



BARCOS: FUSING *Fashion & Technology*

BARCOS

JAPANESE HANDBAG AND WALLET MANUFACTURER BARCOS IS SET TO REVOLUTIONIZE FASHION WITH AFFORDABLE, TECH-ENABLED PRODUCTS THAT CAN BE TRACKED WHEN LOST. *By Sean McBride*



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Fashion designers have always had to strike a perfect balance between form and function, and at no time is this truer than in today's age of technology. From sneakers that record your running style to smart watches, clothing is becoming ever more tech-enabled, and one of the companies pushing this forward is Japanese handbag and wallet manufacturer Barcos.

Founded in 1991, Barcos specializes in producing mass-market items that stand out for their quality and reasonable pricing, in a similar vein to Japanese manufacturers Uniqlo and Muji, which are successful in the apparel industry. As company President Takashi Yamamoto explains, Barcos' know-how and networks

have enabled it to grow into a leading original equipment manufacturer (OEM). He adds: "We can't be competitive in the world unless good products are provided at a low price."

"We are one of the top-class leather-goods manufacturers in Japan."

Takashi Yamamoto
President, Barcos Co., Ltd.

Barcos is now poised to incorporate tracking technology similar to an AirTag in its products, allowing customers to find lost purses, wallets and handbags. "We want to leverage this new product to start the next stage of our business," Yamamoto says, noting that he expects it to be a top seller: "This technology will show people the exact location of their items on their smartphones."

The company plans to launch this new range of tech-enabled products domestically in fall 2024, before expanding its availability across overseas markets.

And having previously partnered with TJ Maxx as an OEM, jointly developed products with firms like Isetan Mitsukoshi, and worked with designers such as Ryuji Otani and Picard, Yamamoto is always open to collaborating with like-minded international designers and material makers. "We do not have any definite criteria," he says. "Rather, it is more about the chemistry and the bond we could have with a potential partner."

