

# BRINGING JAPANESE TECHNOLOGIES TO THE WORLD THROUGH CROSS BORDER OPEN INNOVATION

*An entrepreneur from Uzbekistan who found her lifework in Japan—to fully draw out the potential of advanced technologies lying unutilized—is doing her utmost to serve as a bridge between companies in Japan and the rest of the world.*



“Japan is home to many dormant technologies that have the potential to change people’s lives and the way the world works,” says Fariza Abidova, an entrepreneur from Uzbekistan. Regardless of how outstanding a technology is, ideas from a single company or industry are often insufficient to apply that technology to the creation of an innovative product or business model. “Open innovation” is a paradigm aiming to overcome that predicament and is garnering much attention in recent years. It goes beyond the boundaries of companies, industries, and even countries to gather and

develop expertise in the pursuit of problem-solving innovation. Many companies around the world now practice open innovation in order to address challenges not resolvable by one company alone. After graduating from Kobe University, Abidova began to hold corporate training sessions for global human resources in Japan. It was during this time that she visited a client’s R&D facility where she was shocked to see that, due to the difficulties in

finding and building relationships with business partners from other countries and cultures, many cutting-edge technologies were lying unused. “It made me want to become a bridge between Japanese companies and those of the rest of the world. I can’t offer any technology-related assistance, but I can provide support to overcome cultural differences and facilitate communication.”

At Trusted Corporation—a company she co-founded in

## FARIZA ABIDOVA

Born in Uzbekistan, Abidova came to Japan in 2005 to study intercultural communication at Kobe University. After graduating, she founded a global human resource development company, and in 2016, she co-founded Trusted Corporation, which aims to create innovations by connecting companies around the world.



Left: Abidova when she was studying at Kobe University as a student on the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology scholarship (fourth from the left). Right: Holding training sessions for global human resource development, with a focus on teaching practical communication skills based on specific scenarios.



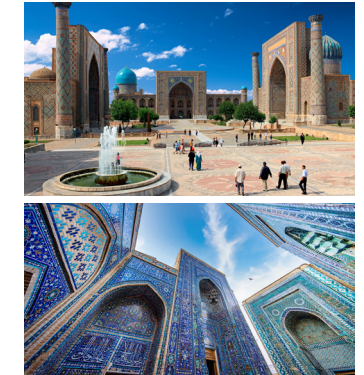
2016—Abidova is advancing projects related to vehicles and logistics for smart cities, with a focus on activities that connect companies in Japan and Europe. Not only does she actively work to find the most befitting business partners—from among 5,000 European companies selected by her firm over a four-year period as promising potential partners—but she also preemptively analyzes problems that Japanese companies are likely to encounter in the course of carrying out a project. Abidova provides the support needed in fine detail, from clarifying visions and challenges to building good communications and relationships with the partner companies. Her background and work history make her the optimum candidate for that task; having built up her career and diverse personal networks through a fluency in seven languages, she

has the skills required to flexibly adapt to the different cultures and styles of communication found in other countries.

Her effortless agility to cross over national and cultural barriers was cultivated in the social climate of her home country, Uzbekistan, where more than 130 ethnic groups live. Growing up surrounded by different cultures and ways of thinking, she had naturally learned to understand and respect cultures different from her own. According to Abidova, during the course of conducting global business, a lack of understanding of the other party’s culture and background has often prevented the proper communication of one’s real intentions, leading to unexpected problems and distrust. She has always wanted to help bridge such gaps.

Uzbekistan flourished as a

crossroads for trade between the East and West on the Silk Road. It is renowned for the beauty of its World Heritage Sites such as the city of Samarkand, but also still faces many challenges, with some areas lacking a proper gas and water supply and other social



Many legacies of various cultures and religions can be found in Uzbekistan. Samarkand, Abidova’s birthplace, is called “The Blue Capital” because of the vivid blue Islamic architecture that abounds there, including the Registan Mosque and madrasas (top), and the Shakh-i-Zinda compound (bottom), a complex of large tombs and temples. The city was registered as a World Heritage Site in 2001.

infrastructure. If life in the world can be made more comfortable and convenient through open innovation, Abidova believes that the living environment in Uzbekistan will also improve. That is how she hopes to contribute to her country through her life’s work. “There are many problems that can be solved through the power of technology. Every day is an exciting one when I think that the work that I do could help change the world.” It may not be long before Japan’s dormant technologies are making their mark around the world in various fields. ●



The nationalities and fields of expertise of her colleagues at Trusted Corporation are diverse (top). Nearly half of the entire staff works outside of Japan, such as in Italy and Germany. Abidova says that it is her role to further draw out the strengths of talented people in various fields, be they clients or colleagues.