

EURO BIZ JAPAN

FEBRUARY
2019



PHILIPP NOACK,
PRESIDENT OF AUDI JAPAN

THE DRIVING FORCE

*Audi Japan puts
customers at the centre
of its strategy*





Audi Vorsprung durch Technik



心の響くままに

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The Mission of the European Business Council

To promote an impediment-free environment for European business in Japan.



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The driving force

By Toby Waters





First Focus

"I went for a walk in Tokyo. I heard this weird sound from one of the alleys. It was a teenage boy who was swinging his bat in the middle of the night. What captivated me most was how respectful he was towards people passing by. He would stand and wait until there was no one around and he would swing again and again.

True Japanese dedication and respect in one picture. Also, it's interesting how many people love baseball in Japan."

Photo and text by Rokas Skeivys
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Writing in and about Japan since 2000, **Gavin Blair** contributes articles to magazines, websites and newspapers in Asia, Europe and the US on a wide range of topics, many of them business related.

➔ *“If anything comes even close to the dangers of the climate crisis we are hurtling towards, it is the plastic pollution of our environment, though the two are related. Around 45 billion plastic bags are handed out annually at Japanese shops alone. We can all at least do our bit.”*



Allison Bettin received her degree in journalism at the University of Hong Kong before relocating to Tokyo. She has written for *Eurobiz Japan* for more than three years on topics such as environmental technology, international economics and wine.

➔ *“I’m lucky to have the opportunity to try world-class wines on a regular basis. But there were few that jumped out at me last year like the ones highlighted in this month’s ‘Cellar Notes’. I hope you’re able to get your hands on a bottle (of each wine), too.”*



Dan Sloan has covered Japan and Asia as a journalist, author and corporate content chief for over 20 years, seeing more governments than he can count. He is a former president of the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of Japan, and an unrepentant Yokohama BayStars fan.

➔ *“Japan was once a smoker’s paradise, where the government was the main owner of the national tobacco concession and the number of male puffers exceeded 80%. But smoking numbers are falling and laws on smoking are tightening — somewhat — as the industry eyes a smokeless future.”*



Kanae Doi is the director of Human Rights Watch Japan, which advocates for human rights domestically and abroad. Before joining the organisation in 2006, she worked as a lawyer on cases that included refugee law, immigration law and criminal law.

➔ *“When we started in Japan 10 years ago, people were sceptical that the foreign ministry would meet with us. Today, they engage with us, which is positive — and sometimes work really proactively. But they don’t act as much as we’d like. They still don’t meet my expectations.”*

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A new era

In the very first issue of *Eurobiz Japan* from January 2010, then-Chairman of the EBC Tommy Kullberg spoke about his goal of seeing a closer economic relationship between the EU and Japan.

“What we need is an economic integration agreement to let people, products, services and goods move freely over our borders,” he said. “Just think about the dynamic developments we could see in Japan.”

For nine years, we have reported in these pages on the beginnings, the negotiations, the signing and the ratification of the deal that is now referred to as the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

This month, as the EPA comes into force, that long sought-after goal of the EBC has been realised. The largest trade zone in the

world is now open for business, and the EU and Japan are officially committed to strengthening their relationship economically, politically and strategically.

At this time of transformative change, the EBC has elected a new chairman. In “Ready to build” (page 29), meet Michael Mroczek and find out about three of his goals for the organisation, as well as the important work ahead of monitoring the implementation of the EPA.

“The stage is set for a significant boost in trade between us, which in turn creates jobs

and lowers prices,” said Cecilia Malmström, the EU’s commissioner for trade, in a press release announcing the entry into force of the EPA. “It is now up to businesses and individuals to make the very most out of these new trade opportunities.”

Welcome to a new era for EU–Japan relations. The time for truly dynamic developments — on both sides — has arrived. ●

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— 18  29 —
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FROM THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM



INVESTING IN JAPAN

TEXT BY TOBY WATERS

PHOTOS BY KAGEAKI SMITH

THE DRIVING FORCE

Audi Japan puts
customers at
the centre of its
strategy

America may be a republic, but there the customer is king; Japan's emperor may not be divine, but here the customer is God — wherever you go, businesses stress the absolute primacy of the customer. But as firms the world over compete for those same kings and gods, attracting people to your brand takes more than just a mindset that puts them in a place of prominence, it takes a plan.

Philipp Noack, president of Audi Japan, has developed a strategy for this year to become an even stronger organisation and better appeal to customers both new and existing. It focuses on three areas: the product, the dealership network and, most importantly, customer centricity. By first understanding their customers and then working backwards, Noack believes dealers can provide them with the products and services that will keep them invested in the brand over the long term.

“I know how important it is to speak with the customer and get a view of what they feel about our product — what they like and don't like, and what we need to take seriously,” says Noack, who has worked at dealerships, in regional sales and at headquarters in Ingolstadt, Germany.

Audi began exporting its cars to Japan in 1967, then, for a time, worked here with its parent company Volkswagen before establishing a 100% Japan subsidiary in 2000. Despite enjoying a stellar reputation around the world, the firm still has room to grow in Japan.

“Globally, we go head-to-head with our competitors”, Noack remarks. “Here, there's a gap, and it's our job to close the gap on market penetration and development.”

In order to do this, Noack is working to further promote Audi's

existing products and its latest vehicles in Japan, in line with his 2019 strategy. There is an impressive range of 42 models already available to the Japanese public, and more than ten are scheduled for release in 2019. Japan has its own favourites among the automaker's cars.

“The Q models are popular, especially the Q2”, he notes. “We're gaining a high market share with our sports performance models, like the R8 and the RS range. Japanese people really like horsepower.”

Last September, less than a week after Noack took up his current post, he launched the firm's two new flagship models in Japan, the A8 and A7. They

“I know how important it is to speak with the customer and get a view of what they feel about our product”





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have already both sold well beyond expectations. Since the start of 2019, Audi Japan has already released the RS4 Avant and the Q5 40 TDI quattro.

“We are progressive premium – in the premium segment, but we also want to be a bit different, a bit on the edgy side, to differentiate us from our competitors,” he explains. “This year, to promote our cars, I’m challenging my media team to come up with new, fresh ideas that are not yet in the market.”

He also points to the launch of Audi’s first electric car in Japan, the e-tron, to show that the firm’s products are at the forefront of industry trends.

“Press and media have tested the car and the feedback has been phenomenal,” Noack says. “I’m proud to be president when we sell our first electric car in this country.”

Having strong products isn’t enough, however. After working in Germany, the UK, Australia, Hong Kong and the US, Noack has learned the fundamental, universal value of excellent customer experiences at dealerships. It’s part of his plan to make these experiences better here in Japan.

“The dealer is the touchpoint with the customer,” he states. “We want to improve the quality of the network, so we keep providing dealers with state-of-the-art technology, keep training them. But we can’t just bring dealers to Tokyo or Yokohama to train, we have to go out and meet them, see what’s happening at the dealerships.”

Another key to reaching a wider audience in Japan is to make the brand even more accessible. Audi already has 126 dealerships across the country,

but it is enlarging its network by an additional two this year, and by another six in 2020, for a total of 134 dealerships.

Even better products and dealership experiences connect to the core idea of Noack’s strategy to have Audi Japan become more customer-centric. But Audi is also going the extra mile to make the buyer’s life easier. One way it is doing so is by bundling its services.

“We make sure our financial products have one signature on



the contract, which includes insurance, maintenance, the whole package,” he says. “This is where we make life easier for our customers, so they feel well protected.”

Noack also believes that it’s the small details that can result in long-term loyalty to the brand.

“It’s doing the unexpected things,” he explains. “We can surprise the customer for their birthday, send a little note when their car is one year old – these are the little things that put a smile on their faces.”

Audi on demand is something else that is putting a smile on faces in Japan. The firm



134

Audi Japan will have a total of 134 dealers across the country by 2020

“We can see we’re developing loyal customers”

is offering its cars for rent for fixed periods of time, and it began a pilot scheme in Tokyo in June that allows clients to get behind the wheel of most Audi models, including an R8 super sports car and the RS series vehicles.

“It has been a great success”, Noack says. “We can see we’re developing loyal customers, as well as touchpoints with people who talk about it on Facebook or Instagram. This helps us extend and promote the brand in Japan.”

With his three-pronged strategy, Noack is convinced that Audi is on a path to take hold of even more of the Japan market. As people become better informed about its offerings and have the opportunity to encounter the brand, he knows the product will speak for itself.

“When we get people in the car”, he says, “we win them.” ●



A slew of horrifying statistics — and a video of a turtle with a straw stuck in its nose — have helped raise awareness of the danger posed by disposable plastic over the past few years. Some 275 million tonnes of plastic waste are produced annually around the globe, with an estimated eight million tonnes of that ending up in the oceans. One report forecasts that if the current trends continue, by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean, by weight, than fish.

PROTECTING OUR OCEANS

The EU and Japan get serious
about the plastic problem

Although governments, companies and individuals have been galvanised into taking some steps to address the problem, measures being taken vary considerably. Europe is leading on the issue where roughly 30% of plastic is recycled across the region, a significantly higher proportion than elsewhere. Japan is moving slower in introducing meaningful policies; Asia accounts for around half of the world's plastic usage.

In October, the European Parliament overwhelmingly approved a proposal for legislation that will ban some of the most common single-use plastic products by 2021. It also calls for 90% of plastic bottles to be recycled by 2025.

“It is essential in order to protect the marine environment and reduce the costs of environmental damage attributed to plastic pollution in Europe, estimated at €22 billion, by 2030,” said Frederique Ries, the member of European Parliament who proposed the bill.

Under the planned legislation member states will have to reduce plastic currently in use, including polystyrene fast-food containers, by 25% by 2025. However, other types of plastic, such as containers for fruit, vegetables and ice cream, will not be banned. This has led some environmental groups to say the measures don't go far enough. With nearly half of all plastic pro-

“it takes a worldwide commitment not to increase but to reduce plastics flowing into the seas”

duced annually going into packaging — and 900 billion packaged food items predicted to be sold in Europe in 2020 — that still leaves a lot of plastic.

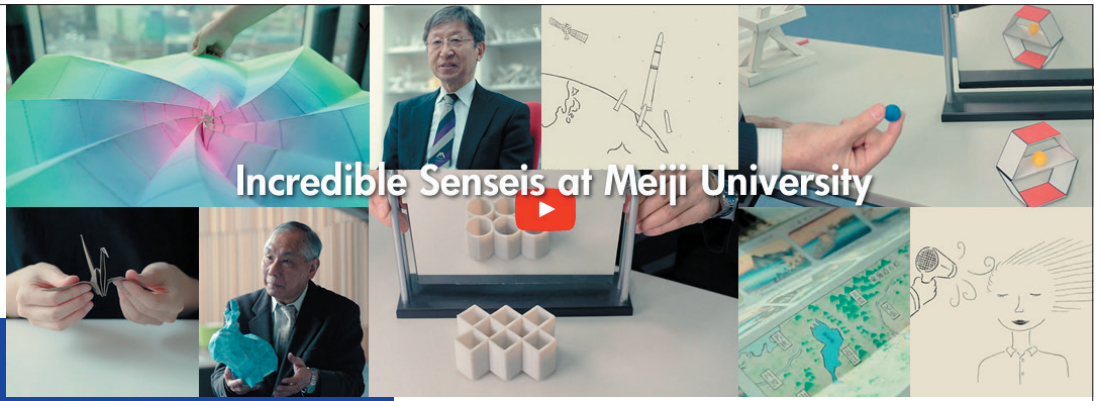
In Japan, where the need for elaborate packaging appears to be culturally ingrained, the Ministry of the Environment has proposed making it compulsory to charge for plastic shopping bags. The ministry is to begin discussions with other agencies this year, with a view to introducing new rules in 2020. It is also targeting a 25% reduction in the use of disposable plastic products by 2030, though it looks unlikely to be binding.

However, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe did broach the issue in his speech at the World

275,000,000

Some 275 million tonnes of plastic waste is produced annually around the globe





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Invest in your future and make 2019 the start of a new chapter in your career.



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Economic Forum in Davos last month.

“At the deepest spot of the Pacific Ocean we now find something terrible going on: the bodies of small sea fleas ... hold toxic PCB contaminants in very high density,” he said. “I would like to build a shared sense that it takes a worldwide commitment not to increase but to reduce plastics flowing into the seas. There is absolutely no need to restrain our economic activities. Innovation ... is what counts.”

“we are committed to switching to reusable or recyclable alternatives for all our packaging by 2025”

An estimated 45 billion single-use plastic bags are handed out annually by shops in Japan, with convenience stores accounting for around 30% of that. Some stores in Japan have been charging for plastic bags for years, while other companies are attempting to eliminate their use completely.

Metro Cash & Carry Japan has been charging for plastic bags since 2009 and is planning to reintroduce its own reusable eco-bag in the spring, though many of its customers use cardboard boxes as they usually purchase in bulk.

As well as aiming to have all the company’s cardboard, paper and wood materials coming from sustainable sources, it is also working to reduce the

An estimated 45 billion single-use plastic bags are handed out annually by shops in Japan

use of plastics. This includes a plan to, “eliminate expanded polystyrene from all packaging, saving a total of 300 tonnes of plastic globally over the next five years,” according to Metro’s Shoko Ochi.

Since 2014, the Dusseldorf-based wholesale and food specialist has already saved some 400 tonnes of material by optimising the packaging on 11,000 of its own-brand items.

“We are working globally step-by-step to reduce the plastic packaging of our own-brand products,” adds Ochi. “In addition, we are committed to switching to reusable or recyclable alternatives for all our packaging by 2025.”

Swedish clothing retailer H&M has also introduced initiatives to reduce its plastic footprint, including charging for shopping bags and transitioning from plastic to paper ones. This switch is a global policy that was implemented in Japan in December, with profits from the sales of bags going to wilderness preservation organisation WWF Japan. In the first month, the use of shopping bags fell by almost half, according to Shige Yamaura, CSR coordinator at H&M Japan.

Globally, H&M has also been using recycled polyester in its clothing, utilising the equivalent of 100 million plastic bottles in 2017.

It is also working on ways to stop microfibres from clothes

entering the water supply — another major environmental danger — including by offering a special laundry bag that catches the fibres while clothing is being washed.

Swedish furniture giant IKEA is also actively helping to reduce plastic usage. It will have removed all single-use plastic products — including straws, freezer bags, garbage bags and plastic-coated paper plates and cups — from its range by the beginning of 2020.

“IKEA is on a journey to be circular in all aspects, from product development, sourcing materials, developing the supply chain, and logistics to how and where we meet our customers,” says Akiko Kato of IKEA Japan. “As part of this, we must find innovative ways to work with renewable and recycled materials and prolong the life of products ... IKEA is committed to phasing out virgin fossil plastic from products by 2030.”

Carl Eklund, president of the Japan operations of metal powder specialists Höganäs — yet another Swedish firm — says there are no specific regulations on reducing plastic use from the Japanese authorities, but believes, “there are some guidelines possibly on the way.”

Also chair of the EBC Materials Committee, Eklund says there have been discussions on tackling the problem, but no policy has yet been decided.

“It’s a huge issue,” he states. “We need to think outside the box.” ●



How the tobacco industry is having to change in Japan

SMOKE AND VAPOURS

A Showa-era (1926–1989) office day in Japan often ended with cigarette smoke floating like a nimbus cloud over a workroom, with 80% of men and a few women lighting up. Smoking was so prevalent that Japan National Railways offered just one non-smoking car, and the government remained sole owner of the nation's tobacco monopoly until 1985.

Fast-forward to today, the end of the Heisei era, when Japan's smoking rate has fallen to less than 20% of the population, and the nation appears to be heading into a smokeless future. By April 2020 — in time for the Tokyo Olympics — smoking indoors will be banned at public facilities nationwide.

“Public”, however, extends only to schools, hospitals, transport and most government buildings. Political and industry objections led to a weakening of an initial health ministry proposal; the new version excludes 55% of restaurants and bars from compliance, compared with just 15% under a stricter Tokyo ban.

Fines range from ¥500,000 for law-breaking proprietors to ¥300,000 for individual smokers. The Japanese government — currently one-third owner of Japan Tobacco (JT) — will now receive revenues from cigarette sales as well as product taxes, while also garnering penalties for illegal use. Meanwhile, Japan's Ministry of Finance earns up to ¥70 billion annually on its JT share dividends.

“If [Japan] were really committed, then public smoking bans for Tokyo would have been introduced well before the

whole world sets eyes on the city for the Olympics,” says Nigel Muston, senior research analyst at capital market firm, CLSA.

However, the government covers nearly ¥1.5 trillion in smoking-related health expenses and handles the brunt of medical costs tied to passive smoking, estimated to cause 15,000 deaths annually in Japan. Japan’s recent bans compare with 17 EU countries that have already launched comprehensive public smoking laws.

A 2018 health ministry survey found only 29.4% of men and 7.2% of women now smoke, a combined record low of 17.7%. But Japan still tops the G7 nations for consumption. Price and access are factors. Even after seeing the cost of a pack of cigarettes double over the past 20 years — now nearly ¥500 — and following the introduction of a new tax in October, it is still far lower than in Europe. The same brand sells in France for the equivalent of ¥1,300.

The survey also shows that 28.9% of Japanese smokers want to quit. Together with tighter regulations and new technologies that purportedly deliver healthier, smokeless nicotine, the steady decline in the number of Japan’s smokers is driving the nation’s tobacco industry into a new phase.

Heat-not-burn (HNB) products, which have rapidly gained over 20% of the Japanese market, use battery power to warm a small tobacco stick or capsule in a handheld device. Philip Morris International’s IQOS, British American Tobacco’s glo, and Japan Tobacco’s Ploom TECH all carry the claim that they

release fewer chemicals than combustible cigarettes. Makers dub HNBs reduced-risk products, claiming they are less harmful than cigarettes.

While Japan effectively bans electronic cigarettes, or nicotine-laced liquid vapour devices, HNB sales have hit \$4.5 billion here, almost 90% of all global revenues. The main target customer for HNB products is the current smoker.

After strong, early HNB adoption, sales flattened, leading to lower prices. The world’s largest tobacco firm, Philip Morris International (PMD), then introduced cheaper product lines, which CEO André Calantzopoulos promoted in Japan late in 2018, along with its top-seller IQOS. He said an unprecedented era for the industry was underway that could eventually leave cigarettes as a historical footnote.

“I’ve seen a lot of change in the industry over 30 years, but nothing like what we are experiencing now,” he says. “We are focused on making a smoke-free future that does not include cigarettes. In an ideal world, all smokers should quit tobacco, but we don’t live in a world where this can happen automatically, or anytime soon.”

Critics are unconvinced by this new stance, even though Swiss-based PMI is running global ads encouraging smokers to quit. The firm expects reduced-risk products to make up 42% of revenues by 2025.

JT, meanwhile, is promoting Ploom TECH at 13 satellite stores in major cities where it can explain its low-heat process and higher-priced accessories. Its cheaper tobacco capsules — in six flavours such as berry mint, Japanese and European pear, and café mocha — are sold at convenience stores. JT’s current strategy is called “Rethink Tobacco”.

CLSA’s Muston says PMI and JT have different strategies, but both are focused on the bottom line.

“PMI’s public commentary may be that it wants to wean customers off cigarettes, but HNBs are a similarly profitable alternative and, depending on taxation and pricing,

could even end up more profitable,” Muston says. “I don’t believe JT is marketing its HNB products as a way to become a non-smoker, but simply as a slightly more healthy way to continue the habit.”

Moreover, JT is looking beyond Japan, as it makes 60% of its profits overseas. The firm recently made the largest-ever foreign direct investment into Bangladesh, with the \$1.5-billion purchase of Akij Group’s tobacco business, which followed a \$1.6-billion acquisition of Russia’s Donskoy in March of last year. Russia is the world’s third-largest market and Bangladesh the eighth-largest — both with some of the globe’s lightest tobacco regulations.

Back at home, the times are changing — somewhat. In 2018, Japan’s health ministry commemorated the UN’s “World No Tobacco Day” by removing the sole remaining cigarette vending machine from its premises.

“We are focused on making a smoke-free future that does not include cigarettes”

“We ask for the people’s understanding and cooperation on the issue of cigarettes and health,” former Health Minister Katsunobu Kato told the media.

Yet, in a sign of how Japan may be stuck in another era, ministry staff are still permitted to smoke outside their building or in designated rooms at a building nearby — the Japanese parliament, which is also exempt from the ban. ●



Flying the flag in Japan

Brent Van Tassel, head of economic affairs at the Belgian Embassy in Japan

After working as a lawyer at an international law firm in Brussels from 2002 to 2012, Brent Van Tassel joined Belgium's foreign service. His first posting was to Burundi, a former colony, as consul of Belgium. Since 2016, he has been serving as first secretary and head of economic affairs at the Embassy of Belgium in Japan.

Can you tell me about the work of the Economic Affairs Department?

There's a very broad scope. We follow the economic, financial, agricultural and commercial fields in Japan, as well as everything concerning science and technology, and report on basically anything of interest to headquarters in Belgium, Belgian companies and other stakeholders. We work closely with the three regional trade offices — representing Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels — to help companies gain market access in new areas and give support to those already active in the market.

On top of that, we work together to attract Japanese investments to Belgium.

How are you helping to promote Belgian businesses?

The image of Belgium is truly excellent in Japan and that's a huge advantage for our economic diplomacy. More than 40% of Belgium's exports to

Japan are chemicals and pharmaceutical products, but it's the classic products — the chocolate, beer and waffles — that really open doors. Having this positive image makes it easier to promote other products and bring new companies into the Japanese market.

A useful economic tool to assist Belgian businesses in promoting their products here is a patronage logo we created, which makes use of the national flag. Companies can apply to use it if their products are Belgian or use Belgian ingredients, and the logo seems to have had a positive effect on sales figures. It also clearly gives greater visibility to Belgian products. For us, it's quite satisfying to go to a convenience store and see all the Belgian flags — on chocolates, waffles, beer, ice cream and frozen vegetables, for instance.

Are you seeing more Belgian firms breaking into the Japanese market?

Definitely. The market is clearly becoming more attractive to Belgian companies. Since I arrived, we're seeing more companies coming that are active in the life sciences and biotechnology sector, in particular. It's an area where we are recognised for our expertise at an international level, and it is attracting specific interest from the Japanese market because of its ageing population. We can see that there's a lot of interest from Japanese companies in working together through joint ventures with Belgian biotech firms. On a global level, Belgian biotech is really booming.

What are some Belgian products that are successful here?

Of course, Valentine's Day and White Day in Japan

wouldn't be the same without the Belgian chocolate — Japan is one of the most important markets for Belgian chocolate companies. The luxury market is very important for us, as well. Antwerp is the world's biggest diamond cutting hub; 84% of the world's mined diamonds are cut in Antwerp. The tradition, the craftsmanship and the 575-year history of Antwerp's cut diamonds are highly valued by Japanese customers.

Also, other luxury sectors, such as Belgian handbags, are doing very well here. It's quite satisfying to work in Japan where so many Belgian brands are successful.

“Japan won their first two Olympic medals in Belgium in 1920”

What is the Invest in Belgium seminar?

After a first successful seminar in Tokyo, we organised a second Invest in Belgium Seminar in Osaka — taking into account its importance as an economic hub — together with the regional trade offices. The seminar was officially opened by Didier Reynders, deputy prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs, who also met captains of industry from the Kansai region, where many important Japanese investors in Belgium have their headquarters.

At the investment seminar, he gave a brief talk to show the attractiveness of Belgium for

firms' European headquarters. He spoke about how Belgium is a top global logistical hub. Last year, the World Bank ranked Belgium the third most logistically friendly country in the world, reflecting the complex, multi-modal integration of our roads, rails, airports, rivers and harbours.

An international tax expert from Belgium's Ministry of Finance also attended the event and explained in detail the recently ratified corporate tax reform. This will lower the nominal corporate taxation base from 34% to 29% this year, and to 25% in 2020. This makes Belgium more competitive than ever before.

What's something the Economic Affairs Department is planning?

In light of the upcoming Olympic and Paralympic Games, sports diplomacy is becoming increasingly important. Belgium had an incredible year in sports last year. We came in third in the World Cup and we're still first in the FIFA rankings right now. But, on top of that, we also won the world championship of field hockey and the world title in golf. So, there's a momentum ahead of the Games next year and we expect to become even more active in this area. Certainly, more official and economic delegations will organise missions to Japan in the very near future.

We also have a symbolic link with the Games in 2020 — it's exactly 100 years after Antwerp hosted them in 1920. Japan won their first two Olympic medals in Belgium in 1920, in singles and doubles tennis. We plan to organise a few events around this symbolic link, further highlighting the great image of Belgium here. ●



Belgium and Luxembourg

Of the highest quality

Situated in the centre of Europe — both physically and politically — Belgium and Luxembourg enjoy the image of being representative of the continent. Indeed, the Belgium–Luxembourg Economic Union, which was established in 1922, can be understood as a forerunner to today's EU. But these two symbols of Europe are perhaps best known in Japan for the high quality of their goods and services.

“The Belgian reputation has been built on excellent quality — and this quality is linked with the pleasures in life,” says Belgian Ambassador to Japan Gunther Sleeuwagen. “Ever since the invention of the chocolate praline, credited to Jean Neuhaus in Brussels in 1912, Belgian chocolatiers have worked to improve, improvise and embellish this traditional treat.”

With a history going back nearly a century, Godiva is one of the world's most well-known Belgian chocolate makers, and operates hundreds of stores around the world, with dozens across Japan producing sweets as head-turning as its namesake. Not only does Godiva prioritise making products of the highest quality, but it values the quality of the giving experience itself. The firm made headlines in Japan last year by taking out a full-page advertisement in February that proposed the

end of the “obligation chocolate” custom in Japan of women buying chocolate for male colleagues and friends on Valentine's Day.

“As another example of Belgium's outstanding reputation of quality and craftsmanship, one can refer to the excellence of Belgium's more than one thousand kinds of tasty beers, which most obviously bring lots of joy to all consumers,” adds Sleeuwagen.

While there are a large number of Belgian brewers concocting superb beers — which are often exhibited at the annual Belgian Beer Festival in Japan during the summer — Leuven-based Anheuser-Busch InBev remains one of the most successful beer makers and distributors internationally. It is responsible for exporting a number of craft and traditional Belgian beers to Japan, including Hoegaarden, Leffe and Jupiler.

“Ever since the invention of the chocolate praline ... in Brussels in 1912, Belgian chocolatiers have worked to improve, improvise and embellish this traditional treat”

—Belgian Ambassador Gunther Sleeuwagen



Businesses from Luxembourg are also bringing products of the highest quality to Japan.

“Many products made by Luxembourg companies are contributing, in a direct, though not very visible way to the excellence of Japanese consumer products,” remarks Christian Muller, chargé d'affaires at the Embassy of Luxembourg in Japan. “For instance, Ceratizit is a global carbide producer, which recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of its presence in Japan. It supplies small carbide balls for the famous FriXion ball pens made by the Japanese firm Pilot.”

Another example is International Electronics & Engineering (IEE), headquartered in Contern. IEE manufactures sensors for cars used, for example, in seats to detect, support and protect drivers and passengers — including by reminding them to wear a seatbelt. IEE sensors are installed in cars throughout Japan, across the spectrum of price ranges and vehicle types.

“Luxembourg wines have become increasingly popular in Japan over the past few years,” Muller adds. “Our white wines and crémants [sparkling wines] — rooted in a 2000-year-old tradition dating back to the times of the Romans — are perfect matches for the delicate tastes of Japanese haute cuisine.”

As the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement comes into force this month, there will be even more opportunities for Belgium and Luxembourg to impress Japanese consumers and businesses with their excellence. ●



Area

Belgium: 30,528 km². Coastline: 66.5km.

Luxembourg: 2,586 km². Landlocked.

Climate

Belgium: Temperate; mild winters and cool summers; rainy, humid and cloudy.

Luxembourg: Modified continental with mild winters and cool summers.

Major cities

Belgium: Brussels (capital), Antwerp, Ghent and Liège.

Luxembourg: Luxembourg City (capital), Esch-sur-Alzette and Dudelange.

Population

Belgium: 11,323,973 (July 2015, estimate).

Urban population:

97.9% of total population (2015).

40.5% are 25–54 years of age.

Luxembourg: 570,252 (July 2015, estimate).

Urban population:

90.2% of total population (2015).

44.37% are 25–54 years of age.

Natural resources

Belgium: Silica sand, carbonates and arable land.

Luxembourg: Iron ore and arable land.



Trade with Japan

Belgium

Exports to Japan: €3.2 billion

Imports from Japan: €8.8 billion

SOURCE: BELGIAN FOREIGN TRADE AGENCY, 2017

Luxembourg

Exports to Japan: €69 million

Imports from Japan: €394.7 million

SOURCE: STATISTICS PORTAL OF THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG, 2016



BUSINESSES FROM ...

BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG

A LOOK AT SOME COMPANIES FROM THE REGION



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**Dale
Carnegie**

A full-page portrait of Jorg van Leeuwen, a young man with light brown hair and blue eyes, smiling warmly. He is wearing a dark navy blue suit jacket over a white dress shirt and a dark tie with a small white polka-dot pattern. His hands are in his pockets. The background is a blurred office interior with glass partitions and soft lighting.

Jorg van Leeuwen

Getting down to brass tax

"In the part of the Netherlands I'm from, every village has a football club and a brass band," says Jorg van Leeuwen, originally from the southern municipality of Bergen op Zoom. "I joined the brass band — and it was amazing."

After starting out with the trumpet at age 11, and not really enjoying it, he soon switched to the trombone and became spellbound with its sound. The instrument quickly became a passion.

"At high school, that's basically all I did in my free time; there were musical productions, jazz bands," van Leeuwen says. "I didn't worry about the future — I just played trombone."

Having skipped a grade in elementary school, he felt he had a year to do something different before going to university. Encouraged by a teacher to

apply to Codarts Rotterdam, a music school internationally renowned for its trombone class, van Leeuwen was invited to audition and was accepted.

"It's called a preparatory year, and it was intense," he states. "There were only twenty places for all five years of the programme. The students were from everywhere — Japan, the US, Australia, South Africa, the Netherlands — and all highly motivated, practicing hard to improve."

In a year of numerous performances, one recital stands out in van Leeuwen's memory. All twenty trombonists, together with one organist, gave a concert at Rotterdam's De Doelen concert hall.

"The piece was a call and response — the organ started, and the trombones imitated the melodies of the organ with its multiple registers," he explains. "During the finale, the organ gave it everything, playing fortissimo, and the trombones still went over the organ. It was overwhelming."

After his taxing year at Codarts — one of intense focus but marked improvement in proficiency — van Leeuwen decided, "pretty much on a whim", to go to law school and specialise in tax law. It turned out to be a perfect fit.

"Tax law is one of the rare fields of law where you usually advise your clients before an event takes place — in criminal law, you usually don't do that," van Leeuwen jokes. "There's a kind of puzzle-like dimension, which I really like. The facts and circumstances aren't fixed, and if you want to achieve a certain result, you have to think carefully about your options."

In 2013, van Leeuwen joined PwC, one of the world's largest professional tax service providers, and was transferred to the Tokyo branch three years later. As tax manager on the transaction team, he helps Japanese clients with cross-border transactions. He also runs the Dutch desk, advising Dutch firms with a presence in Japan and Japanese firms with a presence in the Netherlands.

"It's interesting how rapidly our business is being digitalised," van Leeuwen observes. "We're developing a lot of tools to help clients digest complexity."

"I didn't worry about the future — I just played trombone"

A lot of the routine parts of the job are becoming automated, and what remains is the thinking — the cool stuff."

Much like PwC's business, van Leeuwen's trombone skills are continuing to advance and develop. Shortly after he arrived in Tokyo, van Leeuwen mentioned to a colleague that he was waiting for a shipment of his belongings to arrive, including his trombone. The colleague said that he played in a band and that they were looking for a trombonist.

"We're called the Ruby Room Orchestra and we play music that's a bit funky — rock-pop with horns," he says. "I never did a lot of improvisation, so I've had to learn it and it's widened my horizons. I'm envious of jazz musicians who can just come up with ideas and make it flow."

Van Leeuwen, who is also chairman of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Japan, still loves the sound of his trombone, describing it as, in turn, round and melodious, sometimes dark and aggressive — an instrument often used for effect.

"A trombone solo from a good jazz musician can be funny and make people laugh — and that appeals to me," he says. "It's about emotion and telling a story. It's a way of communicating with people without using words. If you achieve that, it's very rewarding. You can't get that feeling with anything else."

Not even advising on tax law. ●

Jorg Van Leeuwen is tax manager at PwC Tax Japan and represents the Netherlands on the EBC's Board of Governors.

Do you like natto?

Time spent working in Japan:
Almost three years.

responsible for finding the key to deal with them.

Career regret:
None. So far so good!

Secret of success in business:

For my industry, it all starts with being knowledgeable. If you're knowledgeable, the rest will follow.

Favourite saying:
Misunderstanding and incomprehension are greater causes of human suffering than evil intent.

Favourite place to dine:

Outside. In Japan, it can be so difficult to find somewhere you can eat outside, but on a nice, sunny day, there's no better place.

Favourite book:
Notes from Underground by Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

Cannot live without:
My collection of Red Hot Chili Peppers albums (No, not my trombone).

Do you like natto?
I like it. I eat it every morning.

Lesson learned in Japan:
Cultural differences run deep, and you're



Railways

More obstacles to clear off the track

The next time you're on a Japanese train, take a moment to recall that there's a good chance some of it came from Europe. Several EU-based railway equipment suppliers have become increasingly active here, especially in recent years. While they're not selling complete trains to the Japanese, they are providing parts and specialised components, such as braking and electrical systems, essential for keeping one of the world's most advanced railway networks on the move.

Some of Japan's railway operators, including the largest, East Japan Railway Co. (JR East), are reaching out more to European suppliers.

"They're looking for the technology," says Tsunehiro Matsumura of Solton Co., which imports Italian-made electrical connectors for Japanese manufacturers in the railways sector. "They simply want to buy good devices."

For the past few years, JR East has been holding its JR European Supplier Tours in such locations as Lille, Dusseldorf, Paris and Milan.

These seminars explain the company's procurement policies and R&D strategy. Meanwhile, JR East officials arrange face-to-face meetings with their local counterparts.

In addition, some Japanese railway operators have started posting procurement and other information in English on their websites.

"So, any manufacturer can go to their websites and register," explains Shigetoshi Kawahara, chairman of the EBC Railway Committee. "JR or others will recognise who is interested in engaging in business, and they can communicate with each other."

The EBC is heartened by such efforts, as well as by the procurement deals struck to date. But committee members say that follow-up efforts by the Japanese side can be lacking, and that certain barriers continue to make the country a difficult market to crack.

Advocacy issues

➔ Tenders

The Japanese government should promote the use of tendering for railway-related projects.

➔ Testing and certification

Japan should establish a working group to identify basic common technical standards acceptable to all operators.

➔ Open, integrated systems

Manufacturers should be given more freedom to innovate, rather than comply with specifications set by railway operators, so that railway systems can become more open and integrated.

"It's good that JR East is doing the supplier tours and so forth, but I wish they would do more," Kawahara says. "They should take more care after a supplier actually comes to Japan."

Testing and certification are a case in point. To begin with, Japanese operators don't recognise EU certification, so special testing in Japan is required.

"That's fine, but the foreign company may not know who will be doing the test" Kawahara says, pointing to opaque

and confusing procedures.

"Maybe it will be JR East doing it themselves, or maybe they'll make you go to ... one of the independent testing centres. Or maybe they'll say, 'Check to see if your product is compatible with JIS [Japan Industrial Standards]'."

Compounding the problem is that railway operators such as JR East set their own technical standards, rather than adhere to open industry-wide standards, as in Europe.

"This is totally different from other countries," says Hideaki Katsuta of TÜV SÜD Japan. "The EBC members have products that have already conformed with and passed European standards, and so they say, 'Why can't we get into the Japanese market?'"

Cultural differences can be another obstacle, according to Wakako Suga, a manager in the Marketing & Strategy department at Knorr-Bremse.

"In Europe, for example, if an air compressor breaks, then we'll provide a new one, for no charge," she notes.

In Japan, by contrast, the same situation would warrant a detailed explanation from the supplier to its client.

"You'd need to test it to find out the problem and then we'd have to work on the product," says Suga, whose company supplies braking systems to Japanese customers.

Kawahara — whose company, Cembre S.p.A., makes electrical equipment — adds: "Our committee members' products are very special, which Japanese industry doesn't have ... We appreciate the websites and the supplier tours, but we would like to see more from Japan, and the EU." ●

Shigetoshi Kawahara is chairman of the EBC Railway Committee.



Ready to build

Michael Mroczek is elected chairman of the EBC

A new chairman has been elected to lead the EBC during this pivotal time of change for the organisation – its membership structure was revamped at the start of the year, and the EU–Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which came into force this month, marks the beginning of a new relationship between the EU and Japan.

Michael Mroczek, who was born in Poland, moved to Switzerland when he was 16 and later became an attorney at law. He was admitted to the bar in Switzerland and is registered as an EU lawyer in Poland and as a foreign lawyer in Japan. At the end of 2012, Mroczek came to Japan to do a Master's in US law at an American university in Tokyo and, since 2013, he has been a foreign law partner at the law firm Okuno & Partners. As president of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan for the past four years, he has served on the EBC's board of governors (BoG).

What are your goals for the EBC?

The motivation behind my decision to run for chairman was the thought that I could make a difference in three areas.

There are many different stakeholders with diverse profiles – big chambers of commerce, small chambers, eastern European chambers, western European chambers – and each with a different focus. So, my first goal is to ensure that we are all looking in the same direction and that

everyone understands what the EBC can do for its members. To accomplish this, I plan to maintain an open dialogue with everyone, including our fantastic team of BoG members and committee chairs, and will ask that people bring constructive suggestions to our discussions.

Another goal is to increase the visibility of the EBC. We could do much more in terms of exposure, to show that there is an EBC, that it's working and that it's strong. And, through this, I'd like to see the number of member companies grow. Starting this year, companies can join multiple committees without any additional charges.

This is a new incentive for them to join, but the companies need to know about it. I'll need to start knocking on doors, encouraging them to join and meet people who have similar issues – telling them that the EBC can help them.

My third goal is to have the EBC's constitution updated. I'd like to make the EBC more agile, rethink processes and update the organisation for our digital era.

“my first goal is to ensure that we are all looking in the same direction”

What do you believe are the most important jobs for the organisation over the next few years?

They're related to the EPA. This is a big change and the EBC may need to redefine itself. We

need to stay actively involved in the monitoring process as the EPA is implemented, watching how the Japanese authorities are complying. We'll need to be flexible to fit into this new role.

However, there are several issues that are not covered under the EPA, and we shouldn't forget about them. We also need to bear in mind the needs of our non-EU-member stakeholders. So, we should continue, as we always have, to take the voices of our members to the relevant government ministries and make sure that they are heard.

How important to you is the work of the EBC?

If it wasn't important, I wouldn't be involved. I see myself as a builder, and I believe we can build something meaningful at the EBC.

It's the beginning of a new age, and I'm pleased to be carrying on the excellent work of my predecessors. ●





Future flight

Japan and Europe have partnered to imagine a next-generation aircraft experience

Some people love flying. But if you're one of those who don't, take heart. Engineers in Europe and Japan are trying to reinvent aircraft cabins so they can become both more enjoyable and more profitable. What would you say to an onboard lounge and video game room?

Results were announced last month at a seminar in Tokyo to mark the project's completion. Presenters covered topics including future technologies, passenger preferences and the technical integration of concepts. The centrepiece of the event, however, was a scale model of a concept cabin with reimagined seating, as well as new multipurpose lower-deck rooms.

Designed by Spanish agency Mormedi, the high-density economy class consists of lightweight benches that can seat a family of three or two large adults. While they don't recline, the benches would be on relatively inexpensive flights by low-cost carriers. Space under the benches makes it easier to store belongings than using overhead compartments. For the premium economy and business class cabin, Japanese seat manufacturer JAMCO created what it

calls Za-Isu concept seats. Designed for both work and rest, the cubicle-style booths have retractable tables, reclining seats with some space for stretching out, as well as interchangeable soft and hard cushions.

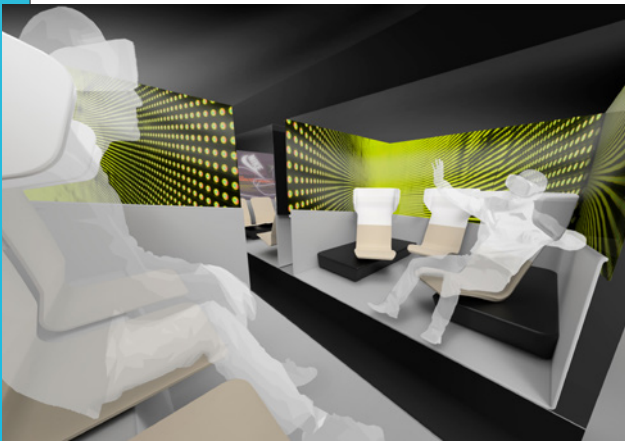
The consortium has explored a number of new technologies. Lightweight flexible displays could be affixed to walls, tray tables and seat backs, and also serve as mood lighting elements. An artificial intelligence system could monitor passenger comfort levels – for instance, by tracking cabin temperature and humidity – as well as identify any passengers behaving erratically and potentially threatening flight safety.

“The AI could suggest to the crew whether they might want to offer water to passengers or whether they want to sleep or watch movies,” said Roman Kirenskis, a PhD student in aircraft design at the UK's Cranfield University, a member of the consortium. “For ancillary revenue, we see this as a high-potential technology requiring the application of small, lightweight sensors.”

AI could also help manage passenger access to the lower deck, a cargo space that's often half empty, according to research by Airbus. By outfitting planes with container-sized “experience modules”, which could be easily swapped out and updated, part of the lower deck could be turned into standing-height playrooms, conference rooms and venues for shopping, relaxing and virtual-reality gaming. Some services could be monetised. At the very least, the cargo space would offer flyers a new area to stretch their legs.

While Airbus hasn't decided whether it will move forward with the FUCAM concept, European and Japanese airlines have shown interest and discussed possibilities with the consortium. Last year, Airbus announced a partnership with France's Zodiac Aerospace to deploy lower-deck sleeping berths for its A330 – so FUCAM isn't purely a pipe dream.

“We must explore many options so we can have a wide-angle view before making decisions,” said Ralf Schliwa, vice president and executive expert of Engineering Cabin & Cargo, Airbus Operations. “In the end, we are reacting to what the airlines are asking for. We have a motto: ‘Passenger at heart, airline in mind’.” ●



FUCAM lounge

The Future Cabin for the Asian Market (FUCAM) is a project that aims to develop passenger aircraft designs for short- to mid-haul flights in Japan, China and Southeast Asia after 2025. It was launched in 2016 and funded in part by Horizon 2020, the European Union's biggest research and innovation programme with almost €80 billion in support available from 2014 to 2020. FUCAM consists of one Japanese and eight European partners under the coordination of Airbus Defence and Space.



The Agenda

MAR
1SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

Japan-Swiss Spring Ball 2019

TIME: 18:00 to 22:00**VENUE:** Imperial Hotel Tokyo, Banquet
Hall "Fuji", 3F**FEE:** ¥27,000**DRESS CODE:** Black tie or dark lounge suit**CONTACT:** motohm62@gmail.comMAR
5SWISS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

2nd Switzerland-Japan Economic Forum

TIME: Starting at 13:30**VENUE:** Imperial Hotel Tokyo**FEE:** Free of charge (registration
required)**CONTACT:** www.sccij.jpMAR
7FINNISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
IN JAPAN

Pre-Opening Tour to the Moomin Valley Park in Hanno

TIME: 14:30 to 20:00**VENUE:** Metsä Village, Hanno, Saitama**COST:** ¥6,000 (for members), ¥9,000
(for non-members)**CONTACT:** fccj@gol.comMAR
7GERMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND
INDUSTRY IN JAPAN

Overview of JP patent examination for IoT and AI related applications

TIME: 9:30 to 11:30**VENUE:** AHK Japan**FEE:** Free of charge**CONTACT:** events@dihkj.or.jpMAR
15FINNISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN
JAPAN AND THE SWEDISH CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

The 34th Stora Enso Cup: Sweden- Finland Golf Challenge in Japan

FIRST TEE-OFF: 9:30**VENUE:** Taiheiy Club Gotemba West,
Shizuoka**PLAY FEE:** ¥18,090 (includes caddie,
lunch and party)**MORE INFORMATION:**

www.fcc.or.jp/se-cup/

MAR
18BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE IN JAPAN

Monthly Beer Gathering

TIME: 19:00 to 22:00**VENUE:** Belgian beer café in Tokyo**FEE:** Pay for your own food and drinks**CONTACT:** info@blccj.or.jpMAR
20BELGIAN-LUXEMBOURG CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE IN JAPAN

Double Taxation Treaty Belgium-Japan

TIME: 17:00 to 19:00**VENUE:** BNP Paribas seminar room 42F,
Tokyo station**FEE:** ¥500**CONTACT:** info@blccj.or.jpMAR
26BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN
JAPAN

Diversity in Rugby

TIME: 12:00 to 14:30**VENUE:** Conrad Hotel Tokyo,
2F Ballroom**FEE:** ¥7,200 (for members), ¥9,200
(for non-members)**CONTACT:** info@bccjapan.com

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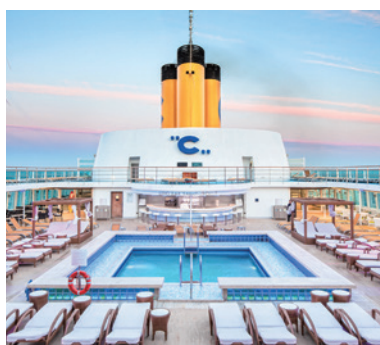
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9 June** (10 June from Kobe)

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Busan, South Korea ➔ June 14 Kochi
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The IoT doctor is in

Advances in healthcare keep more in Japan healthy and safe

Everything around us is getting smarter. The Internet of Things (IoT) is a major driver of technological change today as more and more vehicles, infrastructure, appliances and other equipment go online. The IoT industry is expanding rapidly, and investment is expected to surpass \$1 trillion by 2020, according to market intelligence firm IDC.

One of the most exciting application areas is healthcare. Two solutions that have emerged in the IoT health sector are remote monitoring of chronic health conditions and tracking equipment for people.

As mobile devices are already ubiquitous, using them for health management has enormous potential. The management consulting firm McKinsey estimates that by 2025, remote monitoring could save as much as \$1.1 trillion a year by better supporting the health of patients with chronic ailments.

This is already happening in Japan. As its population ages, diabetes is becoming increasingly common,

with 10 million suspected cases in 2016, up from 6.9 million in 1997, according to government data. In a randomised, controlled trial launched last year, researchers from the National Center for Global Health and Medicine in

Tokyo have given 2,000 diabetes patients aged 20 to 75 a diabetes monitoring smartphone app called Shichifukujin (The Seven Deities of Good Luck). Cartoon illustrations of Japanese folklore gods interact with users and get them to report physical activity and eating habits; if goals are missed, the gods get upset. Meanwhile, linked smart devices such as activity bands, scales and blood pressure monitors also gather data, which

if goals are missed, the gods get upset

is uploaded to a cloud database that doctors can access.

IoT is also being used to improve hospital administration and patient care. Fujitsu has developed hospital bed-sheets fitted with sensors that

record how many times they've been washed. The data is used to decide when sheets should be discarded to reduce the chances of transmitting infections.

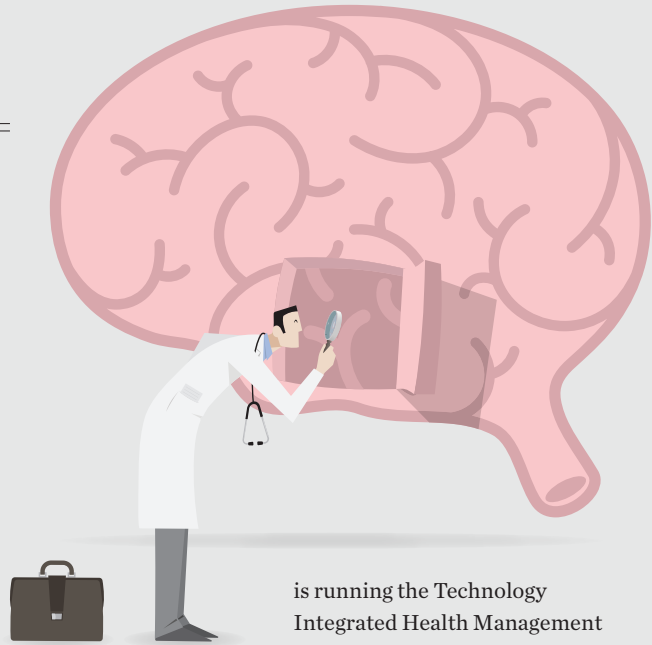
For a trial at Caithness General Hospital in Scotland, hospital beds have been equipped with Bluetooth sensors that relay information about their location and maintenance, a setup that could save the hospital time and money.

To help dementia patients stay safe around the home, the UK's National Health Service

is running the Technology Integrated Health Management project. It uses smart devices, installed around a patient's home and deployed in wearable form, to check for unusual behavior and alert clinicians if needed.

For older people who are prone to falls, Buddi is a UK-made smartband-and-GPS device that can be worn around the clock, even in the bath, allowing monitoring staff to receive automatic fall alerts as well as panic alarms.

Where will medical IoT go next? Our bodies. Abilify MyCite, a joint project between Japan's Otsuka Pharmaceutical and California-based Proteus Digital Health, is a "digital pill" that is ingested to help monitor patient compliance with drug regimens. In 2017, the US Food and Drug Administration approved its use for schizophrenia and other mental illnesses. In the future, you may not need to open your mouth and say "Aaahhh" because your doctor will be inside you. ●



Winning uphill battles

Human Rights Watch Japan fights for human rights at home and abroad

Since it was established in 1978, the goal of Human Rights Watch has been to protect and promote the human rights of all people. The Tokyo office, which was established in 2009, does research into human rights issues in Japan and engages with relevant government bodies to address the root causes of violations.

In the past five years, Human Rights Watch Japan has published two in-depth reports, both of which have had an impact — though we want to see even more change. One is on LGBT bullying and exclusion in Japanese schools. Our main proposal to the Japanese government was to include LGBT children in the national anti-bullying

policy. The report was published in 2016 and, a year later, the Ministry of Education heard us and incorporated this group into the revised policy.

The other report is about children in alternative care in Japan, those who cannot properly be cared for by their families. At the time this report was written, 88% of these kids were in orphanage-style institutions — a huge number compared with other developed countries — and only 12% with foster parents. We called for a change to the Child Welfare Act to reflect that each child has a basic right to a family life. In 2016, reflecting our advocacy efforts, the law was revised and now says that children need to be cared for in a family setting, and only institutionalised when this is not possible. The exception became the rule. Ultimately, we are working towards the deinstitution-

alisation of these kids, but it'll take time.

The other main area of our work is to engage with the Japanese foreign ministry and encourage them to prioritise human rights abroad in their policies and practices. One area where I really appreciate what Japan is doing is the issue of North Korea. Japan is an important ally for the human rights of the North Korean people. As a result of the abduction

issue here, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe took the lead when we proposed that Japan put forward a resolution at

the UN to set up a high-level commission to look into North Korea's human rights violations. This commission was formed, and it has written a very good report concluding that crimes against humanity have been committed "pursuant to the policies set at the highest levels of the state"; and the UN is putting more pressure on Kim Jong Un.

But on other issues, the Japanese government doesn't really use its economic and political power to stand up for

human rights, especially if it has a relationship with, or interests in, the country involved. For example, Japan refused to support setting up an investigative body at the UN into the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar — even though Japan did this for North Korea. This is an obvious double standard.

We're continuing to work on many other issues. One very big problem area in Japan is the protection of minority rights. Unlike most other developed countries, it doesn't have anti-discrimination laws, and its systems to protect those rights — such as administrative agencies to help solve individual cases — are exceptionally weak. So, one of our unfinished jobs is to see the creation of an anti-discrimination law for LGBT people and racial and ethnic minorities.

Until you see the results, fighting for human rights always seems like an uphill battle. It's the kind of battle you never know you've won until you've really won it. But these battles, when fought well, can be won. And, absolutely, we will win. ●

these battles, when fought well, can be won

If anyone would like to help, we would ask that they donate on our webpage. We also have an annual dinner to raise funds and give a report to our supporters. Our next dinner is on 26 April.

Kanae Doi is the director of Human Rights Watch Japan



Japan's labour pains

A mountain of debt and too few taxpayers to move it

Japan has too few taxpayers and labourers, and more than a quadrillion yen in public debt and social service obligations. Conditions are set to worsen as some 17 million leave the workforce by 2050 and become pensioners. If you're a policymaker, what do you do?

One option is to ignore everything, spend like a teenager with their first credit card, and then punt problems to the next unlucky generation, who already represent almost ¥10 million in government debt per person.

Other, less irresponsible choices to slow the slide towards fiscal and demographic perdition are to raise the sales tax, which is happening in October, and to introduce a controversial labour law aimed at staving off critical worker shortages, something that will be enacted in April.

In the bill, led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government, workers are divided into categories — depending on language and technical skills — with different limits on stay duration and ability to bring families. The government is adamant that this is not an immigration policy, despite the law being called the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. The number of mainly blue-collar employees for 14 sectors who can work and live in Japan for at least five years will eventually rise to 345,000.

Some 65% of Japanese opposed passage, according to a Kyodo survey. In fact, one political party held an “anti-migrant day” before the vote. That an incumbent

nationalist prime minister needed to push it through hastily in an early Diet session underscored the unpopularity of any policy that could potentially impact the nation's sense of homogeneity.

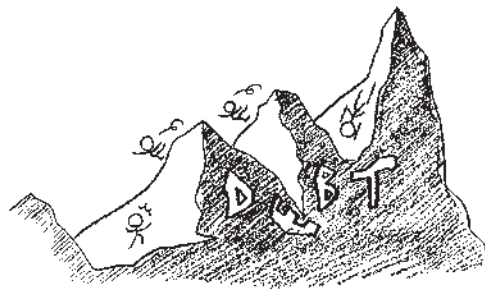
Government spokesman Yoshihide Suga said afterwards: “It is urgently necessary for this country to craft a framework for taking in a broad spectrum of industry-ready, foreign human resources.”

Japan already hosts 1.3 million of these “foreign human resources”. No one believes the latest worker inflow will be sufficient (the initial request was 500,000), as an estimated

Ministry itself said abuses occurred at about 70% of the 6,000 nationwide employers.

Some 50% of current interns are expected to join the new programme, but rather than scrutinise how this law would affect their working conditions, much opposition to the bill focuses on the potential impact on Japanese salaries and overtime, as well as the nation's already overburdened social services.

The prime minister has promised a full explanation of the programme's 124 points, which include Japanese language training, multi-lingual administrative services, and the opening of 100 consultation centres. The



half million citizens annually reach retirement age, while the yearly population decline is nearing 400,000. Instead, the bill reflects a resignation that more women, seniors and robots in the workforce would not adequately address critical economic stress areas.

Until now, the Technical Intern Training Program — which began in 1993 and has been widely derided as exploiting workers primarily from Asia — has been a main entry point to Japan for workers. However, some 7,000 of 258,000 on the programme in 2017 ran away, followed by about 4,300 in the first half of 2018 alone. Interns caught by authorities cited poor salaries and work conditions as reasons for fleeing, while the Health, Labour and Welfare

new law won't substantially offset Japan's fiscal woes, but it may provide better worker and service availability for those who have contributed to, or are still paying into, government coffers.

What will it take to truly address the current 250% debt-to-GDP ratio and the predicted annual rise in social welfare costs of up to ¥190 trillion by 2040? According to a Reuters' survey of economists, more than 70% say Japan must hike its sales tax beyond 10%, with some even pegging a rate as high as 25%.

If the current government struggled just to take a few small steps, imagine the Herculean challenge of uncharted intensity, perhaps a quadrillion times more difficult for the unlucky next generation. ●



Raising junior

Developing young golfers in Japan

Tiger Woods had the best coaches, the best sponsors, the best caddy and the best equipment available, but none of that would have mattered without the most important element in his life: his dad.

“He’s my inspiration,” Tiger said of his father, Earl. “My dad was always the person that would plant seeds and give me encouragement.”

Earl introduced Tiger to golf almost from the day he was born and was his sole coach until Tiger was five years old. Earl’s ambition was simple: to make Tiger into a world-class golfer. Not all parents are that pushy; some just want their kids to have fun. But how often do you see children out on the course in Japan or being taught at driving ranges?

The answer: very rarely. For a start, golf courses aren’t anywhere near most people’s homes, and elementary school students in Japan have homework to do after school. And while they may want daddy to help them with their game, he’s probably at work until 11:00 pm.

Why should this matter? According to Michael A. Taylor, chair of the United States Elite Coaches Association, “Research strongly suggests that parents play the largest role in influencing the development and healthy socialisation of their children involved in sports.”

The love of a sport usually comes from a parent first, but the parent doesn’t have to be great at it. Tiger’s father loved golf but was no more than a good amateur. He introduced Tiger to the sport, but from the age of five, Tiger’s destiny was in the hands of the professionals.

It’s around this age that children are able to effectively take instruction, and there are various opportunities to get your child on track in Japan. The golf course is still a long way off, but don’t let that worry you; you can take your sons and daughters down to the driving range, which will invariably have a resident or visiting pro.

For those looking for instruction in English, Samadhi Golf School, based at the Meiji Jingu Gaien Driving Range in central Tokyo, provides both individual and group instruction for juniors aged from four to 15. There’s also Jinji Golf School, which makes use of a number of driving ranges in Tokyo and Kawasaki, for children aged four to 12. Out in Chiba, short-course operator Dynamic Golf has junior coaching and tournaments.

Short courses are the best introduction for beginners who want to get out of the practice

range and feel the grass under their feet. In Tokyo, there are a number of affordable riverside courses, while further out, some countryside driving ranges have short courses attached.

In addition, the Japan Golf Association (JGA) works together with the Japan Golf Range Association to provide instruction and opportunities for juniors. JGA branches in each prefecture hold junior schools during summer vacations and organise junior tournaments around the country. Juniors are required to register with the JGA to compete. The Asian Junior Golf Association also runs camps in Japan, as well as other parts of Asia. For those with budding Tigers, young competitors can play on the Japan Junior Golf Tour or join the Japan Junior Golf Association.

There’s no guarantee your child will become a Tiger or Tigress, but if you put them on the right road, there’s no telling where they can go. ●



EDUCATION BEYOND ACADEMICS

Bringing out a child's potential through knowledge you can't find in textbooks

TEXT BY TOBY WATERS

While a sound education first and foremost means respecting and challenging a student's academic aptitude, today educators also tout the benefits of so-called soft skills.

THINKING EMOTIONALLY

Ken Sell, the head of school at **Aoba-Japan International School** appreciates the effort it takes acquiring these abilities.

"While the term 'soft skills' is associated with emotional intelligence and empathetic thinking," he says, "they are actually very hard to acquire. In our school, we focus on developing learners' relational skills by primarily focusing on the international baccalaureate learner profile attributes to develop caring, open-minded, reflective, principled and balanced people."

Karuzawa-based **UWC-ISAK Japan** also puts a premium on developing these attributes.

"On our Mindful Self-Discipline and Design Innovation courses, students learn how to consider different perspectives and respond thoughtfully in challenging situations, how to see problems as opportunities, and how to create and tell their story in a way that builds consensus," explains Brendan McGibbon, design innovation teacher.

Gilma Yamamoto Copeland, the director of **St. Alban's Nursery**, knows that understanding emotions is invaluable even at a young age.

"Every day, we focus on helping children recognise and understand their different emotions. It's important for them to learn the connection between feelings, thoughts and behaviour, especially for developing social skills," she says. "At St

Albans Nursery, we encourage our students to identify and discuss their feelings. And rather than just saying 'sorry', to look at their friends, understand how they feel, and ask questions such as, 'Are you ok?'"

Nicole Yamada, director of **Gymboree**, agrees that it's never too early to start learning people skills.

"We start nurturing social skills in our Play, Music and BabyLab classes for infants as young as six months," she explains. "Babies and toddlers are encouraged to

'communicate' with their parents, share toys and wait their turn during play activities. In our classes for pre-schoolers, children practice communicating their feelings during circle time, sharing instruments during music time and working together on group projects during art time."

Poppins Active Learning International School fosters understanding through its diverse staff, says school director Betty Shimozaki.

"Our main and after school programmes are taught by specialists who come from various backgrounds. They expose the children to diversity and the importance of empathy towards

other cultures," she says. "Each specialist teaches specific skills that help children be successful in the classroom and in later life. For example, yoga specialists encourage self-awareness and control over emotions. Our ballet classes emphasise the importance of teamwork and patience."

Damien Rentoul, principal of **Hiroshima International School (HIS)**, encourages mindful attitudes as the secret to academic success.

"In order to develop as an independent learner, a student needs to be able to manage their state of mind," he says, "and this skill is developed throughout the educational programme at HIS. Students learn to be mindfully aware, to persevere, manage emotions, become self-motivated starters and be resilient. These skills complement the more traditional academic skills, such as critical thinking."

Brian Love, director of technical education at **Coding Lab Japan** highlights the social advantages of learning to code.

"The main benefit is that students are learning the fundamentals of programming at an early age so that it becomes second nature," he says. "But beyond coding skills, children also gain crucial experience in problem solving, critical thinking, and mathematics, as well as collaboration and team skills. Kids also exercise their creativity and build confidence in themselves and their abilities."

SEEING THE WHOLE PICTURE

Educators are alert to the importance of providing a holistic education to produce well-rounded learners.

UWC-ISAK Japan's McGibbon says that, "Our aim is to provide students with the tools they need to understand and interpret the world so that they can identify what is most important and needed, take action in the face of discomfort, use

"Innovation emerges from curiosity and creativity"

diversity as a strength, and support others as they learn to do the same."

Hakuba International School's Honorary Theory of Knowledge Advisor Carol Inugai-Dixon unlocks students' potential by recognising them as complex individuals.

"Education and schooling are often confused," she explains. "Schooling might deal only with the needs of a labour supply or qualifications for university — and this can limit critical thinking. Education emphasises cognition. Both, however, fail to recognise the complexity and potential of the whole human being. For that we need holistic education."

St Albans' Yamamoto Copeland shares this view.

"At St Albans Nursery, our students are treated as individuals," she says. "The strengths and weaknesses of each child vary, and throughout life individuals develop at different rates, reaching their full potential in their own time. We understand there are sensitive periods of development, and with a great staff-to-student ratio we can offer one on one support, introduce work based on the individual rather than the group, and focus on positive reinforcement."

Emotional education reinforces traditional learning, says Jim Hardin, head of school at the **American School in Japan (ASIJ)**.

"Learning becomes deeper and more durable when we practice metacognitive strategies that consolidate new knowledge," he elaborates. "It is driven by curiosity and motivation in a supportive environment rich in engagement, social interaction, and feedback constructed in authentic contexts that result in the development of new understanding and skills for all. The importance of social emotional learning (SEL) resonates loudly in that vision."

Gymboree's Yamada highlights the importance of the learning environment.

"Our 'whole child' approach to learning gives children the opportunity to explore, discover, create and learn in a play-based environment. With the support of their parents, teachers and peers, children can pursue their own interests and go where their imagination takes them. Providing children with a learning environment where they feel comfortable, both physically and emotionally, will endow them with the self-confidence they need to challenge themselves and expand their horizons."

Rentoul of HIS believes that holistic education will bring about positive change in the pupil and in the world.

"Innovation emerges from curiosity and creativity," he says. "We want scientists who have explored literature and geographers who

understand the worlds of mathematics and music. We want leaders who see the world from original and imaginative perspectives, who understand the way they learn, as well as the content they encounter. A holistic approach to education fosters this curiosity and creativity and is the basis of our educational programme at HIS."

GROWING WISER, GROWING KINDER

Many educators say that the nurturing of emotional intelligence is paramount for children to fully develop as people.

ASIJ notes the correlation between emotional wellbeing in childhood and a happy adulthood.

"We know from recent studies that the most powerful childhood predictor of adult life-satisfaction is emotional health at age 16," Hardin says. "That is why ASIJ has partnered with the Institute for Social Emotional Learning (IFSEL) and made SEL one of our strategic priorities."

For Sell at Aoba-Japan International School, empathy skills are as importance today as they were in antiquity.

"For centuries, having the capacity to empathise with multiple perspectives and find agreement between people has led to effective and sustainable change. With digitisation creating greater cross-border interactions between nations and communities, emotional and relational intelligence is as important as it ever was."

At Poppins, Shimozaki highlights the benefits of emotional intelligence to relationships.

"Emotional intelligence is very important for a child's future, as it will determine how effectively they are able to work in a team and empathise with colleagues," she says. "We teach these skills via our specialist programmes, such as inviting professionals to share knowledge with the children. This includes vets bringing in animals, architects sharing blueprints and constructing small houses and even robotics."

Empathy is important to becoming a good person, as well as a good student, observes Inugai-Dixon at Hakuba International School.

"Emotional intelligence is integral to developing values that underpin ethical behaviour," she says. "Consequently, it will impact student choices in both further education and future work places. It will inform their sense of agency for citizenship and change, and this impact is significant for the future direction of us all."

Coding Lab Japan's Love notes the advantages that coding will give pupils in the future.

"Learning to code gives kids a critical head start in their STEAM education, preparing them for higher education and future careers," he notes. "Traditional programming jobs, such as web and app developers, are in high demand. But coding is no longer isolated just to core IT jobs. Employees with coding skills have an advantage in fields as diverse as graphic design, business, animation, and science."

In a hard world, soft skills can be the key to success. ●



We only have to look at the TV shows from the 1990s to know that the world has changed. With the proliferation of digitisation, and a significant increase in educational, social and cognitive research, schools are presented with great opportunities to better serve their community and society in general.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, we have strengthened our approach to developing relational skills, such as collaboration, communication, problem solving, risk taking, innovation and leadership.

As a way to complement this, we also focus on developing analytical skills, digital literacy and empathy in our learners with the aim of increasing their efficacy and agency.

Learning in context — where the connection between skills and conceptual understanding is clear and coherent — is important to us. It is this cycle of learning that enables us to make sense of our world. For us, holistic learning is applied using a systematic approach that involves team learning through inquiry. In doing this, we can show that, by applying what we have learned from contemporary research and grasping the positive power of digitisation, we are able to set conditions whereby our learners develop the skills, disposition and understanding needed to lead in creating positive change today and tomorrow.”

—Ken Sell, Head of School,
Aoba-Japan International School



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GETTING THE MOST OUT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Schools equip students for the long term

TEXT BY TOBY WATERS

Higher education is a transformational time in any student's life. In addition to building on their knowledge, discovering new things, expanding worldviews and meeting new people, many students today are eager to make themselves more employable after completing their course. Whether these efforts take the form of internships, networking events or lectures with industry doyens, choosing a school for many will come down to the opportunities their school can give that help them beyond graduation.

LEARNING FROM THE BEST

The first priority when choosing where to study is to make sure that you can trust your educators are among those at the top of their fields. Joseph Cherian, practice professor of finance and director of the Centre for Asset Management Research & Investments at the **National University of Singapore (NUS)**, highlights the value of excellent teachers.

"The Executive Master of Investments and Risk Management (EMIR) curriculum is immediately relevant to students' careers, and EMIR's faculty expertly blends academic knowledge with industry expertise," he says.

Len Leiser, the assistant director of the **NUCB Business School's Graduate School of Management**, notes the recognition his institution has received from international bodies.

"Where the NUCB Business School stands out is its international accreditation that ensures an education with proven long-term outcomes for

"soft skills ... are increasingly necessary for leadership"



students," he says. "We are the only school in Japan to hold AACSB and AMBA accreditation, signaling that the teaching is more than sufficient to prepare students for the employment market."

STUDYING AT YOUR CONVENIENCE

Given that most of us live very busy lives, more and more people are choosing to study part-time while they work, and universities are taking notice and are willing to be amenable. NUS is no exception.

"EMIR's modular part-time programme structure accommodates busy working professionals," says Cherian. "Some 70% is taught over six week-long sessions spread across 10 months, and 30% online over the final four months."

NUCB Business School is also accommodating to those in fulltime employment, according to Leiser.

"Our 'Weekend MBA' is the flagship delivery mode for the EMBA and MBA, and over 85% of students attend part-time," he explains. "The first weekend involves learning skills and theories immediately applicable on the job the following week. This practical application is then discussed in the second, and final, weekend of the course."

WHAT YOU KNOW AND WHO YOU KNOW

To attract the best students to their courses, universities are putting more and more emphasis on added extras to make them stand out from the crowd, including opportunities to get into the heart of industry while studying.

Leiser notes NUCB Business School's focus on fostering attitudes and skills that will shape its students into the leaders of tomorrow.

"'Frontier Spirit' is the founding motto of the NUCB Business School, and we instill that spirit in all students," he says. "We actively encourage study abroad experiences that will push students to develop the soft skills that are increasingly necessary for leadership and management positions across industries and functions around the world.

NUS is proud to hold regular events which put its learners in touch with movers and shakers in the business world.

"Guest speakers and networking events will be hosted throughout the duration of the programme for students to interact with industry leaders," Cherian says.

Whether you're studying full-time or part-time, taking advantage of the unique offerings of your university can give your career a huge boost. ●



#1

EXECUTIVE MBA IN JAPAN

FT Ranking 2018

Japanese Track

- ▶ Executive MBA
- ▶ MBA
- ▶ MSc in Taxation



English Track

- ▶ Global MBA



MBA Ranking
mba.nucba.ac.jp/en/



NUCB BUSINESS SCHOOL
 TOKYO / NAGOYA / OSAKA



Top wines of 2018

A list of stunners from Europe's finest vines

The year 2018 was, thankfully, a departure from the devastating fires and hail storms that destroyed many vines in 2017. France is predicted to have one of its best vintages in recent years, with high concentration and high yields. For those curious about *en primeur* investment — the practice of purchasing wines while they're still in the barrel — 2018 is probably worth researching.

But for those who are more interested in simply delving into some of the wines that were in their prime in 2018, here are my favorites — and they're all available for purchase here in Japan.

2015 Herdade do Esporão Reserva Red

In the undulating hills of Portugal's most famed wine region, Alentejo, sits Herdade do Esporão. With vines up to 40 years old, Esporão's vineyards produce exceptionally concentrated reds in the region's hot and dry summers. Their 2015 Reserva Red, which *Wine Enthusiast* ranked as one of the top 100 wines of 2018, is one of my favorite bold wines for everyday drinking. It is primarily made of the Alicante Bouschet grape, a descendant of Grenache and one of the only red grapes with red flesh. The nose is bright, brimming with violets and dark berries, and the acidic palate keeps the rich tannins balanced.



wines I've ever consumed. Ripe with chalky dark chocolate, leather and black cherries, the palate is structured to the core. It is Bodega Numanthia's signature wine, and one that has garnered acclaim in the form of multiple mid-90 point reviews. This is a wine so powerful that you'll feel like you're eating a meal. Drink by a roaring fire with a piece of dark chocolate for best results.



2010 Tolaini Picconero

2012 Numanthia

Nestled between Ribera del Duero and the Portuguese border lies Spain's most "bullish" wine region, Toro. Its wines reflect their namesake in form and power. Tinta de Toro, the local name for Tempranillo, is the region's predominant grape, and is responsible for the knock-out 2012 Numanthia. This is one of the biggest, driest

While Chianti Classico is more famously known for its darling Sangiovese grape, which produces iconic, cherry-driven reds, Bordeaux varietals such as Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon have also found a home here. Deemed super Tuscans, these wines are often much bolder than their Italian kin, inky in the glass and dark on the nose. Tolaini's Picconero is no exception. Merlot dominant with Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot blended in, this wine has all the spice and floral components of a great Italian with the robust fruit and powerful leather of a French Bordeaux. Collecting 90 or more points on each vintage from 2004 to 2012, this is a sensual stunner worth putting in the cellar — or drinking right away. ●





Andrew Bubala

Company: Groupe SEB Japan
Official title: President and Representative Director
Originally from: Indiana, USA
Length of time in Japan: 12 years

Hungry? Where do you like to go for a bite?

Shake Shack.

What do you do to stay in shape?

I run 5km on the treadmill at the gym every morning before work.

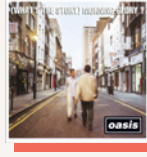
Name a favourite movie:

Raiders of the Lost Ark.

Favourite musician:

Jack Johnson.

Favourite album:
Oasis' (*What's the Story*) *Morning Glory?*



Favourite TV show: *Ike no Mizu Zenbu Nuku Daisakusen* (or *The Great Plan to Drain All the Water from Ponds*), on TV Tokyo.

Favourite book: *Lost Japan* by Alex Kerr.

What's something a lot of people don't know about you?

Mosquitos in Japan do not bite me.

Cats or dogs?

Both.

Summer or winter?

Spring.

What's your ideal weekend?

Great family time, great food and great drinks.

Where do you go for a drink after a busy week?

Ant 'n Bee in Roppongi.

"Mosquitos in Japan do not bite me."



Toru Tauchi

Company: Perfetti Van Melle Japan
Official title: Country Manager
Originally from: Nagoya, Japan

Hungry? Where do you like to go for a bite?

Manten Sushi in Nihonbashi.
Wonderful sushi, excellent value for money.

What do you do to stay in shape?

Surfing on the weekends, walking and swimming during the week.

Name a favourite movie:

The Big Short.

Favourite band:

The Grateful Dead.

Favourite album: *Grateful Dead* (Skull & Roses) by Grateful Dead.

Favourite TV show: *Curb your Enthusiasm.*

Favourite book: *Barbarians at the Gate: The Fall of RJR Nabisco* by Bryan Burrough and John Helyar.

What's something a lot of people don't know about you?

I was a varsity wrestling team member in high school.



Cats or dogs?

Dogs.

Summer or winter?

Summer.

What's your ideal weekend?

Surf, eat, shop, walk the dog and relax.

Where do you go for a drink after a busy week?

To one of a few local bars in my neighborhood with my wife.

"I was a varsity wrestling team member in high school."



**ISHAN PALIT,
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
AND MEMBER OF THE BOARD
OF MANAGEMENT**

TÜV SÜD

TÜV SÜD (www.tuvsud.com) is a trusted partner for safety, security and sustainability solutions. The 150-year old organisation, with over 24,000 employees across 1,000 locations, handles a range of testing, certification, auditing and advisory services.

“TÜV SÜD’s operations in Japan have grown significantly since our first technical inspection of eight refineries in 1968,” says Ishan Palit, COO. “Today, our aim is to partner with our customers throughout the fourth industrial revolution – to inspire trust in new technology and to enable progress by managing risks and facilitating change.” ●



A YEAR *of* APPRECIATION

For more than 60 years, Relais & Châteaux has been delighting guests around the world at our luxury hotels and restaurants with our personalities and passion. We are committed to offering unrivalled hospitality in each of our unique locations. This year is our Japanese delegation's 30th anniversary and we are proud to celebrate three decades of combining French *esprit* with Japanese *omotenashi* hospitality. As a way to commemorate this milestone, we are holding Appreciation Feasts at 13 of our Japanese restaurants and hotels between October 2018 and June 2019, with our top chefs collaborating to create exquisite dishes.

March 20

Venue: Tenku no Mori
 Contact: +81 (0)995 77 2114 /
 gajoen@relaischateaux.com
 ¥58,000 (one night, two meals)

May 8

Venue: Beniya Mukayu, Yamashiro Onsen,
 Ishikawa
 Contact: +81 (0)761 77 1340 /
 beniya@relaischateaux.com
 ¥18,000

May 15

Venue: Nishimuraya Honkan,
 Kinohara Onsen, Hyogo
 Contact: +81 (0)796 32 4895 /
 nishimuraya@relaischateaux.com
 ¥18,000

March 31

Venue: Restaurant Hôtel de Mikuni, Tokyo
 Contact: +81 (0)3 3351 3810 /
 mikuni@relaischateaux.com
 ¥35,000

May 11

Venue: Kanamean Nishitoyama, Kyoto
 Contact: +81 (0)75 211 2411 /
 kanamean@relaischateaux.com
 ¥22,000

June 14

Venue: Hikariya-Nishi, Matsumoto, Nagano
 Contact: +81 (0)263 38 0186 /
 hikariya-nishi@relaischateaux.com
 ¥20,000

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