greater than any individual success.

Even if this path yields no visible results, the trials we faced will eventually become the fuel that sustains us elsewhere. I dedicate this story to all the "Loss-prone Trailblazers" who continue to step forward into an uncertain world.

And to my fellow trailblazers who found themselves nodding until their necks were sore: **Please, help me out and buy a Miku Art Chair.**



*The Global Dialogue: Shungo Ijima sharing the philosophy of the "Loss-prone Trailblazer" in Singapore.*