

# Overview of Tobu Railway Service Efforts for Inbound Visitors

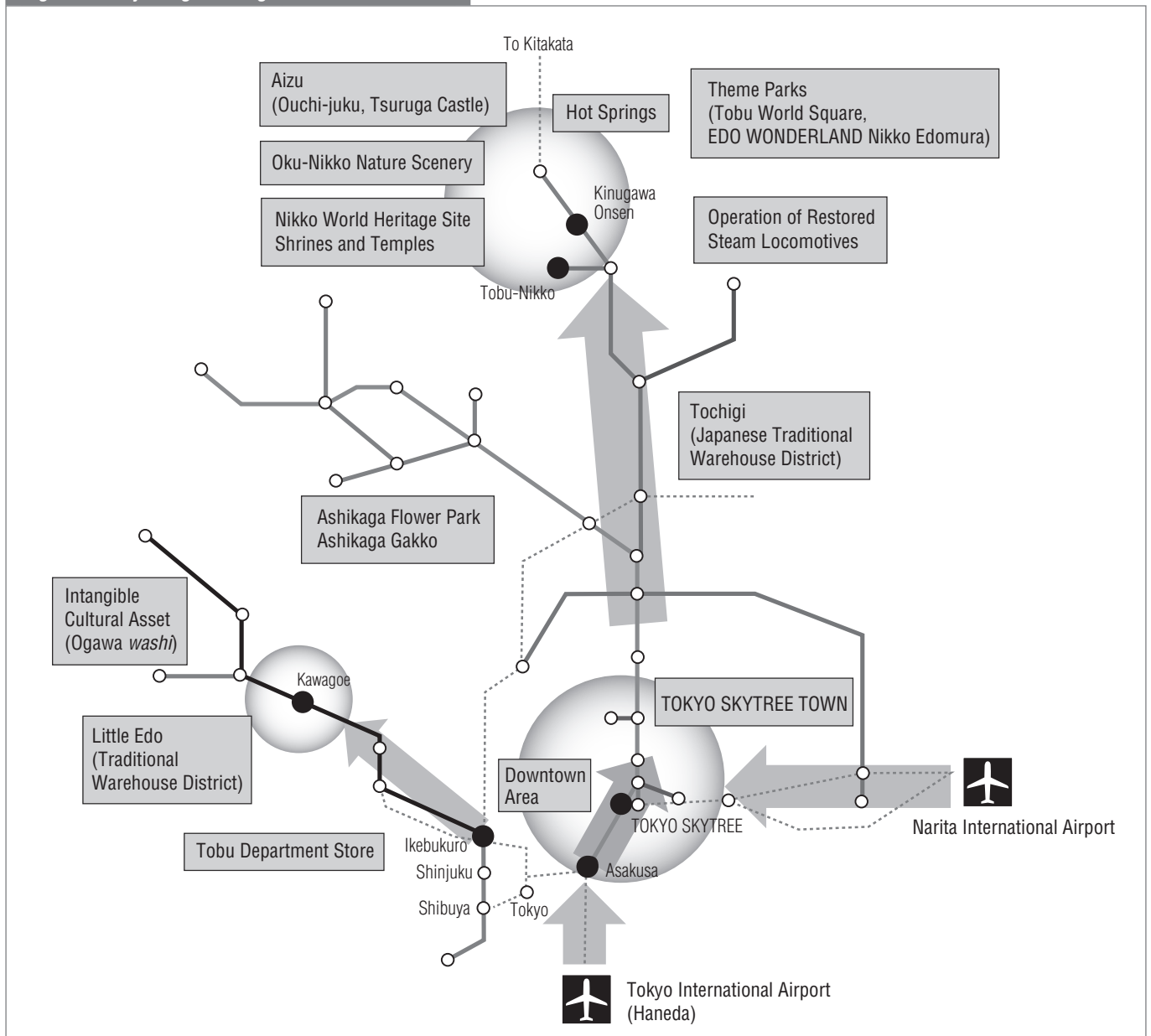
Tobu Group Inbound Travel Promotion Department

## Introduction

The slowing Japanese economy accompanied by falling birth rate and aging society are causing social changes that will inevitably impact trackside areas along Tobu

Railway lines. As a result, revenues from commuting and other journeys by Japanese residents seem set to plateau eventually, making attraction of inbound visitors an important part of future revenue growth.

Figure 1 Major Sightseeing Areas on Tobu Lines



## Strengths in Inbound Travel on Tobu Lines

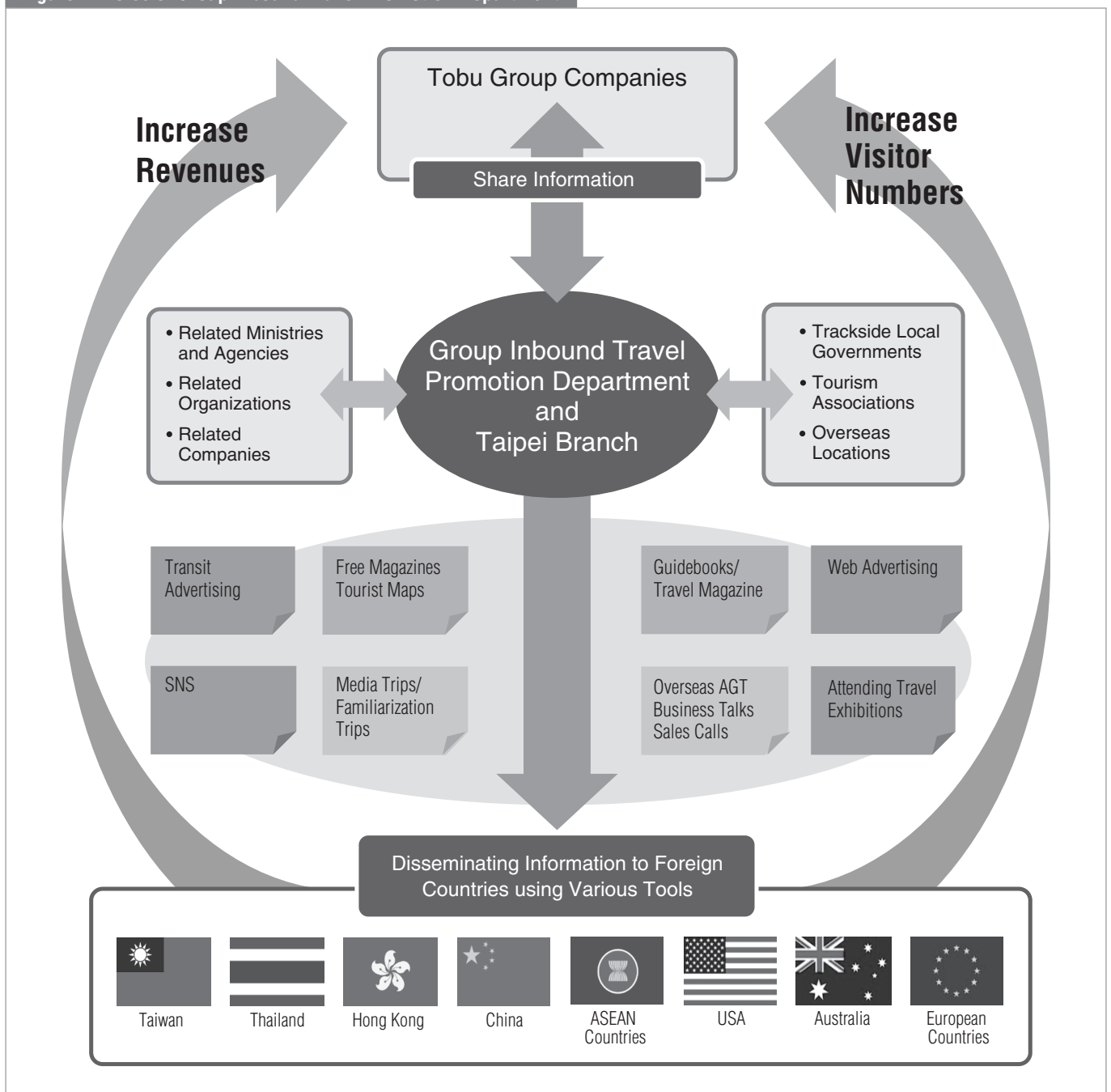
At 463.3 km, Tobu Railway boasts the longest total track length of private railways in the Kanto region, and its wide operations area encompasses many attractive sightseeing spots for inbound visitors (Fig.1). They include Tobu's TOKYO SKYTREE TOWN® near the famous temple district of Asakusa, 'Little Edo' in Kawagoe near Tokyo, the shrines and temples at the Nikko UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the Ryomo region famous for its beautiful seasonal flowers. There are various other Tobu Group facilities in

many sightseeing areas, such as Tohoku and Hokkaido, not served by the company's lines.

## Establishment and Role of Group Inbound Travel Promotion Department

To attract Japan's increasing numbers of inbound visitors to areas served by Tobu lines, the company created its Group Inbound Travel Promotion Department in May 2016. This office is dedicated to attracting inbound visitors and manages group promotions as well as works to strengthen

Figure 2 Roles of Group Inbound Travel Promotion Department



ties with group companies, local governments and relevant companies along Tobu lines. By collecting information from a broad range of sources and combining that information, it seeks to make information more beneficial in order to enable unified dissemination of information to potential customers overseas (Fig. 2).

In October 2016, Tobu established its Taipei branch in Taiwan where the group has good relations with groups such as the Taiwan Railways Administration, and Taipei 101. This branch has created a venue for actively promoting Tobu Group products and tourism information to local agents, media, and others.

## Specific Measures for Disseminating Information

The Tobu Group operations area is home to many attractions (tourism resources) that the company can target at different countries and age groups. However, inbound visitors' tastes vary greatly due to cultural and religious differences, so dissemination of information focussed on specific targets helps spread the word more effectively.

Keeping in mind the behaviour forms of inbound visitors at the time of reception of information (before visit, during visit, after visit), Tobu focuses on providing information before and during the visit. Furthermore, key performance indicators (KPI) for each promotion are constantly monitored while remembering cost-effectiveness and the PDCA cycle.

Specific measures are described below.

## Before Visit

### Marketing to Overseas Travel Agents



Agent sales at overseas travel exhibitions

(Tobu Railway)

### Partnership with Taiwan Railways Administration



Trains operating in Japan and Taiwan using each other's livery

(Tobu Railway)



## Making Offers to Chinese Influencers

Placement on influencer blogs

不一样的旅游，不一样的体验----东京4天3晚游 (2016-08-18 16:27)

转载

标签: 东京4天3晚游 东武集团 晴空塔 东武世界广场 小江戸气息的川越 分类: 旅游达人



上周天使又去了日本，第16次日本行了，这次又玩了哪些好玩的地方呢？

## Advertising Booths and Materials at Overseas Travel Exhibitions (Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Thailand, etc.)



Booth placement at Taiwan Travel Exhibition

(Tobu Railway)

## Spreading Company Information using Tobu's Social Media Accounts (Facebook, Weibo, WeChat)

**东武\_日本**  
TOBU RAILWAY CO.,LTD

73 关注 | 1676 粉丝 | 61 微博

微博认证 Lv2

行业类别 汽车交通-铁路

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相册

东武\_日本 V

11月25日 11:20 来自 微博 weibo.com

下了谷川岳索道,就是广阔的天神平滑雪场,占地50公顷。在关东地区的滑雪场中,作为非人工雪的天然滑雪场来说,这里开始时间最早,结束时间最晚,从12月到次年5月一直可以享受滑雪的乐趣。其雪质也能与北海道媲美,是松松软软的高级粉状雪!您还可以顺道欣赏群山环绕的雄壮美景,这些山脉包括日本百... 展开全文

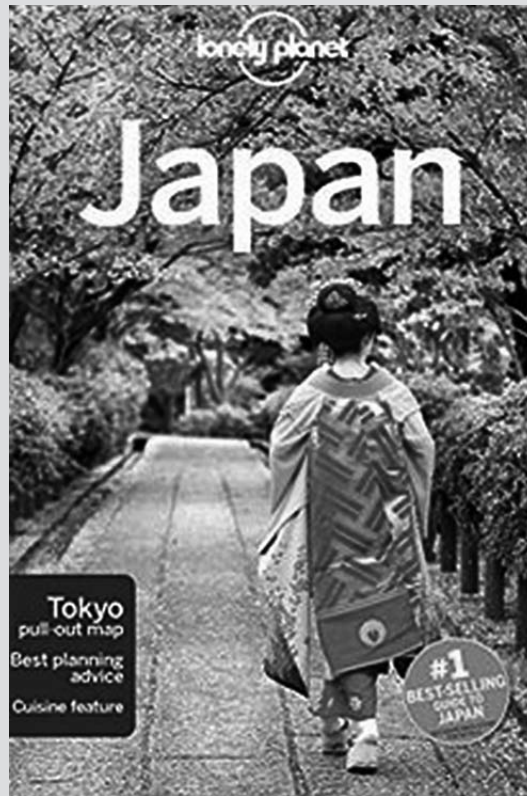
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Tobu Group Weibo account



Advertising in Famous Guidebook

lonely planet guidebook



Spreading Information at Overseas Companies

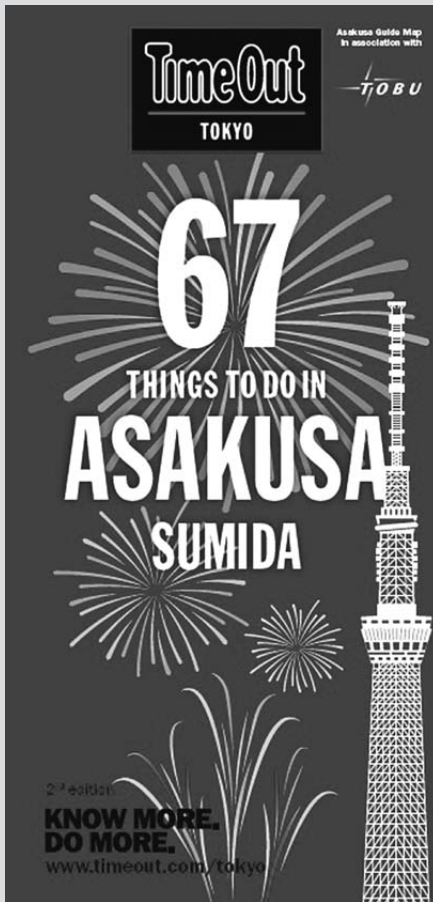


Use of Tobu Top Tours Bangkok local company

(Tobu Railway)

## During Visit

Map Produced in Cooperation with TimeOut TOKYO



TimeOut TOKYO Asakusa Sumida map

Group Joint Campaigns for Inbound Visitors



Inbound visitor autumn campaign poster

## Specific Measures to Host Inbound Visitors

Tobu Group is a key player in locations along its lines visited by many inbound visitors. These locations include the Nikko UNESCO World Heritage Site and international summer resort, and Tokyo's popular Asakusa

and SKYTREE districts with many international visitors, where multilingual tourism-support measures have been implemented, centring on major stations.

To further attract visitors, more investments in multilingual services will be made focused on key areas. Moreover, diversification to manage cultural and religious differences will be important too.



## Physical Infrastructures

Free Wi-Fi in 122 Stations and on Limited Express Trains



TOBU Free Wi-Fi logo

Use of Tablet Computers at Major Station for Multi-language Guidance



Tobu staff using tablet computer at station

(Tobu Railway)

Prayer Room for Muslims

Tobu World Square Prayer Facility  
(exterior and interior)  
(Tobu World Square)



## Customer Assistance

### Proving Test for Luggage-free Sightseeing at Stations Serving Tourist Locations

Luggage-free travel service counter at Tobu Nikko Station (Tobu Railway)



### Cooperation in Acquiring English Customer Service Certification

English conversation for all employees (Tobu Railway)



English customer service certification website (Tobu Railway)

おもてなし英語力を磨く。  
**英語対応能力検定**

🔍  検索

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ここが特長! これでOK!

**英語の準備はOKですか？  
英語対応能力検定で磨きませんか？**

訪日外国人が増えています。  
接客現場での英語対応能力がますます重要になっています。  
英語対応能力検定でおもてなし英語力を磨きませんか？

訪日外国人4000万人時代に向けて。サービスの現場や街なかで求められるのは、  
英語で聞き取って理解し、適切な言葉で伝える「英語対応能力」。  
海外からのお客様に、安心してもらえる、微笑んでもらえる、おもてなし英語。「これだけで伝わる」にフォーカスし、その力を測る「英語対応能力検定」。シンプルだけど伝わる。シンプルだからこそ伝わる。ココロが英語になっていく。





Operating restored steam locomotives in Nikko and Kinugawa

(Tobu Railway)



Nikko Kanaya Hotel, new Tobu group member

(Kanaya Hotel)



## Renewal of Inbound Visitor Tickets



Holder for discount pass

(Tobu Railway)

## Conclusion

Tobu Group is made up of 90 companies (as of September 2016), and it conducts business for inbound visitors in the Kanto region as well as Hokkaido and Tohoku. As previously mentioned, Tobu established in 2016 a department that specializes in attracting inbound visitors and a branch in Taipei by which it is disseminating information in a strategic manner.

Cooperation with affiliated organizations and neighbouring areas is more important for attracting inbound visitors than for stimulating domestic demand. The Tobu Group plans to form partnerships with tourist sources and increase competitiveness, thereby attracting more visitors to its business area and help invigorate local communities.

The company hopes that by continuously disseminating information on the attractions of diverse sightseeing areas, visitors from abroad will see Japan as a place to visit again and again, helping achieve the goal of reaching 60 million visitors a year by 2030 as an internationally acclaimed tourist destination. ■

## Acknowledgment

This article was contributed by Tobu Group Inbound Travel Promotion Department