



business

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TRENDS

JAPAN'S COOL FACTOR

Trend-savvy nation exports 'coolness' to businesses around the world

Yuri Kageyama
The Associated Press

February 19, 2004

TOKYO -- Loic Bizez leads visitors through alleys packed with wild-haired youngsters, makes his way into tiny boutiques tucked beneath stairwells and points out fatigue-inspired jackets, handpainted sneakers and plaid miniskirts.

Part tour guide and part business consultant, the 32-year-old Frenchman is a "cool" hunter, with a mission to uncover the ever-changing street fads of Japan and translate them into a language the rest of the world can understand.

"The people in the streets are very creative," Bizez said, pointing to a young man wearing baggy shorts on top of long pants, a look that's all the rage in Tokyo. "The search to be unique, to be different, creates style."

Bizez's expertise is in demand because



AP photo by Chiaki Tskumo

Loic Bizez, a 32-year-old Frenchman, walks an alley packed with youngsters in Tokyo's Harajuku shopping district. Bizez is what's known in the trend-watching industry as "a cool hunter," a person whose mission is to keep abreast of the pulsating ever-changing street fads of Japan translate them into a language the rest of the world can understand.

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