

TAISHI OKANO

 New York Metropolitan Area

 taishi.okano@gmail.com

 [LinkedIn](#)

 <https://taishiokano.com/about>

SKILLS & CERTIFICATIONS

Certifications:
Certified Product Owner™ (Scrum Inc.), Certified Scrum Master™ (Scrum Inc.)

Tools:
Quid (NLP/Sentiment), User Testing, Airtable, Google Looker Studio, Google Analytics, UXCam, Jira, Typeform.

Languages:
English (Fluent), Japanese (Native).

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Strategic Product Leader and Venture Builder with 10+ years of experience spanning IoT, digital transformation, and cross-border commercialization (Japan/US). Co-Founder of Hydrific (CES Innovation Honoree), recognized for transforming rigorous customer insights into market-validated products and executable business strategies. Expert in driving complex 0-to-1 innovation initiatives by conducting exhaustive consumer-centric research, including in-depth interviews and translating competitive intelligence, sentiment analysis, and behavioral patterns directly into product decisions and growth strategies. Synthesizes deep customer empathy with commercial acumen to bridge technical development and market success across startup and corporate environments.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- **Innovation & Product Strategy:** 0-to-1 Venture Building, Roadmap Development & Prioritization, Go-to-Market (GTM) Strategy, P&L Management, Agile/Scrum, Hypothesis Validation.
- **Market Intelligence & User Research:** Behavioral Insight Generation ("Do vs. Say"), "Jobs-to-be-Done," Sentiment Analysis (Quid), Competitive Benchmarking, Pricing Strategy (WTP), Multi-Source Intelligence Synthesis.
- **Strategic Leadership & Commercialization:** Executive Stakeholder Management, Cross-Cultural Leadership, Strategic Partnerships, Digital Transformation, Channel Economics (B2B/D2C), Kickstarter/Crowdfunding.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

○ **Co-Founder & Head of Product Strategy | Hydrific (LIXIL Venture)** *New York, NY (Jan 2021 – Present)*

Launched an independent venture focused on water sustainability/IoT. Led product definition, research, and business strategy from concept to commercialization.

- **Venture Leadership:** Co-founded the entity, transitioning it from an internal corporate innovation project to a standalone business. Conceptualized and launched "Droplet, an awarded ultrasonic water monitor, achieving the Kickstarter funding goal in just 11 minutes.
- **Product Strategy & Roadmap:** Defined the "Trojan Horse" strategy, focusing on awareness over conservation based on the insight that "water is taken for granted. Balanced technical feasibility with customer value to deliver a data-driven roadmap for executive stakeholders.
- **Rigorous Customer Discovery:** Conducted 200+ customer interviews in the first 90 days and led a 60-home field testing program. Utilized "Do vs. Say" behavioral analysis to validate features, leading to the strategic prioritization.
- **Competitive Intelligence:** Analyzed 2,000+ customer reviews of competitors using Quid and AI tools to identify market gaps. Validated a premium pricing strategy through willingness-to-pay studies and feature differentiation.
- **Growth & Organization Building:** Leading growth strategy and B2B partnership initiatives to scale beyond D2C. Established a Center of Excellence for research standards, institutionalizing customer insight practices (User Testing, Airtable, Looker Studio, UXCam) across the organization.

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Product & Brand Manager, INAX | LIXIL AMERICAS

Piscataway, NJ (Sep 2019 – Sep 2021)

Managed P&L and orchestrated market entry for INAX, Japan's #1 tile and sanitaryware brand, into the North American market.

- **Market Entry Strategy:** Developed a comprehensive business case and product roadmap for the North American launch. Applied 3C, STP, and 4P/4C frameworks to identify white space opportunities for premium Japanese design aesthetics.
- **Data-Driven Positioning:** Analyzed 5,000+ social media and news data points to shape brand sentiment and positioning. Mapped the competitive landscape against incumbents (Kohler, TOTO) to inform pricing and channel selection.
- **Cross-Functional Execution:** Led collaboration between Japan-based engineering and US-based sales teams to develop North American-compliant plumbing specifications.
- **Digital Growth:** Launched the regional INAX website and implemented lead generation platforms to drive engagement with architects and designers. Managed the full tile product portfolio, utilizing data dashboards to optimize SKU performance by region.

Project Lead, Digital Transformation | LIXIL

Tokyo, Japan (Apr 2016 – Aug 2019)

Selected for high-impact roles bridging HQ strategy with global execution, including innovation scouting and digital modernization.

- **IoT Product Development (Bridge Role):** Served as Interim Product Owner for the American Standard Commercial IoT Bathroom. Successfully bridged US hardware engineers and Japan software teams, translating complex technical requirements across cultural lines to keep development on track.
- **E-Commerce Transformation:** Led the migration and redesign of the LIXIL Online Shop. Managed the expansion of the Amazon channel presence to nearly 100,000 SKUs, significantly scaling digital footprint.
- **Innovation Scouting:** Partnered with Plug and Play Tech Center (Silicon Valley) to facilitate open innovation. Organized 5 matchmaking events, connecting LIXIL R&D with 20+ startups in smart home and health-tech sectors.
- **Retail Experience:** Piloted an AR (Augmented Reality) kitchen planning tool across showrooms, enabling real-time visualization to boost conversion rates.

Assistant Sales Manager (Strategic Embedded Role) | LIXIL

Tokyo, Japan (Apr 2012 – Mar 2016)

Strategically embedded within a major competitor's distributor to drive LIXIL product adoption from the inside out.

- **Strategic Account Growth:** Increased annual LIXIL purchases to ¥110M (approx. \$1M USD) in FY2016, an 80% YoY increase, by aligning distributor incentives with LIXIL product strengths.
- **Channel Mastery:** Gained deep fluency in B2B2C distribution economics (contractors, plumbers, end-users), achieving a 17-point market share increase within the branch over two years.

EDUCATION

Rikkyo University, Tokyo — Bachelor of Arts in Economics