

Back on Track

by Michelle K. Beckett



Photo credit: AFP

A Japanese railway company was losing money, but now it is back on track thanks to the popularity of a stray cat.

A rail company in Japan was losing money and had to lay off all their staff two years ago. Now they are celebrating a 10% increase in business - thanks to Tama the cat.

The feline, who was born and raised at Kishi station in the city of Kinokawa is proof of what the Japanese believe - that cats are good luck.

The nine-year-old - who receives cat food in lieu of a salary - won national stardom last year when the firm formally made her "station master".

Since then passengers have been gradually returning, recently rising 10% to about 2.1 million a year.

"She never complains. She is an amazing cat. She has patience and charisma. She is the perfect station master," said Yoshiko Yamaki, a representative for the rail company.

The cat is responsible for a selection of popular merchandise, including a picture book called: "Diary of Tama, the Station Master."