

THE POWER OF CLOTHING

— Making The World A Better Place —

BIGGER CHALLENGES, BIGGER DREAMS



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LifeWear

The Power of Clothing
Making the World a Better Place

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BIGGER CHALLENGES, BIGGER DREAMS

Making a dream come true isn't easy. At times it's a great struggle, and nothing seems to work. Then everything clicks, and suddenly, the dream is a reality. Despite this, even bigger challenges may wait. In this edition, we introduce three people who have gone beyond achieving even their wildest dreams.

BIGGER CHALLENGES,
BIGGER DREAMS

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2020 Global Wheelchair Tennis Fever

Shingo Kunieda, UNIQLO Global Brand Ambassador and reigning world wheelchair tennis champion, won the 2014 Grand Slam titles in Australia, France, the UK, and US. What is the secret behind his consistent and amazing success, and what comes next?



I couldn't sleep the night Tokyo won the bid to host the 2020 Olympics

Shingo Kunieda loved baseball, until a life threatening illness left him in a wheelchair at age nine. Ten years after starting wheelchair tennis, Kunieda won a gold medal at the Paralympic Games. He ranked No. 1 in the world in 2006...then he hit a wall.



Last season, I was not at the top of my game, both in technique and physical fitness, and I was losing to younger players. With change comes risk, but I knew I had to do something.

To be No.1, you have to put your opponent on the defensive. Tennis is all about offense and defense. When I'm off form, my tennis is predominantly defensive. I had to redress this balance and regain the offensive, but how?

You have to work on your chair work and fitness if you want to dominate at the net. This means dashing up to the net time and time again during training. You also have to improve the power and accuracy of your shots, if you want to surge up to the net and hit that perfect winning shot.

The trick is to keep your upper body steady and your waist mobile when taking a shot. I practiced returning shots aimed into the two corners of the court over and over. It was hard to repeat mundane, basic beginner training, but after doing it tens of thousands of times, it became instinctive.

Some days I would spend seven hours on the mat strengthening my stomach muscles, or go for a 15 km wheelchair cycle. My shoulders and upper arms get a lot of exercise moving my chair, but I also do

exercises to increase my flexibility and range of motion.

Thanks to all that additional training and commitment, I won the Grand Slam this year in Australia, France, the UK, and US. At 30, I feel I am at last developing my true potential.

It's World No.1 or Nothing

I always want to win, and be the best in the world.

The only time that conviction wavered was when I first ranked No.1 in the world back in 2006. All of a sudden, there was no one to chase and I started questioning why I was even playing tennis.

But I soon realized that, while I might be No.1 in the world, I was still emotionally immature and had plenty of room to improve. That's when I stopped trying to chase someone else and started competing against myself.

I began using a wheelchair after being treated for a spinal tumor at age 9. After coming out of hospital, I was determined to keep up with my friends, even when playing basketball in a wheelchair. From that moment on, I was determined to win.

My mother didn't tell me what had made me ill until I was 14, and had passed the expected five-year



Gold Medal Tennis Wear London 2012 Paralympic Games

UNIQLO designed a detailed made-to-measure pattern that does not hamper movement. The shirt's flat seams prevent rubbing, even during vigorous play. UNIQLO and Toray developed a high-quality, light and thin DRY-EX material that absorbs perspiration rapidly, for a quick-dry feel even in hot humid conditions. The red color represents Japan, with dark red vertical piping on the chest.

01

2020 GLOBAL WHEELCHAIR TENNIS FEVER

survival threshold. That's when I realized I had been in a life or death situation and had beaten what I found out was cancer. Suddenly, being in a wheelchair didn't seem such a huge price to pay. Instead, I felt grateful that it had enabled me to play tennis and meet all kinds of people.

As part of the UNIQLO Recovery Assistance Project, I spoke at a school in Ishinomaki, which had lost many students and their families in the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. I was so nervous, but I was reassured by their enthusiastic welcome and their power and resilience. I felt I had witnessed one of mankind's fundamental strengths—the ability to turn traumatic experiences into a greater resilience and appreciation for life.

The Chance of a Lifetime

I heard about Tokyo's successful 2020 Olympic bid

on the eve of the US Open final. I was so excited, I couldn't sleep.

Naturally, I want to win the gold medal. But I'm also looking forward to the rare opportunity to compete in an Olympics hosted by my home country, and to show people first-hand how exciting wheelchair tennis is.

Many people say I'm really brave for playing wheelchair tennis, but they are not necessarily interested in the sport. Our matches should be reported as cut-throat competitions on the sports pages, not as uplifting stories on the Lifestyle or Society pages. I want to be judged on my play, not my background.

Spectators will be guaranteed some thrilling action at the 2020 Paralympic wheelchair tennis and my new dream is to fill the stands for every single match.



I visited Ishinomaki in Miyagi, Northeast Japan in the fall of 2012 as part of the ongoing UNIQLO Recovery Assistance Project from the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami. I hit some balls with children at the Ishinomaki Lawn Tennis Club and answered questions at the Kamo elementary school assembly. I can still hear the cheers and applause.

WHEELCHAIR TENNIS TOUR

UNIQLO Becomes the Title Sponsor for the International Tennis Federation's Wheelchair Tennis Tour

In June 2014, UNIQLO became the title sponsor for the International Tennis Federation's Wheelchair Tennis Tour. The ITF Tour covers over 160 tournaments each year in over 40 different countries, including the four Grand Slam championships in Australia, France, the UK, and US. UNIQLO's Global Brand Ambassador, Shingo Kunieda, Novak Djokovic, and Kei Nishikori, all attended the news conference held in London following the sponsorship announcement.

On returning to Japan following his victory in the British Open Wheelchair Tennis Championships, Kunieda said, "I was so proud to be affiliated with UNIQLO. I do feel pressure when I see the UNIQLO name displayed on every court I play on, but it helps me focus. I signed my first contract with UNIQLO in 2009 and began sporting the UNIQLO logo on my tennis wear. Back then people would ask me what UNIQLO was and where it came from. Now people say, "UNIQLO? Cool!" That makes me happy."

UNIQLO will work with the ITF over the next three years to further promote wheelchair tennis.



02 Fostering Independence— Internship for Refugees

When we hear the word “refugee,” we tend to think of the people on the news escaping regional conflict in refugee camps. But UNIQLO’s Internship for Refugees is designed to support refugees who have decided to settle in Japan. So far, six interns have joined the payroll, and currently work in UNIQLO stores.

Carving out a New Life in Japan

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*1, there are more than 51 million people worldwide who are forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution and human rights violations. This number continues to increase.

A small number of refugees come to Japan to seek asylum. Of the 3,260 refugee applications in 2013, only 157 people were granted refugee status and given the right to remain in the country. This number is tiny compared to other developed countries and unfortunately awareness on refugee issues in Japan is low.

People who seek refuge in Japan, as in other countries, want to rebuild their lives in a safe environment where they can pursue their dreams. But even after being granted refugee status, refugees need help learning the Japanese language and culture, and above all, finding work. Organizations such as the Refugee Assistance Headquarters (RHQ)*2 help refugees settle in new

environments. But finding stable employment with a decent salary is challenging. Language is an obvious barrier, but so too is the shortage of companies actively employing refugees.

Refugees face discrimination in the workplace and are given few job opportunities. Over time, their spirits are squashed due to a lack of acceptance in Japanese society, and they lose the desire to work and build a better life.

UNIQLO launched its Internship for Refugees in 2011—offering refugees the opportunity to gain in-store work experience. Following a successful internship, refugees can join UNIQLO as a full time employee. Cing Hau Lun is one of six refugees currently working at UNIQLO.

We don’t see these people as refugees, but as valued co-workers. UNIQLO prides itself on creating a fair workplace where different individuals can work together as a team, regardless of their background or circumstances.

*1 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees was established in 1950 to lead international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide.

Fast Retailing and UNHCR signed a global partnership agreement in 2011.

*2 Refugee Assistance Headquarters (RHQ)

Commissioned by the Japanese government to operate RHQ support centers to foster independence among refugees in Japan, the centers provide vital information to refugees and their families, including Japanese language classes, information on everyday living and jobs.





Cing Hau Lun
UNIQLO Atré Kameido Store (From the Republic of the Union of Myanmar)

At first, I felt useless, frustrated, and sad.

Most of the refugees who come to Japan don't understand Japanese language or culture, and they are anxious about their futures. They have refugee status, but don't know how to get a job. Cing Hau Lun, from Myanmar, talks about her experience.

I am one of seven children from a farming family. We lived in a village surrounded by mountains in Chin State near the Indian border.

Primary and secondary education spans 10 years in Myanmar, so students go to university at 16. My father wanted me to study to become a nurse or a school teacher. At 16, I didn't know what I wanted to be but I did want to experience life in the big city! Luckily, my father supported my aspirations.

I graduated university in 2007, the same year that the Saffron Revolution (protests against the military government led by Buddhist monks and students) broke out in the Yangon capital. My determination to join the demonstrations outweighed my fears at the time. Later, people in plain clothes came up to me and asked who had encouraged me to take part. Frightened, I returned to my home village.

I graduated university but due to the turmoil in my home country, I decided to leave Myanmar. I thought hard and decided to come to Japan where I had some family living. I have an uncle who studied in Japan and now works here. After my uncle sent the necessary documents and my parents reluctantly agreed, I came to Japan.

It was so far from Narita Airport to my uncle's house in the southern part of Tokyo. I was amazed by how quiet and orderly Tokyo was despite all the people. I didn't speak the language and couldn't work, so I spent three months in the house, mostly

watching TV. In Myanmar all you hear on TV is news about minister visits, or quiet music. Japanese TV is so much better!

I applied for refugee status at the immigration office, and four years later, I received it. I had a part-time job washing dishes. I went to a two-hour Japanese lesson once a week and received local information and advice from the Refugee Assistance Headquarters. That was when I heard about the working opportunity at UNIQLO. I love UNIQLO's casual clothing so I jumped at the chance of an interview. I passed and started working.

At first, I couldn't understand anything and I didn't know what to do. Everyone was so busy, and I just felt useless, frustrated, and sad. But the store manager cheered me up when he told me I was not a refugee or a foreigner but a valued UNIQLO co-worker.

Now, after twelve months, I can instantly recognize what size a customer is and offer them helpful advice. If UNIQLO ever opens a store in Myanmar, I want to be first in line. My biggest dream is to open a store selling high quality UNIQLO clothes that people can afford in Myanmar.

Another dream of mine is to go home for Christmas. Myanmar is a predominantly Buddhist country but there are many Christians in Chin State. Our family is Christian and I would love to spend Christmas together with them.

BIGGER CHALLENGES,
BIGGER DREAMS

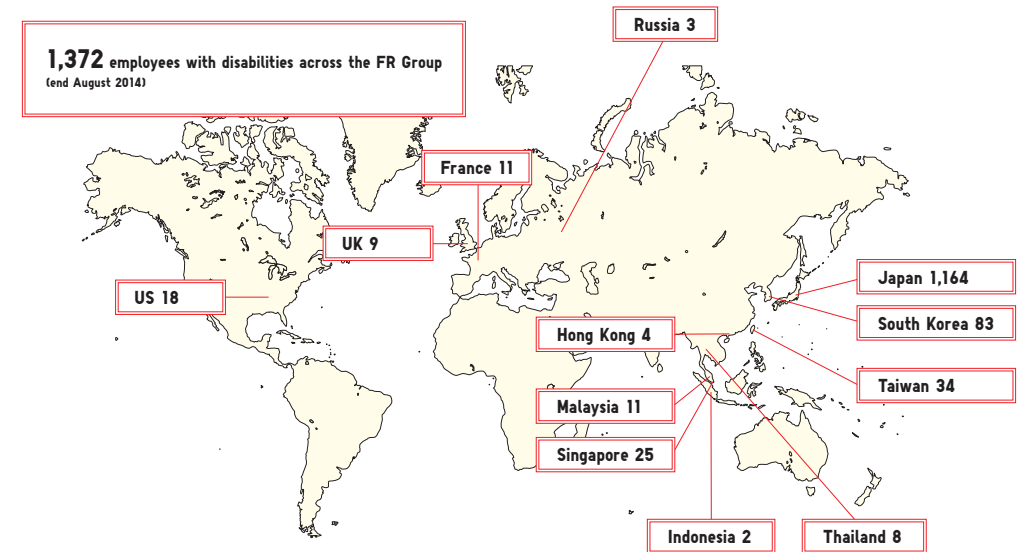
03 Empowering Employees Facing Disability

Society consists of individuals with special abilities and special needs, and as such, working with people of differing skills and backgrounds is natural. UNIQLO has always actively employed people with disabilities.



Employing People with Disabilities at UNIQLO Worldwide

In Japan, employees with disabilities constitute 6.36% of the workforce at Fast Retailing, the parent company of UNIQLO. According to Fast Retailing's own research, that is the highest rate in the country, among businesses with 5,000 or more employees. The company is now looking to actively promote the hiring of more employees with disabilities, across its global operations.



Progress, through Respect for the Diverse Values Across European Countries

When we began actively hiring employees with disabilities in Europe in 2013 we found legal requirements and values differed considerably between countries.

French law requires companies to hire employees with disabilities. Companies that don't comply have to pay fines, and some companies consider it more economical to just pay. The French government has tightened its rules, and attitudes are gradually improving. Companies in the UK are also required to hire people with disabilities in accordance with their equal opportunity laws. Clearly the social importance attached to employing people with disabilities is much higher there.

At UNIQLO France, we hold manager training sessions and in-store meetings to improve staff understanding of people with disabilities. But, in my experience, the best way to learn is to have people

work together, side by side. Employees realize that anyone could become disabled at any point in their life. They become less prejudiced and start to talk more openly about disabilities.

While it is important to increase the number of employees with disabilities, we shouldn't stop there. By encouraging people with and without disabilities to work together, I hope we can help foster a deeper mutual respect, and a more caring, inclusive company.



Carole Pattier
CSR Project Manager
PR Department,
UNIQLO France



Emeline Dufour
UNIQLO Levallois So Ouest Store, UNIQLO France

Working For a Brand From Japan!

**Working in a store in the Parisian suburbs,
Emeline pursues her dreams, with energy and curiosity.**

Ever since I was a child, I have adored Japanese culture; the mutual respect, the kindness of Japanese people. I also admire the ability of Japanese fashion designers to combine a deep respect for tradition with new, modern ideas. I was attracted to UNIQLO's Japanese roots, so I applied for a job even though the company didn't have a specific hiring policy for people with disabilities. My previous job involved designing clothes, but I wanted more contact with customers. UNIQLO was a Japanese brand, so it was the perfect place for me. I was also impressed by how highly the company values its individual staff.

I was born with vision defects associated with albinism. Things look unbearably bright to me even in everyday light. I am extremely short-sighted, but wearing glasses doesn't help, so someone has to help me read the clothing labels. Owing to the nature of my particular disability, people can't instantly guess what help I need and when. When I first entered the company, I had to explain to people when I had difficulties and get them to help me.

Working on the cash register was the most frightening. I found it hard to read the screen, and I would get nervous dealing with money and a long line

of customers. But I overcame that fear thanks to the kind encouragement of my colleagues.

Everyone gets on really well here. We are like family. We talk openly about many things, including my disability. Thanks to their patience, support and understanding, my disability no longer prevents me from doing any of the jobs in the store. I love working in the fitting room, because I see customers smile and I know I have helped them. It gives me a real boost when a customer says thank you.

My immediate goal is to do each task perfectly. I want to repay everyone's kindness by doing the best job that I can.

At some point, I want to use my personal and professional skills to become an independent image consultant, offering advice on dress, style, and manner. I would like to extend this service to people with disabilities and help them find their own style. This store is a great place to learn, because so many different people come in every day.

My other dream is to go to Japan within the next five years. I save a little each month so that I can spend a few weeks in Tokyo and Kyoto experiencing Japan firsthand.



Toufik Benzenati
Store manager
Levallois So Ouest Store, UNIQLO France

Most people don't know how to treat employees with disabilities, which can come off as distant or hesitant. Once they start working together, they realize they have many things in common, and I firmly believe the entire staff benefits from learning to compromise and understand each other better. It can take time to get to know each other, but in Emeline's case, we got on straightaway because she discussed any problems honestly and openly. Nowadays, we don't really have to make any allowances for her disability. In fact, I think she works harder than any of us!



UNIQLO, along with its global brand ambassadors Kei Nishikori, Shingo Kunieda and Novak Djokovic, is proud to be the title sponsor for the International Tennis Federation's Wheelchair Tennis Tour.



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