

New Direction for Driving School



<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/videos/20221117104814345/>

Many Japanese executives have seen an aging population drag down their opportunities, but those at one firm are changing that downturn into a U-turn. Here is NHK World's Takigawa Shion.

It's not often that exercises in a welfare facility are taught by a driving school, but this company in Miyazaki, southwestern Japan, has embraced the idea of diversifying. Here, instructors teach physical fitness classes which are packed with driving school knowhow. Seniors learn how the movements involved in putting on a seatbelt also help when washing their backs at home. The company also offers driving rehabilitation services. Saita Hirohito is among its enthusiasts. He suffered a stroke that left him with paralysis on the right side of his body. Specialist driving lessons not only train him physically but have also given him a new zest for life.

Thank you very much.

How was today?

It was exciting.

The company's welfare services are popular, accounting today for 20% of its total revenue.

Our industry will continue to slow down if we give up and do nothing. We can compensate for losses caused by a shrinking population if we develop a business model adapted to times in which we live.

From this year, those over 75 who have driving violation records must take a proficiency test in order to

renew their licenses. Tapping into this new regulation, the company has developed a special training car for elderly drivers. Multiple cameras record 360-degree images. Its GPS has only a 3-centimeter margin of error and the sensor detects sudden changes in speed.

Please speed up to 40 kilometers per hour along that straight line.

The car's technology is able to highlight the driving habits of 77-year-old Sakamoto Kikuo.

See, the car over crossed the line by this amount. You must drive between these lines.

Sakamoto was unaware of this.

I seem to have some incorrect habits after driving for 50 years.

The driving school's mission is to help people recognize if their driving is dangerous. Cars are often still necessities in rural communities. I want to encourage people to attend driving school on a regular basis.

As Japan's population continues to age, the company is planning to promote this innovative new business model nationwide.

Source: (NHK World News)

Now discuss the questions with a partner.

1. What's your opinion of the new direction for this driving school?
2. What other rules do you think should be applied for senior drivers?
3. Have you heard of any other news stories related to senior driving?
4. Can you think of any other strategies to help driving schools stay in business?
5. What other industries do you think must adapt to an aging population?