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Innovating for an elderly future.

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It has been a tendency in the last couple of years that the global population aged as twice as the world wide population back in 1980. It is expected that by 2030, according to the United Nations World Population Ageing report the elderly population will surpass the children under age 10 (1.41 billion vs 1.35 billion) and the youth 10-24 in a 2.1 billion vs 2.0 billion people rate.

In other words, the future is looking wrinkly and grey due to the decline in fertility and improvement in survival demographic changes across the world's population. Hence, innovation is far from being what everyone expected it to be when we were younger. Perhaps, the ideas of teletransportation, bending cellphones, and flying cars are just concepts that have changed because of the aging population. The shift on the expectations of the future consumers will have other needs to be met and satisfied, such as their mind, care, mobility, and independence. Innovations, for the not so distant future should not only consider in covering some services for this new market, but also innovation must make it up for labor shortage caused by the fertility decline.

Japan is one of some countries leading the list on bringing up new services and products for the next the elders. Considering that the Land of the Rising Sun, also has the highest proportion of people 65 and older as well as the oldest citizenry in the world. This nation, as many other developed countries is facing the shortage on their labor work force. Furthermore, it is an island resisting migration as a measure to ensure their economy. Japan bets more on innovation and technology rather than leaving it all to migrants.

Basic services at hospitals, and retirement homes lacking care givers, to take aid the elder population on their daily activities. Japan has been testing, self-driving cars to transport patients from their houses to hospitals. Robots to carry, feed and even cook for their owners, flushable adult dippers. However, to them these type of innovation is lacking a major element. Technology is not making them feel dignity.

Companies and restaurants like Kaze no Oto, prepare meals for elderly people which are not only nutritious but also friendly with their dentures and digestive systems. However, the flavor and value are not what keeps them relevant, the pureed food is presented as a whole course meal with the perfect shape of the dish that represents. Elders argue that besides being tasty, it makes them feel not as old and useless when it comes to a basic chore as feeding themselves.

Japan is ahead of many countries on understanding the implications of an elderly future. Because the companies, understood that the next big market with acquisitive power are not the young generations. Also, their innovations go further than just offering technology or a service. Companies know their

Japanese market being quite picky when it comes to food. Since it is such a cultural value, presentation does not only look presentable, it gives them back control and dignity.

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