

< Hidejiro Matsu >



Country/Region : Los Angeles, United States of America
Current Position : President, MKK IMPORT

Hidejiro Matsu arrived in America in 1960, and together with his brothers established Marukai Hawaii Inc. in 1965. The company started business as an importer and wholesaler of Japanese foods and commodities. In the early days, the brothers did the rounds of restaurants and supermarkets to develop sales channels themselves, and on the weekends they would boost their sales by marketing samples in-store and giving cooking demonstrations. The business grew steadily, opening branches in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco in 1972. The price of imports from Japan rocketed as the yen appreciated rapidly from 300 to the dollar to 180 to the dollar in 1978, creating serious difficulties for importers and wholesalers. The brothers began to withdraw from this business and move into retail. They earned an excellent reputation by creating a members-only market and developing systems for selling goods at prices more than 40% below those of their competitors. The business grew rapidly, gaining more than 170,000 members in California and Hawaii and opening 12 stores. Matsu retired from Marukai Corporation in September 2013 and now acts as a consultant assisting young Japanese entrepreneurs who come to America aiming to start businesses.