手仕事
Echizen-shi
JAPAN

Tourism Development Challenges in a Craftsmanship City

Echizen City Tourism Association

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About Echizen City

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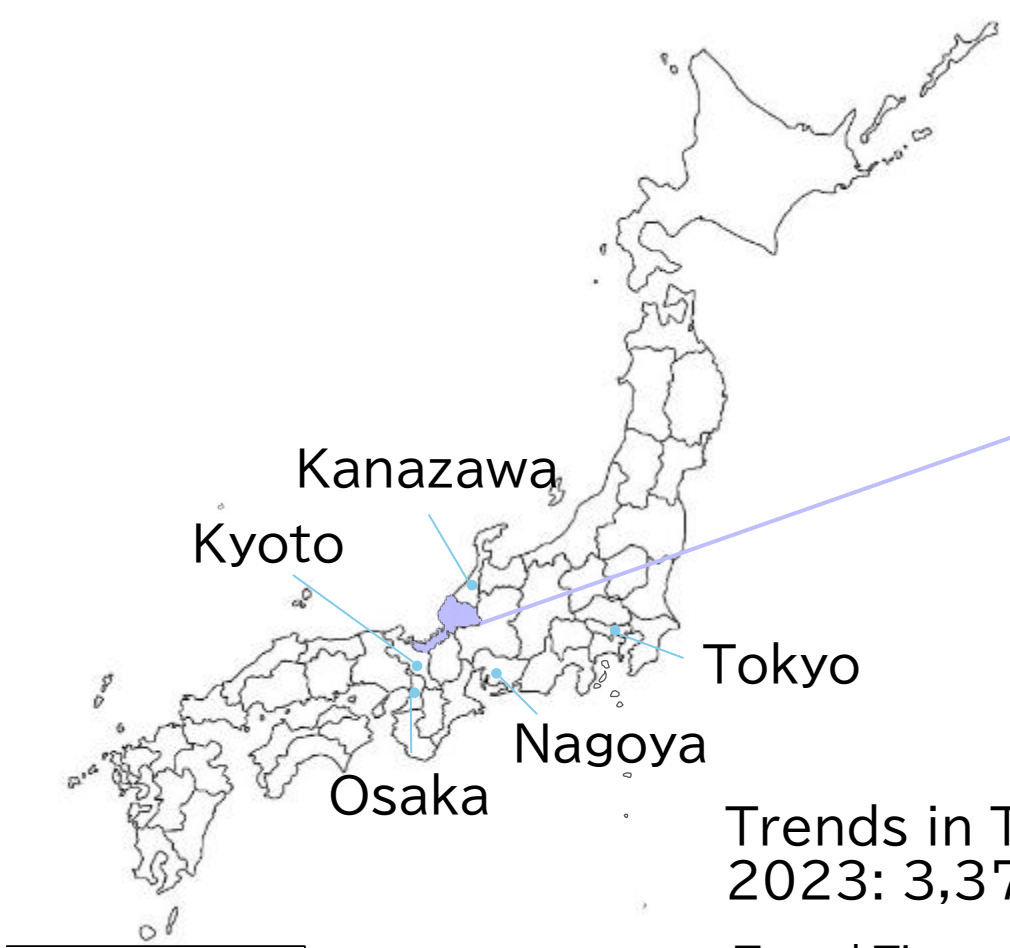

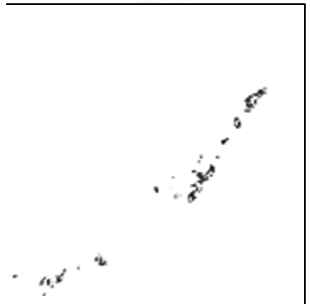

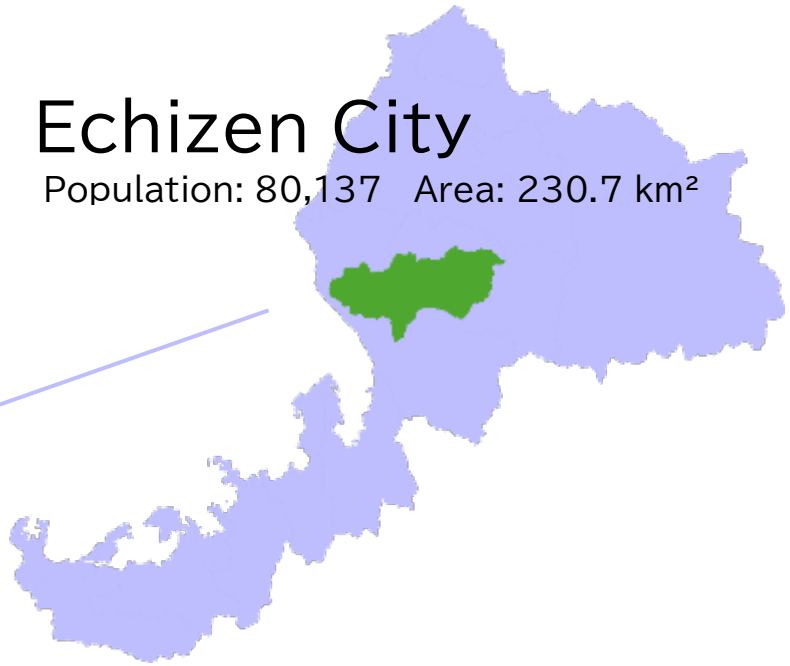

Echizen City

Population: 80,137　Area: 230.7 km²

Trends in Tourist Numbers

2023: 3,379,000　　2024: 4,307,000

Travel Time

From Tokyo Station to Echizen Takefu Station: 3 hours 6 minutes by Hokuriku Shinkansen
From Kanazawa Station: 44 minutes by Hokuriku Shinkansen
From Osaka Station by Thunderbird: 1 hour 38 minutes
From Kyoto Stationby Thunderbird : 1 hour 14 minutes

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An area where five traditional craft production centers, rare even within Japan, are concentrated

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< Traditional craft production areas surrounding Echizen City>

Echizen Tansu
(since the 19th century)

Echizen Forged Blades(since the 13th century)

Echizen Washi
(since the 6th century)

<Key Points>

- A rare region in Japan where five distinct traditional crafts are concentrated and continue as a livelihood.
- About ten years ago, the focus was solely on craftsmanship, separate from tourism.
- Over the past ten years, initiatives to revitalize the industry using tourism as a method have rapidly increased.

Start Year	Event Name	Overview	Event Period
2015	RENEW Organized by SOE	3-day OpenFactory	October
2016	手仕事のまち歩き Organized by us	Year-round Workshop Visits	All year
2017	千年赤糸工藝祭 Organized by Craft Festival Executive Committee	2-day Group Event	August

Event Highlights

RENEW

手仕事のまち歩き

千年赤糸工藝祭

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The Direction of Echizen City Tourism

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○ With a focus on enhancing local appeal, promoting settlement, and fostering pride in the community, efforts are being made to contribute to the region's sustainability.

Vision for the Future

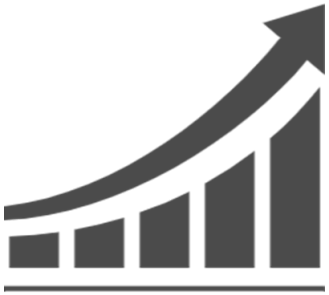
Culture

A wide range of products and services that leverage the value of "handcrafted work" enhance the area's appeal as a tourist destination.

Tourism

Customers acquired through tourism are purchasing products and services offered by the region.

Economy



Distributing tourism spending and attracting customers who appreciate "handcrafted work" contribute to the maintenance and development of various businesses that uphold the culture.

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The Beginning of Craft Tourism in Echizen City

Local Resources

○○○○ and Tourism

Regional Challenges

Solutions

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The Beginning of Craft Tourism in Echizen City

Local Resources

Traditional Crafts and Tourism

Solutions

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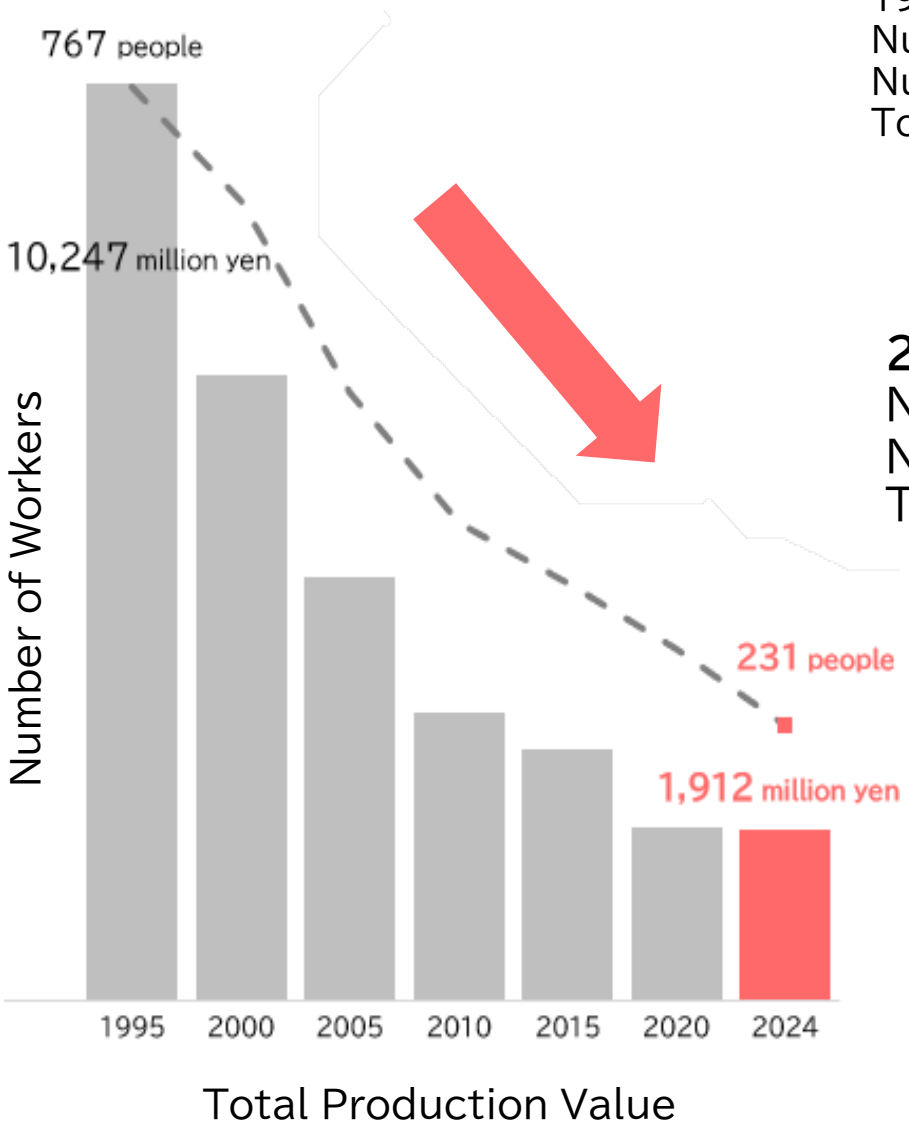
Trends in Echizen Washi Businesses



1995 (30 years ago)
Number of Businesses: 83
Number of Workers: 767
Total Production Value: 10,247 million yen

2024年
Number of Businesses: 44
Number of Workers : 231
Total Production Value: 1,912 million yen

※Based on an original survey by Echizen City

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Large-scale promotion and mass tourist attraction efforts (unsuccessful)

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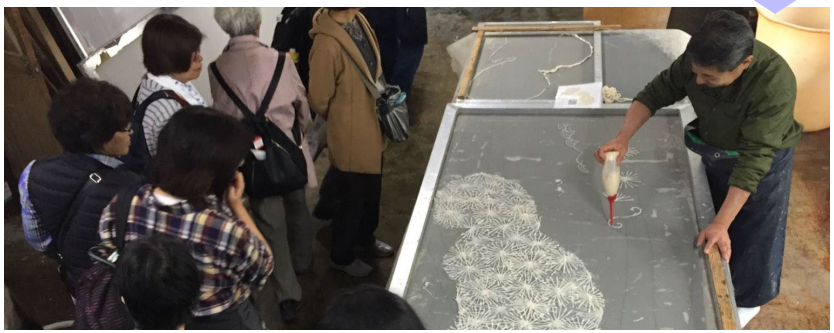
Creation of tourism content without any organization

Tours designed solely to increase visitor numbers

Extensive PR in major cities



Attracting more visitors than the production site can accommodate (overtourism), with tourists showing little interest in the workshops or products

Tourism had a detrimental impact on the production area, resulting in resentment among the business operators.

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Initiatives for addressing challenges

Interviews with Local Business Operators

Based on preliminary surveys, interviews were conducted and rules for tourism programs were established.

Example

- ・Unannounced visits → Introduction of a reservation system
- ・Mass visits → Implementation of a capacity limit
- ・No consumption → Introduction of a factory tour fee

Field Study of Advanced Industrial Tourism Destinations

Exchanged views with domestic workshop operators to share the importance of industrial tourism, recognize current challenges, discuss future directions, and reaffirm the value of Echizen City's traditional industries.

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Echizen City's Approach to Craft Tourism

Traditional Crafts and Tourism

Work

Leisure

It is important to understand the "work (primary business)" and promote tourism in a way that minimizes the burden on host operators while efficiently providing benefits to their "work (primary business)."

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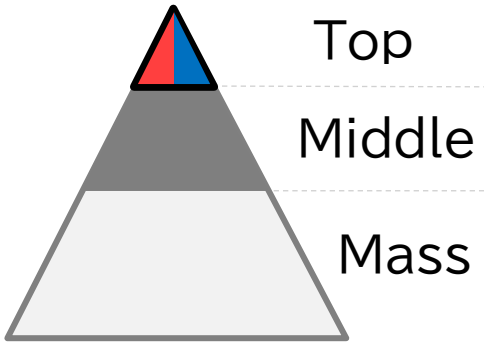
Target Customer Segments for Echizen City



- The target segments are classified into three groups based on number of customers and spending.
- This segment empathizes with and understands Echizen City's traditional industries. Aiming to benefit both the production area and visitors, two specific groups within the top segment have been targeted.

Professional

Luxury Travelers

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Initiatives for the Professional Segment

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○Experts are invited to study how to appeal to the professional segment alongside traditional craft operators, including key points and phrasing, as well as the design of tours around the production area (material tours).
○Using that knowledge, exhibits are held at venues where the professional segment gathers, such as interior material trade shows, to promote the appeal of Echizen Washi and related tours.
○Traditional crafts have reached creators in fields previously unconnected, including art, interior materials, and printing resources.

Studying How to Convey Value with Business Operators

Introduction and Business Negotiations for Products and Production Area Tours

Attracting the Professional Segment

Leading to an Order !

As Exhibits in Department Stores

As Display Desks in Brand Stores

As Interior Walls in Showrooms

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Initiatives for Luxury Travelers

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- To accommodate high-value travelers, initiatives include creating consistently themed content, training guides to ensure accurate understanding of history and culture, and exchanging views with domestic and international DMCs to build networks, while utilizing subsidies from the Japan Tourism Agency.
- Visitors who are interested in and understand traditional crafts are gradually coming to Echizen City, with not only increased tours but also higher product purchases.

Development of content at sushi restaurants using Echizen forged blades

Training guides to respond flexibly to luxury travelers

Detailed consultations with monitors and travel agencies

Gradually attracting visitors!

To the Echizen Washi production area

To the Echizen Forged Blades production area

To the Echizen Tansu production area

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Through “Traditional Crafts × Tourism”

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Professional

An increase in industrial spending in the production area, as orders for interior materials and art lead to business transactions.

Luxury Travelers

An increase in tourism spending in the production area through visits, hands-on experiences, and shopping.

Tourism is helping to offset the decline in production value, which has become a regional challenge.

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Through “Traditional Crafts × Tourism”

○Through initiatives targeting the professional segment and high-value travelers, various impacts are emerging, including increased community well-being, cultural preservation, and local employment creation.

Fostering Civic Pride

Increase in Production Area Visitors

Preservation of Cultural Practices, Such as Shinto Rituals

Increase in Volunteer Tourism Guides

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We will continue our efforts to link the power of travel with industrial tourism, ensuring that such travel remains sustainable for visitors, business operators, and local residents.

Taking a step to carry forward what has been handed down since ancient times from our era to the future

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