

MAIN STREET PROGRAM: HOW THE UNIQUE METHODOLOGY WORKS

A Strategy of Downtown Revitalization based on the Trademark Right

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[SYNOPSIS]

The purpose of this report is to be a collect introduction on the methodology of the Main Street Program in America for Japanese experts on downtown revitalization, in order to remove prevailed misunderstanding in Japan.

Presumably, the hardest part to understand for Japanese experts, the most unique part of the system as well, is that the Main Street Program is a methodology of branding which fundamentally based on registered trademark right that owned by nonprofit nongovernmental organization, and local communities is required to be compatible to the specific methodologies and standards, and need to take inspection by coordinating organization every year, in order to get and maintain the position to be permitted to use the name of "Main Street" in their program's name. However, local programs that are recognized as a Main Street Local Program would not be given any financial support by the national organization, but get authorized assurance of quality on their organization and activities, which draws and attracts the whole support from the community, both financially and manpower, including by local government and business sectors. This could be called as a methodology based on branding power, which does not seen in downtown revitalization strategies in Japan. Another part that hard to understand for Japanese experts would be the requirement of employment of payed professional director, which is rarely seen in Japan.

This report demonstrates how the system works specifically through the case studies of Main Street Iowa as one of the best coordinating program, and Cedar Falls, Dubuque and Valley Junction in the State of Iowa as samples of winners of the Great American Main Street Award.