

*The following is translation of a Japanese article.*

*For original visit at; [https://newspicks.com/news/1782767/body/?ref=user\\_1377489](https://newspicks.com/news/1782767/body/?ref=user_1377489)*

**In this series, we hear the stories of NewsPicks' starl Pickers. As our seventh installment, this month we shine the spotlight on one of our female Pickers - Miyuki Otomo.**

**A communications professional, Ms. Otomo has held PR roles in international projects and global corporations. Currently, she is jointly responsible for PR and research into population issues at a think tank, all the while sharing her macro-perspective comments on NewsPicks.**

**With this background, we asked Ms. Otomo about the potential she sees in NewsPicks.**

- Reasons for commenting from a macro perspective

**—Please tell us what led you to begin commenting on NewsPicks.**

I had been a reader for some time, but only started commenting recently, around June 2016.

After being assigned to the think tank by the LIXIL Group, I began to express myself publicly as a researcher under my own name. With this change in environment, I felt ready to try contributing comments on NewsPicks, outside of my work.

At the think tank, the project I am responsible for is population issues. I felt that I had much to share on anything related to my current research topic, which is the declining birthrate, aging population, and the structure and work of day care centers.

CV

Miyuki Otomo

After working at the British Embassy, Tokyo, and the MOFA Permanent Mission in Geneva, supervised communications on the international Integrated Ocean Drilling Program for the US NSF. Engaged in global PR, M&A communications, and coordinating the World Economic Forum at the LIXIL Group before assuming current post as a principal researcher on population issues and PR manager at the Japan-based think tank, Rebuild Japan Initiative Foundation. Acquired M.B.A at the Oxford Brookes University. Completed Marketing Diploma at Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM).

**—It seems that many of your comments are balanced overviews, rather than being based on your experience or feelings in daily life.**

Actually, it is easier to write comments rooted in your own life experience.

However, in the sense of micro vs. macro, I try to write from a macro perspective as much as is possible.

——Why is that?

Two reasons. The first is that I want to develop my own ability to look at society from a macro perspective. My move from a manufacturer to a think tank was also done in order to cultivate an ability to observe society as a whole, so that I may understand the needs of consumers.

The other reason is that I want to collectively consider the social issues behind the news.

Take population issues for example; probing into the necessary changes naturally requires an understanding of the essence of the situation.

What kinds of social issues are behind these events we see in the news? Without such an understanding, we can't begin to unravel the solution, and may allow the same problems to be repeated.

I feel that many of the daily users of NewsPicks are, like myself, seeking to understand this essence. I hope to share opinions and consider the problems with these kinds of people.

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人口問題は、長期で全体的に取り組まないと効果がでない。  
しかし、2-3年で変わるいまの政治制度では、とてもプライオリ  
ティーは低い。  
「リスク」という言葉がよく聞かれますが、人口問題こそ最大の  
「リスク」だと思います。

『アジアが迎える高齢化リスク』  
(NewsPicks編集部) 2016/5/30

Without long-term, comprehensive efforts we won't see any effect on population problems. However, the priority is low in our current political system, which changes every 2-3 years.

We often hear about 'risks', but I feel that population issues themselves are our greatest 'risk'.

“Asia's aging population risk”  
(NewsPicks Editorial) 30/5/2016

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- Connecting the world with communication

—**Looking at your profile, you seem to have found great success around the world regardless of country or language.**

I've continued to work in communications without limiting myself to a particular industry or business.

After finishing an MBA and Marketing course in the UK, I returned to Japan to work at the British Embassy. From there I headed abroad again, accumulating around 10 years of experience at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Permanent Mission in Geneva and with local private firms.

When I came back to Japan six years ago, I managed PR on a project for the American National Science Foundation. It was a joint international deep sea drilling project, with participating scientists from some 30 countries.

Specifically, the aim was to gain an understanding of the Earth's internal structure and the mechanisms that cause massive earthquakes by surveying deep areas of the ocean floor using the Japanese scientific drilling ship *Chikyu* and other vessels from Europe and the US.

I was involved in PR activities to spread global awareness of the project's value.

For example, I published research results in 'Nature', 'Science' and other science journals, as well as coordinating international conferences and exhibitions.

I also initiated a project which shared footage from the drilling ships at sea through Twitter, in order to generate interest in our research within the general public.

—**Your work to date has really been global, and covered a broad range of areas.**

If you look only at my job history, it may seem as though my career has progressed smoothly, but there have been some difficult times when I was clinging on to my visa while job hunting (laughs).

- Ms. Otomo's 'key abilities of a businessperson'

—**Within 'PR', how does your work differ when dealing with products and services aimed at consumers, or promoting intangible research?**

When dealing with a firm's products or services, the end users you are trying to reach are usually the general public.

As for 'research', whether it is deepsea drilling or the population issues I am currently

tackling, communication within the team members becomes important. A vital part of the job is creating relationships with specialists in order to gain their cooperation.

My current role in ‘M&A Communications’ with the LIXIL Group also shares this aspect.

Sometimes you receive a query from the acquired company’s overseas office asking ‘So what happens next?’. Which brand will be used, the new or the existing? What about the employed staff? The company may be a national enterprise, in which case the country’s government will also be asked for input, and accountability becomes important.

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M&Aは、企業価値を高める近道。でも、「高いお買物」で終わらないために、終わりのない長い道のり(成長)を、本体の事業と一緒に、目指さなければならない。コアビジネスの変化や、新たな企業がM&Aで加わったりと、多くの変化を経験することもあります。

『マネーゲームでM&Aは成功しない』  
(NewsPicks Brand Design) 2016/6/28

M&As are a shortcut to increasing company value. However, [companies must set their sights on the infinitely long road \(growth\), alongside their main operations, to ensure M&As don’t end up an ‘expensive splurge’](#). Transitioning core business or the addition of a new enterprise through M&A can bring many changes.

“Money game doesn’t bring M&A success”  
(NewsPicks Brand Design 28/6/2016)

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**——What abilities are required of the global businessperson, regardless of country or language?**

A universally important trait is action - the ability to get things done.

Have at your disposal any approach you can conceive in order to reach your goal. When you get stuck, come up with other methods to compensate.

First and foremost, push yourself to figure out how you might bring the image in your head into fruition.

Thinking is the first step to action, but I believe speedy action without overthinking is

also important.

- Policy reviews through comments

**—As a communications professional, what are your aims when commenting on NewsPicks?**

Through NewsPicks, I try to review our country's policies and *state of affairs*.

Are the new policies and systems right for the times? Who benefits as a result? Is anyone losing out? When commenting, I try to present my own evaluation and conclusion on each aspect.

Scrutinizing policies is also an important role of the think tank. I want people to be aware of and have an interest in what is happening, since it impacts their lives. That's my mindset when commenting.

**—Is there any aspect of your comments that you are looking to brush up?**

I feel like I still need to improve my comment writing. While staying on the topic of aging I feel that, rather than simply posting theory, writing about my family and daily experiences in a more personal tone helps to convey my message by making it easier for readers to relate.

I am still learning from other Pickers how to avoid making my comments too stiff.

**—As a woman, did you feel at all uneasy about publicizing your name through NewsPicks?**

Personally, I was not at all conscious of gender.

In regards to making your name public, I think some people are in an environment where that is possible while others are not.

However, when I added my name and career history, the number of people following me increased. Perhaps many people consider someone's experience to be a deciding factor in whether or not to trust their statements.

**—Your comment about NewsPicks being the 'place to tackle social issues' was striking. Perhaps you see greater potential here than in standard media or SNS?**

Well, NewsPicks is a part of the media dealing with the news. Within that, I think it is a platform which not only delivers timely information but also plays an educational role.

In addition to the news, major newspapers and existing media have already been creating editorials, commentary and other articles to educate readers. However, NewsPicks has developed this even further, providing content and education in a unique format.

Specifically, it has involved users through comment posting and allowed the sharing of opinions. Users are able to learn from each other - that's where I see the potential.

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すごいですね、この社会現象！（略）  
ゲームでしっかり遊んだあとは、NPでお勉強。  
社会課題に皆でチャレンジしていきましょう。

『週末各地でポケモンGO熱中＝スカイツリー、  
世界遺産前でもバイク蛇行で反則切符』  
(時事ドットコム) 2016/7/23

What an amazing social phenomenon! ...

After a good play, [come learn on NP](#). Let's tackle social issues together.

“Weekend Pokemon GO mania nationwide -  
Skytree, world heritage sites not spared - infringements for weaving riders”  
(jiji.com) 23/7/2016

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—Did this Pokemon Go news also give you that sense of ‘learning together’?

The familiar topic of Pokemon Go provided an opportunity for rich exchange.

At first, people were sharing their impressions and feelings from playing the game, such as how many Pokemon they caught or what level they were. Before long, people seeing others play began to speak up about possible dangers, with some discussing the need for regulation while others raised opposition.

News becomes the topic through which users can obtain new input by reading articles and comments, or generating output in their own comments. Anyone can participate, think, and learn - that's what I find wonderful about NewsPicks.

- Ms. Otomo's new challenges

—Finally, please tell us what challenges you're looking to tackle from here on.

My research into population issues can be discussed from many perspectives, such as aging and changes in the way we work. I have asked experts researching these various topics for writings which I have collected into a book.

While these issues are more advanced in Japan than the rest of Asia, it is said that other countries will face aging populations just as we have. I sense a value in sharing this research abroad, and am working to provide information in English as well.

When trying to sell the idea to publishers abroad, I managed to gain interest from a fairly major company, which plans to release the book next year.

Having no publishing experience, this is a first for me personally, but it is an enjoyable challenge.

- Miyuki Otomo's recommended Pickers

Rieko Komiyama:

<https://newspicks.com/user/730134/>

A reliable insight delivered in accessible language.

Yuichi Suzuki:

<https://newspicks.com/user/329856/>

Comments with a sense of stability. Provides balanced analysis which reflects his specialized knowledge base (finance).

Tomoki Kurosawa:

<https://newspicks.com/user/121063/>

For his logical and specific marketing analysis.