

Why don't you join us?

-- The challenge of the two who created RakuRUN



Two people who were in completely different fields are now sitting side-by-side in the same department.

Kondo-san is from the Legal and Intellectual Property Department, and Nishiumi-san is from the Parts Technology Department. The two first met through the "Musashi Innovation Program," a co-creation program with Musashi Precision Industries implemented in 2023. These two were coincidentally paired together in the team formation decided by the organizing committee.

Looking back on that time, Kondo-san says:

"Nishiumi-san seemed incredibly composed and reliable, especially considering he's only been with the company for two years."

On the other hand, Nishiumi-san said, "My boss at the time knew Kondo-san, and I heard that she was a wonderful person with an impressive background and character." "After actually meeting her, I thought that was exactly right," she says with a laugh.

After the program ended, the project was approved for commercialization after an internal pitch.

Subsequently, in fiscal year 2025, both were transferred to the New Business Development Department. Approximately three years after joining the Musashi

Innovation Program, the running app "RakuRUN" has reached a milestone with the start of its trial sales.

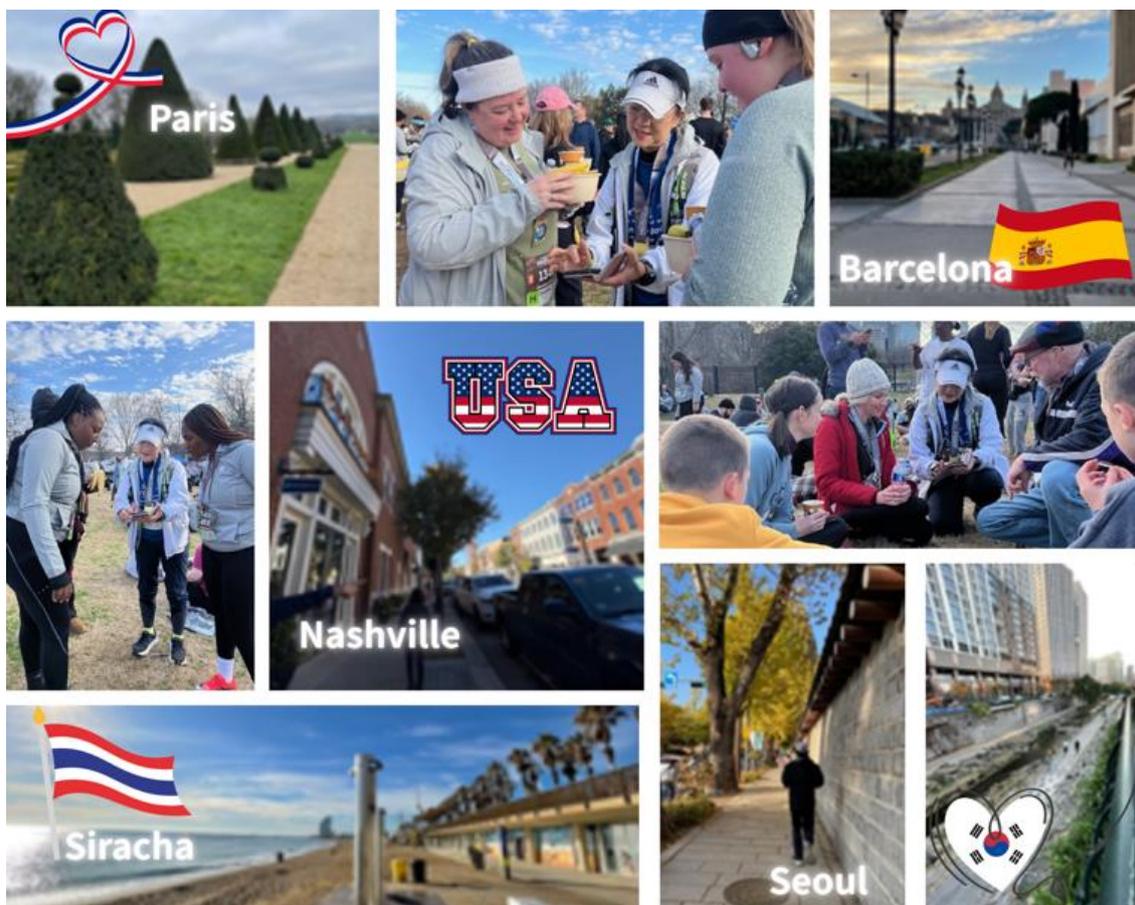


*RakuRUN is a route app that lets you enjoy a place without having to look at a map. No prior course planning or thorough research is required. You can entrust yourself to the voice navigation and run or walk, experiencing the depth and stories of the city. Encountering information only known to locals transforms familiar landscapes into new experiences. This app connects cities and people through the simple act of running.

"The muscle lady" and "The brain guy"

The idea was conceived by Kondo-san. Originally a recreational runner, she and her friends practiced "travel running," where they ran from Numazu to Shuzenji while enjoying the scenery and local cuisine. When I shared that experience with the team, they responded with "That's interesting!" and shared my enthusiasm. "I'm in charge of the muscles." The originator and the person behind the persona. "Just run, sweat, and create the course." Her extensive network of contacts was also a valuable asset. Whenever she was in a difficult situation, someone would always lend a helping hand. For example, Lee-san from JATCO Korea Engineering. Lee-san, who is also a recreational runner, resonated with this idea, taught himself app development, and brought it to life. Furthermore, with the support of President Shinmyou, the Korean members ran through the local town with Kondo-san and even created the course.

It's surprising to learn that, following South Korea, JATCO has already begun developing courses in France, Spain, Thailand, and the United States, where it has overseas offices. The simple act of running has evolved into a project spanning a global network, involving the presidents of each branch and other supportive members.



These are scenes that Kondo-san, the "muscle expert," actually discovered while running.

Nishiumi's role, on the other hand, is that of the "brain." The logical thinking of a science and engineering background, and the sensibilities unique to the digital native generation. I was responsible for UX/UI design and software considerations. "Kondo-san is moving around outside with all his might." "During that time, my role is to protect the harbor."

It's because of Nishiumi's presence that Kondo-san can run around freely. The mutual respect between the two was clear in their conversation during the interview.

The wall of an unprecedented challenge

It wasn't all smooth sailing.

"The hardest part was that there were no rules," Nishiumi-san says. Because this is an unprecedented undertaking, we don't even know which department we should consult. Those receiving the consultations were also constantly bewildered. I learned firsthand how difficult it is to turn an idea into a successful business.

Kondo-san also reflects on the experience.

"Jatco is a company that has been diligently manufacturing transmissions for many years." Because of his seriousness, "An app?" running? Is it just for fun? "There were also voices saying that."

In essence, it's a difference in values that lies between existing businesses and new ventures. For a company that has made profits from automotive transmissions for many years, running apps present a completely different set of evaluation criteria and risk-taking strategies. The journey from a hobby-based idea to getting it recognized as a business was far more challenging than I had imagined.

Nevertheless, there was strong support within the company. Each department that offered advice responded by saying, "If there are no rules, let's work together to figure out what we can do within the existing framework."

Furthermore, Kondo-san sought further learning outside the company and enrolled in graduate school. My perspective broadened, and meeting like-minded friends was a great source of strength.

"Entrepreneurship isn't just for those who take on challenges." Those who accept and support you also possess that spirit." They both feel that way.



Kondo-san and Nishiumi-san taught me the joy of running.

Test sales, and then the starting line.

Currently, RakuRUN is undergoing a Proof of Concept (PoC) sales phase in Tokyo. "I've finally reached the starting line." I want to envision a bigger picture. "I'm nervous, but I can't stop feeling excited," said Kondo-san.

Nishiumi-san

"Software truly begins after its release." It's important to continuously improve, sustain, and expand upon it.

We have very little in-house expertise in app sales. We consult with experts, utilize AI, and sometimes contact Google developers directly. In the age of digital transformation, learning opportunities are everywhere.

If I could talk to my past self from two years ago...

Kondo-san said, "Even though it's a thorny path, we're moving in the right direction." Don't give up.

Nishiumi-san laughs, saying, "I want to congratulate myself for raising my hand in my second year at the company."

"From now on, we'll be able to hear from real users, not just internal users." It's also scary. But more than that, I'm looking forward to it," he said.



A test run of the Kyoto course. The editorial team has been watching this challenge unfold for two and a half years.

Want to run together?

To everyone who has even the slightest interest in new businesses.

The challenge is not just for a select few. People who come up with ideas, people who support others, people who encourage others. All of them are drivers of innovation.

First and foremost, please find our initiative interesting. And if possible, let's run together.

I believe that running is about moving forward.

"RakuRUN" is still just at the starting line.

You might be the one to take the next step.

Why don't you join us?

-- Kondo/Nishiumi

