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Odoo in Japan: Strengths, Challenges, and the OSS Question

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Quartile (コタエル株式会社)

FOUNDED

2012 HK · 2018 Fukuoka

HQ

Fukuoka, Japan

TEAM

6 people

FOCUS

Odoo + OSS



Japan's leading OSS contributor

Core translation · OCA localization · issues & PRs to Odoo core.



No lock-in by design

Open source by default — only rare licensing-bound modules stay private.



Deep, hands-on Odoo expertise

Working with Odoo since 2013 — among Japan's most experienced teams.

The winning global playbook that stalls in Japan

世界で通用した勝ち筋が、日本では停滞する理由

The approach that scaled Odoo elsewhere — **English-first, self-serve, light-touch, community-localized** — runs into very different terrain in Japan. Six frictions every vendor hits:



Japanese UI & docs required

Most users aren't comfortable working in English



Hard to localize — far from English

Large linguistic distance makes Japanese localization hard



Customers shape how you operate

Processes bend to your trading partners' standards



Unique business customs

Distinctive commercial practices and trade conventions



Cautious, proof-driven adoption

Precedent and proven track record drive every decision



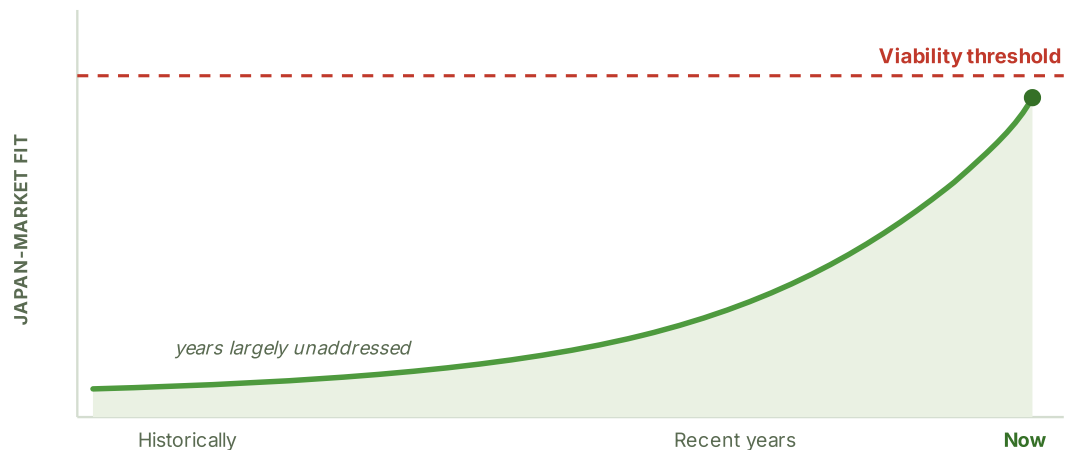
Strong domestic accounting & HR software

Homegrown accounting/HR tools dominate locally

None of these is a total block — but each defeats the standard playbook and demands real local depth. That's precisely where a committed partner and an open ecosystem earn their place.

Long ignored — now crossing the threshold

長く後回しにされてきたが、今、転換点を越えつつある



For partners like Quartile, contributing to open source (OCA) was effectively the only way to bring the product and service to an acceptable level here.

For years, Odoo left Japan's specific needs largely unaddressed — and many gaps remain. But **its viability is changing fast**, lifted by three forces:



Localization. The Japanese UI is now genuinely solid — Odoo brought translation in-house (2023).



Marketing & community. Odoo's Japan presence and awareness are rising.



AI advances. Collapsing the language and implementation barrier.

QUESTION 1

Q1

Where does Odoo have a genuine edge in Japan?

日本でOdooはどこに本当の優位性を持つのか？

The opportunity — where Odoo can genuinely win here.

Where Odoo has a genuine edge in Japan

日本でOdooが本当に優位に立てる領域



Lowest TCO among full ERPs

フル規模ERPで最も低いTCO

Free Community · Enterprise << SAP / Dynamics — opens the SME door.



One integrated platform

ひとつの統合基盤

Sales → Inventory → MRP → Accounting → HR in a single database.



No forced lock-in

強制的な囲い込みがない

Own your data, inspect the core, switch partners — when implemented in the open.



AI-ready & open

AI対応でオープン

Open code AI can read and build on — closed ERPs stay a black box.



Fast-moving & global

変化が速くグローバル

16M+ users · yearly releases · Japan still early.



OCA fills the gaps

OCAが空白を埋める



~2,000 modules · OSS-licensed · community-maintained.

QUESTION 2

Q2

What's the real challenge — and what's at stake?

本当の課題は何か。そして、何が懸かっているのか？

Being honest about both the operational and the structural.

The honest challenge picture

課題の全体像 — 正直なところをお話します

Two kinds of challenge — I want to be honest about both.



Operational — real, but solvable

The familiar hurdles of entering Japan — **known problems with known fixes**, given time and a committed partner.

Localization

Talent

Sales cycles



Structural — rarely named openly

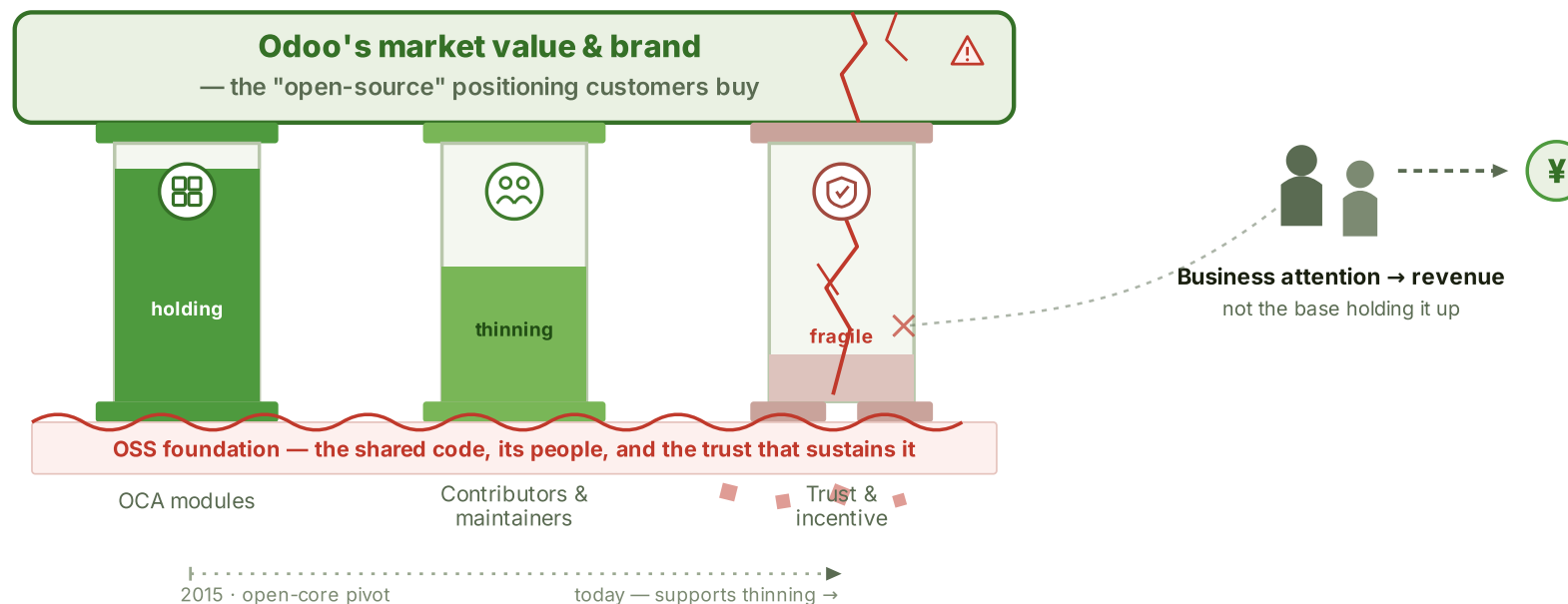
Odoo's **business culture has drifted from its open-source roots** — silently eroding the ecosystem that makes Odoo worth choosing.

Today I'll focus on the structural one — it needs a deliberate choice to fix.

Odoo's "open-source" position is more fragile than it looks

Odooの「オープンソース」という立ち位置は、見た目より脆い

The commercial value everyone sees rests on an open-source base — and that base is **thinning relative to commercial scale, with little attention from the side that funds it.**



No dramatic collapse — just gradual erosion the commercial side rarely pays attention to. By the time it surfaces in the product, it's expensive to rebuild.

The ecosystem Odoo's value depends on

Odooの価値を支えるエコシステム

Open source means the code is free to use, inspect, and improve — and improvements can be shared back.

🔗 Odoo's value holds only if two worlds stay in balance:

🍃 Open-source world

- Community Edition (LGPLv3)
- OCA (est. 2013) — ~2,000 modules, ~70% of needs
- Contributors: localization, fixes, reviews
- Shared knowledge: forums, events, docs

📁 Proprietary world

- Odoo Enterprise (modules, support, upgrades)
- Partner implementations & custom dev
- App Store modules
- Odoo Online / Odoo.sh

The proprietary world monetizes. The open-source world provides the foundation, reach, and trust that makes it possible. Both must be healthy.

What changed after the open-core pivot (2015)

オープンコア化 (2015年) 以降に変わったこと

~2015 · AGPL ERA

- Odoo S.A. championed the OSS community
- Contributions celebrated and central
- Sales & engineering shared OSS values



NOW · OPEN-CORE ERA

- Scaled ~10x since 2015 (staff 300→4,000+, partners →3,000+) — OCA's influence only ~2x
- Business org seems motivated by sales only
- OSS culture no longer promoted by Odoo S.A.
- Many staff & partners: no OSS background

Credit where it's due — Odoo still puts the majority of R&D into the community core.

The concern is narrower: the business culture has decoupled from OSS.

Fewer contributions → ecosystem degrades → Odoo's differentiation weakens

What this looks like on the ground in Japan

日本の現場で実際に起きていること

👁️ What we observe

現場で見えること

- Most JP partners don't contribute to OCA or core
- Many aren't even aware OCA solutions exist — AI is starting to help discovery
- New entrants unaware of OSS norms & licenses
- Odoo S.A.'s Japan messaging is sales-only
- No encouragement to participate in OSS
- **Root cause:** global OSS runs in English — the language barrier keeps many JP devs out

⚠️ Why it matters for growth

成長にとってなぜ重要か

- The ~70% OCA coverage needs ongoing maintainers
- Every OCA JP-localization submission is Quartile's (2025)
- Customers who chose "open" deserve an open ecosystem

If the OSS ecosystem degrades → TCO weakens, localization lags, and Odoo becomes just another mid-market ERP competing on price.

Does AI make open source matter less?

AIの登場で、オープンソースの価値は薄れるのか？

The obvious 2026 objection. Honest answer: AI erodes the *old* reasons for OSS and strengthens the *deeper* ones.

🗨️ The dilution argument — largely true

希薄化論 — おおむね当たっている

- **Code got cheap.** AI generates modules on demand — "OCA saves you writing code" weakens.
- **Knowledge got cheap.** LLMs replace much of forums & docs.

🛡️ Why AI makes OSS matter *more*

AIでこそOSSの重要性は増す理由

- **Ground truth.** AI hallucinates JP rules — tax rounding, Qualified Invoice, summary invoices, JP CoA. Reviewed OCA modules are the reference that *verifies* it.
- **AI learns from open code.** If everyone keeps their customizations private, AI for Odoo falls behind.
- **Anti-fork insurance.** Shared OCA maintenance beats a flood of unmaintained AI variants; inspectability hedges opacity.

AI cuts both ways: writing code is cheaper than ever — but reviewing it isn't, so AI-written PRs pile onto the few maintainers while free-riding gets easier. Left unchecked this is a lemon market: genuine contributors go unrewarded, so contributing stops paying off. Which way Japan goes is a cultural choice Odoo S.A. can still shape.

QUESTION 3

Q3

What we're doing — and what we ask of Odoo S.A.

私たちの取り組みと、Odoo S.A.へのお願い

Our response, a live customer case, and the ask.

What Quartile is doing about it

コタエルが取り組んでいること

We treat OSS contribution as a core business activity — not a side project.



OCA module development

OCAモジュール開発

JP invoice formats, tax rounding, payment terms, summary invoices — released as AGPL.



Odoo core contributions

Odoo本体への貢献

JP translation lead through ~2022 (now in-house at Odoo) and the Japan chart of accounts every JP implementation depends on — plus ongoing translations, issues & PRs.



OCA maintenance & review

OCAの保守・レビュー

Maintaining modules across versions and reviewing community PRs — keeping the ~70% OCA coverage **alive**, not just authored.



Knowledge sharing

ナレッジの共有

Forum posts, community events, open documentation.

We walk the talk — our OCA org ranking climbed #26 (2024) → #16 (2025) → #9 (2026 YTD), among the top global contributors. How does a six-person team sustain that? AI leverage on the review and maintenance load — the same answer we'd give Japan's whole ecosystem. And it's not altruism: contributing sharpens quality, builds skills, and earns customer trust.

A live example: summary invoices for Japan's Qualified Invoice system

実例：適格請求書制度に対応した合計請求書

Summary invoicing is standard B2B practice in Japan (manufacturing, retail, wholesale) — and where used it must meet Qualified Invoice (適格請求書) rules: **baseline, not premium**. Built and proven in OCA — Odoo is now considering it as an **Enterprise app**.

🔒 As an Enterprise app

- JP compliance locked behind a paywall
- Inconsistent with every other localization
- Duplicates a solution that already exists

🌐 In core (LGPL-3)

- Free for the whole Japan market
- Consistent with how l10n is delivered
- Built on a proven, battle-tested base

伝票番号: CUST.BIL/2025/00014
 総日: 2025年05月20日

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 BNP Paribas - GEBABEBB
 12345678

合計請求書 CUST.BIL/2025/00014
 下記の通り御請求申し上げます。

請求日: 2025年05月20日
 お支払期日: 2025年06月30日

合計 ¥113,670

オーダーNo. 説明	数量	単価	消費税	金額
2025年05月14日 INV/2025/00023				
[FURN_6741] Large Meeting Table Conference room table	5個	4,000	外税8%	¥20,000
[FURN_8220] Four Person Desk Four person modern office workstation	5個	2,350	外税8%	¥11,750
				伝票計 ¥31,750
2025年05月07日 INV/2025/00022				
[FURN_6741] Large Meeting Table Conference room table	5個	4,000	外税8%	¥20,000
[FURN_8220] Four Person Desk Four person modern office workstation	5個	2,350	外税8%	¥11,750

Actual output — l10n_jp_summary_invoice (OCA)

Our offer: relicense what we solely authored, and co-develop an LGPL-3, core-ready version with Odoo for the shared pieces. Quartile has held an Odoo CLA for 9 years — we're ready to contribute today.

単独で開発した部分は再ライセンスし、共通部分はOdooと協働でLGPL-3のコア対応版を開発します。

What we'd like to ask of Odoo S.A.

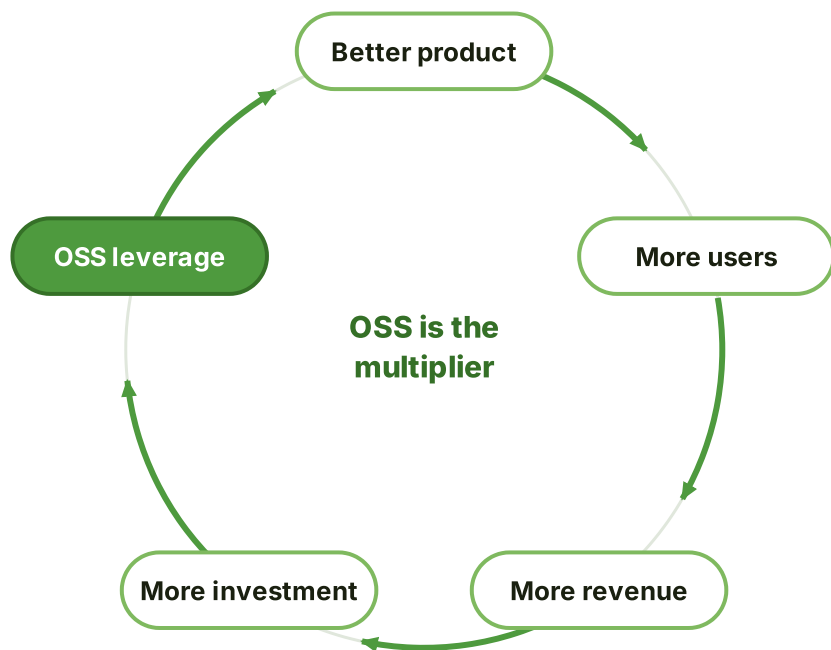
Odoo S.A. へのお願い

Odoo S.A.'s commercial success funds everything — these asks **strengthen** the ecosystem, they don't weaken the business.

- 1 Visibly champion OSS participation.** Signal it in partner comms, events, and certification — and visibly value those who contribute.
OSSへの参加を明確に後押しし、貢献する人を正当に評価する。
- 2 Let's build Japan localization together — complement, not duplicate.** We'll gladly move what we've built in OCA into Odoo core wherever that helps, so investment goes to the gaps the community hasn't reached yet.
日本のローカライズは重複せず協働で。OCAで作ったものは、可能な範囲でOdoo本体へ移します。
- 3 Onboard new partners into OSS norms.** Licenses, contribution etiquette, ecosystem responsibility.
新しいパートナーにOSSの作法（ライセンス・貢献マナー・エコシステムへの責任）を伝える。

The virtuous cycle — and what breaks it

好循環と、それを壊してしまうもの



What breaks the cycle

- Partners free-ride on OCA without giving back
- OSS treated as irrelevant to commercial success
- Localization lags → satisfaction drops
- "Open" becomes marketing, not practice
- Odoo loses differentiation, competes on price

448 / 3,300+ partners contributed to OCA in 2024 — and as Odoo's partner count passes 16,000, that share keeps shrinking. In Japan: effectively just Quartile.

This is good for Odoo S.A.'s business, too

健全なOSSエコシステムは、Odoo S.A. のビジネスにとってもプラス

A healthy OSS ecosystem lowers Odoo S.A.'s cost of market expansion — and raises the quality ceiling for every customer.



Lower acquisition cost

Active communities create organic trust & inbound interest — before a sales dollar is spent.



Better product, faster

Contributors surface bugs, edge cases, and localization needs early.



Stronger partners

Deeper expertise → better implementations
→ more Enterprise renewals.

Promoting OSS culture isn't charity — it's the cheapest growth Odoo can buy. A thriving community compounds into trust, reach, and product quality that competitors can't replicate.

OSS文化を育てることはチャリティではなく、Odooにとって最も低コストな成長戦略。活発なコミュニティが、競合には真似できない信頼・到達・製品力を積み上げていく。

Commercial success and a healthy ecosystem pull the same direction — the ask is simply to **steward the OSS ecosystem as the commercial asset it is.**



LET'S TALK

World's knowledge → Japan. Japan's knowledge → world.

That bidirectional loop — global OSS localized so Japan can use it, and Japan's on-the-ground know-how flowing back through OCA and Odoo core — is Odoo's real, hard-to-copy moat here. Let's keep it spinning — **together**.

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Further reading — choosing an Odoo partner by their OCA contribution: www.quartile.co/blog/odoo-1/odoo-120

