

243th Business Plan Presentations Held on December 13, 2022**YOXO BOX****1. LOOVIC Inc. President Mr. Toru Yamanaka** <https://www.loovic.co.jp/> (English)

Established in May 2021 Capital stock: USD \$ 20,200

LOOVIC sells a physical navigation device service for the resolution of spatial cognition problems that enables users to reach their destinations without looking at their smartphone. The device is worn around the neck and provides guidance that appeals directly to the senses, by vibration and voice. Although it is a device for visual support, it solves issues certain people have when walking. More specifically, people who have trouble with spatial cognition are constantly at risk of accidents. If they are also inept at using maps, they must depend on the assistance of others when going somewhere. The company launched the development of the basic technology from the problems faced by people with these issues. Nevertheless, it is aiming for application as a type of technology that can change mobility lifestyles among the general public, because the same approach can be utilized for the mobility space supporting society at large.

【Re-Cap】 Spatial cognition may be weak, mainly among people with auditory dominance (a development impairment), higher brain dysfunction, or a slight decline in cognitive capability. LOOVIC aspires to the creation of a society that facilitates autonomous movement by all members. The conventional smartphone maps and Maas applications are surprisingly hard to manipulate and passively do as directed. In contrast, the company's navigation service makes it seem as if a sympathetic person is right beside the users, speaking to and supporting them. The users, in turn, can have more margin to enjoy the scenery and cherish the real space. Mr. Yamanaka said that the company is targeting a total of 44 million users (including use by the general public), and has IPO in mind further down the road.

**2. MEAT EPOCH Co.,Ltd. President Mr. Mikio Atobe** <https://www.meatepoch.com/> (Japanese)

Established in July 2016 Capital stock: USD \$ 330,000

In 2012, Meat Epoch opened a store dealing exclusively in dry-aged meat. Learning that fermentative bacteria are important for aging, the founder immersed himself in research of bacteria and meat while managing a restaurant. Through industry-academia collaboration with Meiji University's Faculty of Agriculture, after about four years, he succeeded in culturing zygomycetes that were safe and harmless to the human body. In additional collaboration with Meiji University, he developed a sheet that anyone can use to make aged meat and fish, both stably and within a short time. The sheet is a fabric to which cultured zygomycete cells are affixed, and is simply wrapped around the meat or fish to age them. As for its features, the sheet eliminates the need for the usual curing space, and can produce value-added food that has been safely aged by individual efforts. The founder also discovered that this technology could be used for preservation. It enables varied control of products, from aging to preservation, by control of temperature and the number of days. The sheet can be used to make meat and fish aged to personal preferences, reduce deterioration of sashimi raw fish slices, make food keep longer, and even extend the advisable period for consumption (expiration date). "Keep Food Project" is the name of the company's agendum of preserving food as opposed to eliminating waste. It is aiming for positioning of this agendum as a new SDG to be attained with the power of bacteria. It has received many awards, including the corporate award at the Food Tech Business Contest and the industrial award from the City of Kawasaki.

【Re-Cap】 Mr. Atobe said that his company has received nearly 100 inquiries for its Aging Sheet and Oisheet, and that cases of first-time introduction number about 20 per month. He added that, going forward, it was also going to engage in research and development in areas such as freeze-drying and spray atomization, to make the technology even easier to use.

**3. BirthT, LLC. President Mr. Tatsunori Watanabe** <https://birtht.xyz/#/> (Japanese)

Established in September 2019 Capital stock: USD \$ 2,000

BirthT is an R&D-oriented venture firm that is the first in Japan to develop 3D printers in the form of belt conveyors. It has an in-house development, production and sale of Lee and LeePRO, which are 3D printers of the fused deposition molding (FDM) type. These printers are capable of long-length molding and automatic continuous molding, which are not possible with the conventional 3D printers. Although they contribute to agile development by reducing manufacturing costs and shortening delivery times, 3D printers are still saddled with several issues. One is constraints on size. The printing of large-sized items naturally requires a printer that is larger than them and entails a high installation cost. A second issue is the lack of amenability to automation. 3D printers were originally developed as machines to enhance the efficiency of the work of designers. However, every time the printing is finished, it is followed by the task of removing the piece from the machine and other manual work that interrupts the main operation. Lee and LeePRO resolved these issues by adopting a bottom belt conveyor and performing deposition in an oblique orientation. Because the deposition is oblique and the belt conveyor is linked with each layer, there are no constraints on the formation size in any one direction (printing size: y axis orientation - ∞, x axis orientation - stage width, z axis orientation - stage height). Every time the printing ends, the belt convey is activated to ensure new printing and thereby enable the next round of printing in succession. In addition, the moderately curved surface on the end of the bottom surface results automatic removal of the object, thereby making seamless continuous printing possible.

At present, the company is selling Lee, the No. 1 model, in response to orders, and recruiting companies to serve as monitors (with compensation) for LeePRO, its first-generation industrial model equipped with higher levels of precision and function. (The monitor companies can become the first to purchase LeePRO, including maintenance service, provided that they cooperate with detection of bugs in it.)

【Re-Cap】 The market for industrial-use 3D printers is projected to reach USD5.2 billion in 2026. Mr. Watanabe said that there was one competitor globally but none in Japan yet. He also expressed his desire to eventually transform BirthT into a joint-stock company, with a vision including IPO.

**【Message from Vice Chairman Masatoshi Go】**

We at MINERVA have continued to hold these Business Plan Presentations meetings once a month, with use of both an online platform and real space. We intend to continue doing so going forward as well. The Japanese Government, Kanagawa Prefectural Government, and Yokohama Municipal Government are all focusing on support for start-up firms, and we at MINERVA too will continue striving to help this cause. We are truly grateful for the appearance of companies that are of interest to all concerned to make presentations at these meetings, and for their backing in various forms.

We are counting on your support again in the coming year!



《Impressions》This last Business Plan Presentations meeting of 2021 attracted an audience of about 40 people who participated either online or at the venue. We earnestly hope to hear presentations by many appealing companies again in 2023.
Best wishes for a happy holiday season!

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