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Network Connections

JP Takala
Nokia Networks Japan

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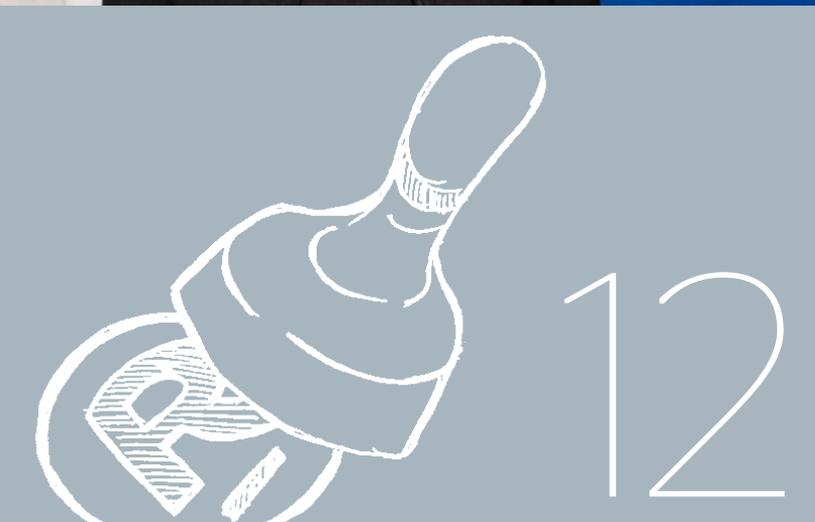
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Is it working?

By Elliot Silverberg

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Contributors

Gavin Blair finds out why Japan lags behind on foreign patent applications, page 12



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. "I had always thought of patents and intellectual property rights as something that high-tech companies sometimes fought over and developing countries mostly ignored. Hearing patent protection referred to as a crucial element in a strong economy made me reconsider its importance, and hearing that Japan is successfully streamlining its system was certainly encouraging."

Allison Bettin recently relocated to Tokyo from Hong Kong, where she received her degree in journalism and geography. She now writes freelance articles for various publications.

"London 2012 was the first Olympics I didn't get to watch on TV [due to licensing rights in Hong Kong], and after listening to Lord Deighton's speech, I felt as though I had missed out on a piece of history. Deighton is passionate about the legacy

Allison Bettin reports on a London Olympic organiser's advice for Japan, page 29



his team left behind, and I hope that will-power is reflected in Tokyo in 2020."

Tim Maughan tells us about an Osaka school where visitors can learn to cook Japanese, page 40



Tim Maughan is a Nara-based freelance business and industry journalist. He moved

to Japan in 2008, after nine years with a London magazine publisher. "Old habits die hard, except at an Osaka cooking school run by two Englishmen and their Japanese wives. Tucked away on a quiet side street, the school teaches tourists the finer points of traditional Osakan food. It's an oasis of peace and quality eats, in an ever-changing world."

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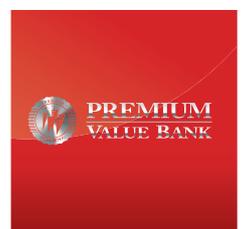
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Since January 2010, *EURObiZ Japan* has been covering the people and policies of the European Business Council (EBC) in Japan. We report on topics and issues important to the EBC's mandate, which is to "improve the trade and investment environment for European companies in Japan."

Over the years, our work has brought us into contact with many wonderful, hard-working EBC executives. Most have been generous with their time; offering quotes for articles or doing full-fledged interviews.

But, as everywhere, executives are busy and not always available to talk to us. That's a shame, because *EURObiZ Japan* needs to hear their voice.

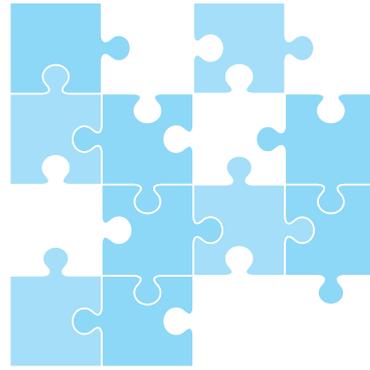
We are not a chamber magazine but a publication covering issues important to Europeans (and others) doing

business in Japan. Hearing from experts on business, economics and trade-related matters benefits all readers, and keeps the magazine fresh and interesting.

As an example, we recently convened a roundtable discussion on the future of the European Monetary Union [to be featured in an upcoming issue]. It was a lively and informative discussion, demonstrating the insight and expertise of our EBC leadership.

It was the kind of informative discussion you will not likely find anywhere else in this market.

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Thanks for reading and happy March! 

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Taxing exit

Japan takes a bite out of wealthy foreigners

Text **CHRISTOPHER S THOMAS**



In the Japanese government's attempts to revitalise the economy, political leaders have been taking great pains to attract foreign investment. Efforts have included rewriting regulations and liberalising government practices that were clogging the business environment.

At the same time, a gap in the tax law allowed rich taxpayers who left Japan to take up residence in lower-tax locations and take substantial capital gains with them, to avoid being taxed on their gains.

In an attempt to rectify this problem, the government has announced a new exit tax, to take effect on 1 July 2015. Under the new legislation, any Japanese national – and foreign long-term resident with a permanent or spouse visa – would be subject to a 20.4% capital gains tax on assets of ¥100 million or more when leaving Japan. For Japanese, this means the tax loophole is closed. For foreign nationals, this is effectively an “exit tax” imposed when they return to their home country or their next assignment overseas.

The problem is that wealthy foreigners (e.g., European spouses and taxpaying citizens) get swept up in the letter of the law along with the scoff-laws, and sometimes get taxed twice – by Japan when they leave and by their own country when they arrive home.

This is not fair, according to Hans-Peter Musahl, chairman of the EBC Tax Committee. Musahl believes the tax violates the government's efforts to attract investment, since it could discourage people from moving here. “As Europeans, we have to admit we have such laws as well,” says Musahl.

The problem is not the exit tax itself, but rather the legislation as written that could lead to premature taxation of foreign residents on profits they have

not even realised. And this, in turn, could result in highly skilled or wealthy individuals opting not to come here, in effect undermining the Abe government's efforts to revitalise the economy. The EBC, therefore, is calling for foreign nationals to be exempt from the new exit tax.

The Japanese government believes that the new tax will impact only about 100 people, Japanese and foreign. However, the EBC notes that there are more than 1 million foreign residents in Japan, among them 7,000 Europeans who hold visas in the target categories, which include holders of spouse visas and permanent residents.

“If only 1% had, or will have saved, financial assets of ¥100 million by the time of their exit from Japan, more than 1,000 people would be affected by the

taxation, often provide that where a taxpayer moves from one country to another, only the country to which the taxpayer has moved is allowed to tax the capital gains.

As Paul Hunter of the International Banking Association notes: “We are concerned that the [new law] might lead to a fragmented system, and does not take into account how the country and economy might – and should – develop.”

For example, Hunter says the new regulations apply to people in all sectors, but the financial industry will be disproportionately affected – again, undermining the government's efforts to energise the economy. “In an environment in Japan where we are encouraging people to invest in financial instruments, it seems odd to penalise people for embracing this new environment,” he adds.

The government is considering amendments to the new legislation that would exclude people with certain types of visa, such as intercompany transfers, management and business. “We think this is a good step to exclude a range of people who might get caught up by this tax law [and] who it is not intended to capture,” says

Musahl. This would include people who could contribute to the growth of Tokyo as a financial centre, as well as foreign nationals who may want to engage in further direct foreign investment in Japan. “We think this will ... discourage them from contributing to the growth of Tokyo as a financial centre and from galvanising the wider economy.” It could also, in some cases, keep people from accepting assignments in Japan, if there could be difficulties leaving with their assets intact.

“Foreign [people] should be able to go home at any time without being accused of tax avoidance,” Musahl says. “Tax law shouldn't be telling me where to spend my time.” 

“TAX LAW SHOULDN'T BE TELLING US WHERE TO SPEND OUR TIME”

Hans-Peter Musahl

new exit tax rule – not only a few foreigners among the total number of 100 Japanese and foreigners assumed by the Ministry of Finance,” Musahl says.

He is quick to point out that people who trusted in the law as written to avoid taxation in the past should not be called tax “cheats”. “If you have taxation rules not addressing an exit, and people follow these rules, then it's not cheating,” he continues. “The government needed to change the rules, and they did; but they overdid it, in our view.”

Under domestic tax law, Japan retains the right to tax capital gains when its residents depart to foreign countries, as do most countries. Tax treaties, concluded for the avoidance of double

Foreign exemptions

The government has announced modifications to the exit tax legislation:

- Foreign residents under visa category II (e.g. permanent resident, spouse visas) may apply for a category I visa (e.g. investor, intra company, etc) – and thereby avoid the exit tax – if their period of stay was prior to July 2015.
- Only those who will have lived in Japan for more than five years from July 2015 (under visa category II) will be liable for the tax.



H.E. Anne Barrington

Ambassador of Ireland to Japan

Text **MIKE DE JONG**
Photo **NATHAN BERRY**

As Ireland's first female ambassador to Japan, H.E. Anne Barrington is a strong role model for women in this country. On the theme of gender equality, Barrington recently joined a delegation of women ambassadors who met with Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. *EURObiZ Japan* spoke with Barrington about that visit, along with other issues important to Ireland-Japan relations.

Do you feel you are a leader in creating a path for other women to follow?

Well, I am the first Irish woman ambassador to Japan, so that is an honour and a milestone for Ireland. I mean, gender equality is something that every country struggles with, and it's something that you can't take for granted. So once you've reached one milestone, you have to keep advancing towards others. We have had a very good experience within the European Union, in Ireland, which has set the parameters for gender equality, and set the milestones we need to reach and the efforts you have to make. For example, when we joined the European Union, there was pay inequality in Ireland, and the EU said that was not acceptable. So we've worked to get rid of that inequality. But there are always other barriers, and I think what they're doing in Japan is really interesting in trying to "let women shine" – as Prime Minister Abe has said. I think the recognition by the prime minister that there were a significant group of female ambassadors in Japan will give a sense of hope to women in Japan and worldwide.

Can you tell us what some of your priorities will be as you assume office?

The relations between Ireland and Japan have never been closer. Last year, we had the visit of Prime Minister Abe to Dublin; and in December last year, our prime minister visited Tokyo. They agreed on a joint declaration, a comprehensive piece of work, which covers cultural, economic, commercial – and a whole range of – issues. I have a set agenda, which is wonderful; and I have the best engagement we've ever had with Japan. Really what we want to do is push those relations for our mutual benefit. We need to both trade with – and invest with – Japan. And they need to do the same. We also feel that Ireland is a great gateway to the European Union, and we're the only English-speaking member of the euro zone. We have the top companies in a range of areas located in Ireland, and we have been ranked by *Forbes* magazine as the best

place in the world to do business. So we have a lot going for us, and we think we have a lot to offer to Japan – as Japan has a lot to offer to Irish businesses.

How many Japanese companies are in Ireland, and how much trade goes back and forth?

There are 27 companies, employing about 3,000 people directly, creating about €2.7 billion worth of trade and services, so it's very significant. Japan is our 11th-largest trading partner. So, for us, Japan is very significant, indeed; and we want to build on that, because we think there's enormous potential.

One of the areas we're looking at very closely is research, in a range of areas that we're good at and have niche markets in. But we would like to have more cooperation and collaboration

“ JAPAN IS VERY SIGNIFICANT, INDEED; AND WE WANT TO BUILD ON THAT ”

with [the] Japanese because they have extra skills. If we got together, we could do very well in big data, ICT, pharmaceuticals – and all those areas we want to push forward.

You have said that Japan and Ireland have a lot more in common than they have differences. What do you mean?

I was very struck by the fact that they celebrate Halloween here. Halloween is an Irish festival. It's a very ancient Irish festival, but it strikes me that it would fit very well with the Japanese way of thinking. This idea of the souls arising and stalking the land on a particular night is very much an Irish tradition – but it's also a Japanese tradition. We have a very ancient culture in Ireland that goes back millennia. So do they in Japan. We have a very family-oriented culture in Ireland, as they do in Japan. So there are lots of similarities.

There is also a similarity in the fierce independence of the Irish and Japanese people.

That's right. That might come from the physical nature of being on an island – and being separated from others has this advantage of independence. But we've become so globally inter-dependent in Ireland. In fact, we're one of the most globalised countries in the world. We've had to learn how to adapt to globalisation, in a way.

Do you see your background as a diplomat in Africa informing your work in Japan?

I think the Japanese development and cooperation programme is celebrating its 60th anniversary, and I've been struck by the similarity in focus between the Japanese development areas and what we focus on in Ireland.

We focus on the poorest of the poor in Africa, with food security being a very big area for us. And now we're, like Japan, branching into those areas of the market, and supporting small industries and finding ways to finance them. In fact, when I was in Tanzania, we collaborated very much with the Japanese embassy there on food security issues. We have a very good

development aid programme in Ireland ... and we're very proud of that. And Japan is very proud of what it does in this area.

What would a free trade agreement between Japan and the EU – and a strategic partnership agreement – mean for Ireland?

We're very much in favour of this agreement being completed, and we hope it will be agreed [to] next year. That is the aim. We're very much in favour of anything that helps intensify and accelerate trade. We believe that this agreement – the two agreements – will enable us to do that. Japan is such an important country that if we can get this agreement through, it will be of mutual benefit because it will allow our businesses to do more business. And that's the main purpose of the programme. [e](#)



Patent problems

Examining Japan's painful patent process

Text **GAVIN BLAIR**

A well-balanced patent law that properly regulates intellectual property rights (IPRs) is of greater significance than simply fairness of reward. It is widely acknowledged to be a factor in the strength of a country's economy. Too little protection and companies will not invest in developing new technologies; too much and progress is slowed, while the risk of monopolies increases. Japan's patent law has evolved considerably over the years, but still presents challenges, particularly for overseas firms wishing to navigate its occasionally foggy waters.

Long gone are the days when Japanese firms had a global reputation for liberally "borrowing" technology and copying products; those fingers are now pointed most often in China's direction. As more original technology was created in Japan, the country inevitably began

to take IPRs more seriously. And despite recent criticism of declining innovation, seven Japanese companies appeared on the top 20 list of patent registers in the United States last year, second only to American firms. Canon and Sony came in third and fourth, respectively, sandwiched between Samsung and Microsoft, with IBM topping the rankings.

Although advances in patent protection have occurred in Japan, the danger of technology theft still exists, according to Michel Théoval, president of Group Hi Tech (GHT), a division of PMC, which represents a number of innovative European companies here.

"If you show a big Japanese company new technology as a potential customer, they naturally try to get as much information as possible," says Théoval. "And because of the *monozukuri* mentality [dedication to perfection in manufacturing], they want to make as much of it as they can themselves.

"They will try and isolate the component they can't replicate and reduce the scope of what they have to acquire the patent for," suggests Théoval, who says that this can occur even when it would be cheaper to license the technology.

When Japanese firms are involved in patent infringement disputes, they are often willing to pay up in an out-of-court settlement, according to Théoval. Which is just as well, because suing a company in Japan can be "a very interesting experience," he adds, in part due to the unpredictability of judges' interpretation of the law.

Some of this unpredictability stems from the fact that Japanese patent law was originally based on its German counterpart, but was imported minus its underlying guiding principles, suggests Felix Einsel, managing partner at Sonderhoff & Einsel Law and Patent Office in Tokyo.

"People laugh when I say this, but

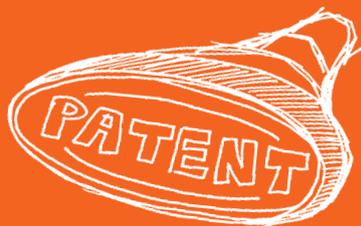


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特許



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“I’VE BEEN STUDYING
JAPANESE PATENT LAW FOR
MORE THAN **20 YEARS**, AND I
STILL DON’T UNDERSTAND IT”

Felix Einsel



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I’ve been studying Japanese patent law for more than 20 years, and I still don’t understand it,” says Einsel, “because, for me, it doesn’t make any sense.

“In other countries, the judges look at the theories of law professors and implement those theories in their conclusions. But Japanese judges wouldn’t do that, because they say that the professors are people who couldn’t pass the bar exams and, therefore, aren’t as good as us,” continues Einsel.

Following a landmark patent decision and some well-intentioned, though misguided, reforms from the Junichiro Koizumi administration during the 2000s, the number of patent infringement cases in Japan dropped dramatically, explains Einsel.

Even with some recent improvements to the system, Japan sees only around 150 cases a year, against 330,000 patent applications; while in Germany there are around 1,400 cases against

far fewer applications. The famously non-litigious nature of Japanese culture just doesn’t explain away all of this; part of the patent system remains dysfunctional.

“They need to do more on the enforcement side – one way to do that would be to award higher damages and issue faster injunctions,” suggests Einsel.

Japanese patent examiners also tend to issue patents on a narrower scope than their European counterparts, meaning that multiple applications are sometimes needed for new technologies, thereby pushing up costs.

“The examinations for patents are extremely strict and are scrutinized very carefully on concepts such as creativity or whether value is added,” says Laurent Dubois, partner at TMI Associates in Tokyo. “Japanese companies may be advantaged because they know the rules better, but we [all] have to play the game.”

The system is being reformed, nevertheless, and most observers say it is moving in the right direction.

“These days, the process has been speeded up; and they’ve done a good job on that. A lot of improvements have been made,” says Dubois.

Einsel agrees, but also suggests that Japan is still perceived as problematic in some quarters.

“The image that many Western companies have is that you will get a patent everywhere in the world but Japan – it’s costly and you can’t enforce it. This isn’t true,” says Einsel, who notes that the rate of successful patent applications jumped from about 50%, until 2008, to about 70% currently.

And the message does appear to be gradually getting through. Even as the total number of patent applications in Japan fell in 2013 by more than 14,000 to 328,436, the total from overseas rose by around a thousand to 56,705. 

Network ————— ————— Connections

*JP Takala, President,
Nokia Networks Japan*



The history of Finnish tech giant Nokia has been one of constant reinvention. From its origins as a single small paper mill in 1865 in Tammerkoski, Finland, through growth into a powerful consumer products vendor with a globally recognised brand, the company's latest incarnation is as a mobile broadband specialist, supplying hardware, software and services to telecommunications network providers worldwide.

Text **CHRISTOPHER S THOMAS**
Photos **BENJAMIN PARKS**

Nokia is now reinventing itself once again, having offloaded its hardware business to Microsoft in 2011 to concentrate on networks, digital mapping and R&D in mobile technology. It's a bid to capitalise on the current boom in mobile devices, as well as the coming revolution in the form of the "Internet of Things" (IoT).

JP Takala, President, Nokia Networks Japan, outlines the company's strategy to seize opportunities opening up in

this new data-drenched world, which are sure to be lucrative.

Mobile networks will be the centre of the revolution. "We expect to have 5 billion voice connections by 2020. But by 2025, we expect to have 50 billion or more connections between things – cars, appliances, machinery, industrial equipment and many other devices," he says.

"For example, soon we expect to see driverless cars, and these will take advantage of Nokia's strengths

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– mobile networks, digital mapping and cutting-edge technology. These cars will contain thousands of sensors to detect where the car is, as well as the environment around it, and the cars will be built around them.

“We are the mobile broadband leader, globally and in Japan; we are one of the top three vendors in radio [i.e., wireless connections]. Now we are focusing on LTE [Long-Term Evolution, the fourth-generation high-speed wireless technology]; we are the number one foreign TD-LTE provider in China. The key to success in Japan, as elsewhere, is how you optimise your networks, so that the mobile user gets a nice clear signal and smooth transitions, and the signals are not blocked by buildings, mountains or whatever.”

It also depends on having the right services to bring these networks to market: “Your level of system implementation – that is, how well you connect

all of these solutions together – is another key to acceptance by customers,” Takala adds.

Digital mapping will be crucial when things start talking to each other, and Nokia is already well placed as a leader in this field. With its HERE system, which combines the company’s mapping and location assets, Nokia powers about 80% of car navigation systems in North America and Europe. “It’s already big, and it will be huge in the future,” notes Takala.

He also has high hopes for Nokia Technologies, the third pillar in the company’s new edifice. The segment will conduct R&D activities and the firm will generate revenue by expanding Nokia’s technology, licensing programmes and developing new solutions to help others benefit from the innovation.

“We talk about cloud-connected telecom networks – these will be software-defined networks – and judging by recent history, Japan is definitely going to be in the first wave. So our

concern is how we can support our customers here – to make sure that Nokia can provide them on-time services and on-time technologies, not just to operate complex networks, but also to provide the analytics. These are important, but most important is how we can bring these analytics to the operators to support their efforts, to generate more revenue from the networks.”

This is one reason Japan is so important. “We have to stay on top of changes in the industry – the renewal cycles are coming faster and faster, and Japan is where the change is happening fastest,” Takala points out.

Nokia’s acquisition earlier this year of part of the wireless network business of Panasonic System Networks was a strategic move that strengthened Nokia Japan’s presence in this market. “We’ve worked with them before as partners, and now they are bringing us the competence in the Japan market, both in the business and in the understanding of technology and R&D power.”

There is another reason why Japan is such a crucial market – it keeps you on your toes. “Customers here are very

“WE ARE THE **MOBILE BROADBAND LEADER**, GLOBALLY AND IN JAPAN”

demanding, but they appreciate and understand quality,” he says.

Takala came to Japan four and a half years ago to head Nokia’s R&D operations; he took the top job in October 2012. “Honestly, since I’ve been here, my customers have changed me,” he says. “Everything here is quality-oriented, from the physical products to services, to the way we manage our company.”

This plays to Nokia’s key strength, he says. “Our aim is always to be the quality leader. In whatever we do – in quality, we aim to be the best.” 



Sven Stein

Volkswagen destiny

Text **MIKE DE JONG**

Photo **GENEVIEVE SAWTELLE**

When a person comes from the home of one of Germany's most iconic automobiles – a town with the world's largest automobile factory – their destiny is mostly set. Such was the case for Sven Stein, representative director and executive vice-president of Volkswagen Group Japan (VW).

"I was born and raised in Wolfsburg, which is the Volkswagen headquarters," says Stein, who is a member of the EBC Automobile Committee. "All of my family is working at Volkswagen."

But he didn't start off there. First, Stein wanted to see the world.

"[To begin at VW] would have been too easy for me," he says. "I wanted to see something new and different [from] the small city of Wolfsburg. So I chose a short detour which delivered quite well on my career."

Stein's detour included stops at an international trading house in Osaka and an intellectual property firm in Japan that licensed German brands. He also spent time in management consulting before returning to the VW family, first as a key account manager and later the managing director of a Volkswagen-related affiliate in the automotive IT sector.

"Born and raised and finally returned, could be the case," says Stein, of his ultimate career path. It would naturally lead to Japan, too, given the focus of

Stein's university studies.

"My fellow students were all looking at foreign exchange internships in English, French or Spanish-speaking countries," he says of his days at Germany's University of Mannheim. "So I thought, why not go for Asia?"

"I was looking, first of all, at China. I started some language courses in Chinese. But fairly quickly, I found that basically, Chinese is something that I would never be able to learn at a sufficient level. So I looked a little bit further east to Japan."

From there on, Stein focused his international management studies on Japanese companies. His university thesis even pointed towards Japan (he spent six months here working on it) and, ultimately, the auto industry.

"It was a proposal for a restructuring of the sales approach for shock absorbers and bumpers into the Japanese aftermarket environment," Stein recalls. "I liked it very much because it brought me close to the consulting area."

Do you like natto?

Time spent working in Japan:

11.5 years, or approximately 65% of my career.

Career regret (if any): I should have started learning the language with more determination (but it is not too late ...).

Favourite saying: In German, "In der Ruhe liegt die Kraft." Roughly translated into: "steady wins the race."

Favourite book: *Japan Business*, for raising and solidifying my interest and decision to have a career over here.

Cannot live without: Miso soup, my family and friends.

Lesson learned in Japan: Active listening, patience and perseverance.

Secret of success in business: Trust and empowerment of co-workers, the right mix of multicultural relationship management.

Favourite place to dine out: Resort Sikan (in Toyohashi). A very nice *teppanyaki* place.

Do you like natto? I wouldn't order voluntarily.



Think Blue.

“ALL OF MY
FAMILY IS
WORKING AT
VOLKSWAGEN”

The similarities between Japanese business culture and his own were another attraction to this country.

“Germans, as well as Japanese, are known – or stereotyped – as being very disciplined; very much following rules, regulations, guidelines,” he says. “I think they are very similar.”

One rule that Stein has trouble following, though, is a highway speed limit. That’s to be expected, given that there are no such restrictions on German autobahns.

“Germany is one of the last places where, to a certain extent, you have no speed limits,” he says. “It’s quite a limitation over here in Japan being compliant with the local traffic rules on the highway. I try my best to be in line,” he laughs, “but from time to time it’s difficult.”

These days, while running the operations of the largest foreign auto importer (67,438 vehicles in 2014, according to the Japan Automobile Importers Association), Stein still finds time for two sporting passions: skiing and soccer. He regularly flies back to hit the slopes in Austria, and spends weekends watching his sons on the pitch.

“I usually go every weekend, if I have the time, with my sons to the soccer grounds,” he says. “They’re playing on the German School soccer team, and they’re members of the Kanagawa League. It takes some time to travel to all these remote areas in Kanagawa [prefecture], but I really enjoy seeing them play.

“I, myself, played soccer and, even today, play soccer from time to time at

the German school with other fathers ... almost every Sunday.”

As for his work with Volkswagen, Stein sees himself as his team’s main manager and motivator.

“You have to motivate, you have to empower, you have to educate”, he says, “and you have to drive and direct people into the key working environment, so that you can generate the most efficient and the best results for the company and the group.

“You can’t do this all by yourself. You need a good team in place. If you feel that one or another team member needs support – just like in soccer – you need to support them.

“If you see that your offense is not scoring the goals, take the ball and score by yourself,” he concludes. 



Is it working?

Text **ELLIOT SILVERBERG**

Yuki Wachi and her husband cannot speak English, but they send their five-year-old daughter Tamami to a preschool where

English is the primary language of instruction. Once Tamami finishes kindergarten and enters the Japanese public school system, Wachi and her husband will commit an additional ¥100,000 per month to after school English lessons for their daughter.

"The ability to communicate in English is more important these days," says Wachi. "We don't want our daughter to miss out on her future just because she can't speak English."

The Wachis' focus on English reflects Japan's growing concern about its population's ability – or lack thereof

– to communicate in a language widely regarded as the international business world's lingua franca. The Shinzo Abe government announced in 2013 a major educational reform programme aimed at improving the English proficiency of Japanese students by 2020, just in time for the Tokyo Olympics. Japanese companies – such as Nissan, Fast Retailing (Uniqlo) and Rakuten – are investing millions to teach their employees English – and making proficiency a term of employment. International schools, such as Tamami's preschool, are also in high demand by parents who believe that learning English is the key to ensuring their children are successful in the global economy.

"Without English, it's very difficult to compete on a global level," said Hiroshi Mikitani, co-founder and CEO of Rakuten,

during a press conference at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan in 2012. Mikitani, who coined the term "Englishisation" when he ordered his firm to adopt English as its company language, added, "Lack of English communication skills really prevented us [Japan] from being a global leader, so we really need to wake up and open our eyes."

It is not for lack of trying that even white-collar workers in Japan struggle with English. The language has preoccupied Japan almost ever since it first opened its doors to the United States a century and a half ago.

Shigeki Takeo, dean of Meiji Gakuin University's Faculty of International Studies, traces Japan's difficulty with English to after the Meiji Restoration of the late-19th century, when the Japanese were able to adopt Western

Need for developing language skills

“Made in Japan’ has always been synonymous with excellence – and still is,” says Geoff Rupp, Founder & Chairman of Language Resources Ltd. “But corporate Japan faces increasing pressure from neighbouring nations, whose English skills put companies here at a disadvantage when presenting products and services, or negotiating with foreign partners. So the need has never been greater for decision-makers to reassess their understanding of, attitudes to, and need for improved communication skills through professional language training.”



culture while maintaining their native language. Because the Japanese no longer need an adequate command of English to appreciate a Hollywood film or purchase a McDonald’s burger – effectively domesticating Western culture – they “cannot easily acquire the motivation to learn English,” says Takeo.

As a result, Japanese students tend to score comparatively low on English-language tests. According to an official summary of scores on TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) in 2009, out of 30 Asian countries Japan (67) ranked second from the bottom in mean score, behind China (76), North Korea (75) and South Korea (81).

Even as Japan’s quarter-century economic recession has hastened a tide of xenophobic nationalism – spurred by fears that neighbouring rivals, China and South Korea, are surpassing it – Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has tried three times in the past 15 years to revise its English-language curriculum for the elementary through high school levels.

MEXT’s most recent attempt centres on three fundamental changes to the existing curriculum, said Takashi Katsuragi, who began working on the government’s education reform program in 2014.

First, elementary school students will be introduced to English earlier, in the third grade instead of the fifth grade. Second, students from the fifth grade onward will be subjected to frequent evaluations based on a combination of objective and subjective criteria, such as scores on EIKEN (Test in Practical

English Proficiency) and GTEC (Global Test of English Communication), as well as teacher assessments of students. And third, middle and high school students will be expected to practice using English in “simple information exchanges” and “high-level linguistic activities [presentations, debates, negotiations]” designed for them to achieve

Rakuten may be the most well-known example. But Nissan, owing to its 15-year alliance with the French car manufacturer Renault, has long demanded of its senior employees a fixed level of English proficiency, too.

“We want to continue raising the average TOEIC [Test of English for International Communication] score

of our Japanese employees from 600 – where it is now – to 700, 750, and finally 800, which we feel is a good enough score to work in Nissan’s global business,” says Hirokazu Takebata, a manager in the automobile giant’s human resources division. To this end, Nissan offers employees who are underperforming on TOEIC a variety of English-language

“ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS TO **STUDY ENGLISH** IS TO EXPLAIN AND EXCHANGE IDEAS”

Takashi Katsuragi

fluency by the time of graduation.

The learning experience, often a tedious process, must be interactive and enjoyable for any subject – whether mathematics, science, history or English – to be comprehensible, according to Saburo Kagei, headmaster of St. Mary’s International School in Tokyo.

“Learning is a whole lot easier when it’s fun,” says Kagei. “Many teachers will call it the hook, and you’ve got to have a hook if you want to lure in your students.”

Japan’s attempts to improve its people’s understanding of English extend far beyond the country’s public sector; the private sector is also making efforts, albeit with mixed results.



training courses and specialised seminars on cultural diversity.

MEXT, like Nissan, has made the promotion of cultural exchange a priority in its efforts to prevent Japan from lagging behind in today’s globalised world.

“One of the main reasons to study English is to explain and exchange ideas,” adds Katsuragi. “If Japanese people can speak English more fluently, they will have more opportunities for work abroad.”

Takebata is of the same mind.

“Before entering Nissan, Japanese workers should have a lot of cross-cultural experience using English,” he says. “Cross-cultural – or cross-company – business will be expanding in the future so ... our employees will need to be comfortable communicating with people from other parts of the world.” 

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JEFF CRAIG, M.Ed.

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Geoff’s interests lie in psycholinguistics, teaching methodology, language testing. He also has a special interest in English for medical professionals



CRAIG JENNINGS

President

B.A. (Asian Studies)

Cambridge CELTA,

Cambridge DELTA

Cambridge CELTA Teacher Trainer

—British-Australian

Craig’s interests lie in language consulting, course design and evaluation, teacher training and development



BRIAN RODGER

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(株) ランゲージ・リソースズ

LANGUAGE RESOURCES

Waste is power

Kinsei Sangyo turns garbage into energy

Text **ALLISON BETTIN**



One man's junk is another man's treasure."

It's an old yarn, but it certainly applies to Keiichi Kaneko, whose company turns garbage into electricity. "Waste is energy," says Kaneko, general manager of Kinsei Sangyo, a Gunma-based gasification firm.

"Making the most of it will decrease our use of fossil fuels and reduce air pollution."

Gasification, perhaps not as well known as other green technologies, has proven to be a highly effective renewable energy source since the early 1800s. The process is based on the basic principles of incineration: when a solid substance burns, it turns into gas which, mixed with air, combusts. And when gas is burned, it produces electricity. Kinsei's dry distillation gasification system separates gas production from combustion. "Separating the process," says Kaneko, "enables better control over energy recovery. Our technology extracts almost 100% of energy from waste."

Here's how the whole process works: hospitals and fac-

“OUR TECHNOLOGY
EXTRACTS **ALMOST**
100% OF ENERGY
FROM WASTE”

ories contact Kinsei Sangyo to properly dispose of their waste. This waste, which can range from industrial and medical waste to rubber and kitchen garbage, is put through Kinsei's unique "batch processing" system. Comprised of two gasifiers linked to a combustion furnace, this process allows continuous production of electricity, without the intrusion of air for greater energy control. The ash residue is clean enough to be used in cement and paving projects. Kaneko says the system is "safe, economical, and excellent for the environment".

He is not alone in his enthusiasm for his company's work. In 2011, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the government of Japan, selected Kinsei

Sangyo as one of six firms to showcase at the Tokyo Green Industry Conference. Kinsei, in the category of creation

of green industries, has numerous technology advantages cited by UNIDO including "controlled gasification, clean and safe, economic benefits, construction permits already available in many countries, almost no auxiliary fuel required, recycling of rare metals, high efficiency of heat recovery and automated operation."

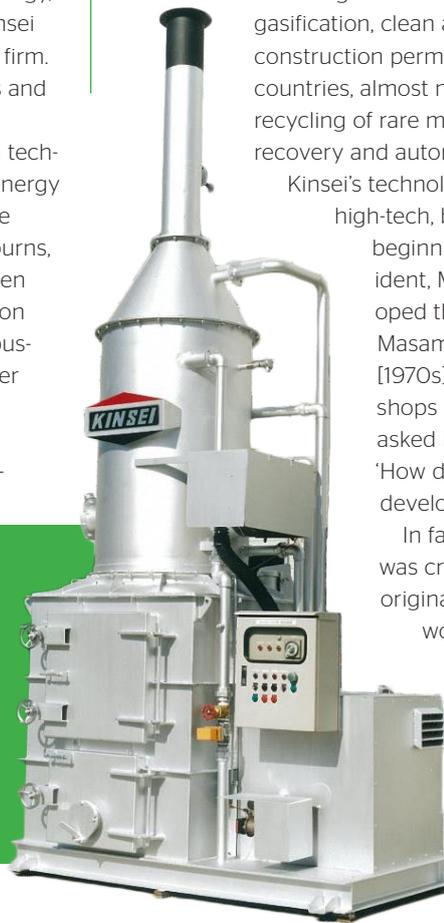
Kinsei's technology might be modern and high-tech, but it has surprisingly humble beginnings "[Our] company president, Masamoto Kaneko, developed the technology," says Kaneko, Masamoto's son-in-law. "During the [1970s] energy crisis in Japan, local shops couldn't get heavy oil and asked him for help. The question, 'How do things burn?' led him to develop this technology."

In fact, all of what Kinsei does was created in-house, and the firm's originality has earned it 70 patents worldwide. Kinsei has customers across the globe, too, and hopes to do business in India, China, South Korea, Thailand, and the United States. It also hopes to expand into South America and Europe in the future. Kinsei is working with Japanese local governments and

academia to develop gasification systems to process animal waste. Though not the most glamorous of endeavours, properly disposing of animal waste will reduce water and air pollution.

The dire need to address key global issues such as diminishing landmass, increasing waste, and rising pollution will certainly see a greater demand for gasification technology.

According to Kaneko, in addition to the waste-to-energy advantage, the combination of income from waste disposal and low running costs gives gasification the economic advantage in green technologies. 





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Marko Saarelainen

President, Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Japan

www.fcc.or.jp

Text **MIKE DE JONG**

Japan-Finland trade relations date back to the early 1920s, when Japanese silk and pottery made their way to Finland. Finnish industrial products and paper appeared in Japan in the 1930s. Later, the Finnish Business Council was founded, paving the way for the establishment of the Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Japan (FCCJ) in 1998. Marko Saarelainen is the current president.

Can you tell us about two or three Finnish companies that have benefited from your chamber's activities?

The chamber provides networking opportunities, support and a wide range of advisory services for companies, assisting them in trade policy issues through the EBC and our embassy.

So, in a sense, I believe that all Finnish companies have benefited from the FCCJ, in one way or another, although I would be a bit hesitant to name anyone specific. After all, the success of a company in this market is mainly up to their own efforts and activities.

What areas do you feel Finnish companies lead in Japan and worldwide?

Traditionally, the forest sector [which my company, Honka, represents] has been a dominant force worldwide. Although its importance globally has shrunk, it still makes up for more than 40% of our exports to Japan. I believe it will remain so even in years to come.

If we look globally, the role of the technology sector has become very important. Nokia's role, or at least visibility, has diminished somewhat since it left the mobile phone handset business [sold to Microsoft last year]. However, the firm is still a major player in the telecommunications industry through its network business, including here in Japan. More than 50 million Japanese



I BELIEVE THAT
ALL FINNISH
COMPANIES
HAVE
BENEFITED
FROM THE FCCJ

use mobile phones through Nokia network equipment.

Our technology sector also has several other important players – in lifts, diesel engines and other specialised machinery [e.g., for the paper industry]. These also have a substantial foothold on the Japanese market, although they're not often visible "on the street".

For example, a large number of lifts in Japan [and in many other Asian countries] run with Finnish equipment. But on the lift it reads "Toshiba", as the Finnish Kone – one of the leading makers in

the world – has a strategic alliance and cross-ownership with Toshiba.

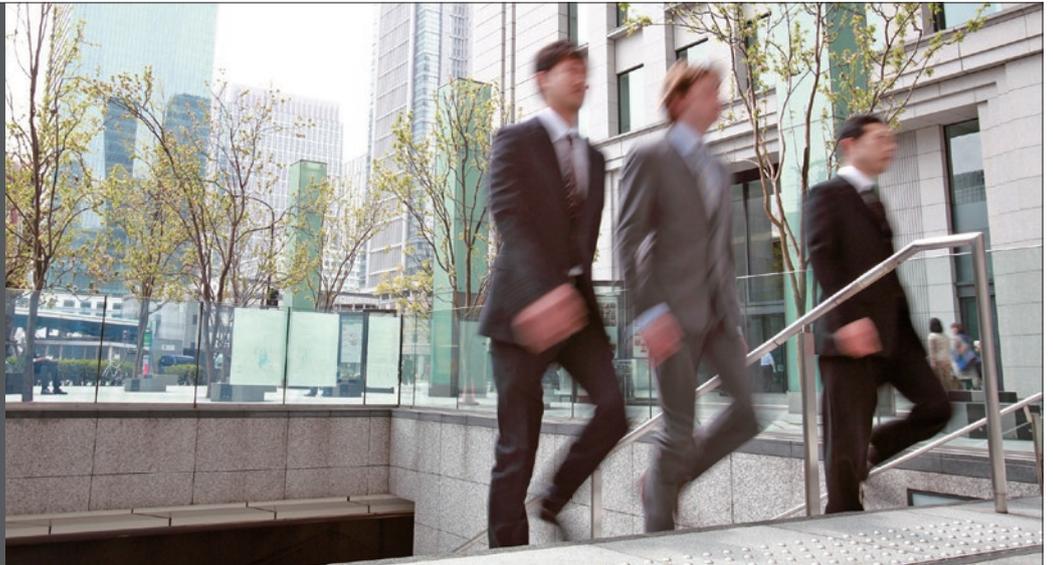
Finland generally ranks near the top of global gender equality surveys. Is there anything that Japan can learn from the Finnish model?

Prime Minister Abe's 'Womenomics' still has a long way to go, although I think he has the right agenda, in particular the target of "having no less than 30% of leadership positions in all areas of society filled by women by 2020". In Finland, women now make up about 42% of the members of parliament; in Japan, the ratio is only about 8% in the Lower House. The Abe cabinet has only four female ministers [out of 19], while the Finnish cabinet has 10 women and only 9 men.

In the private sector, the difference is even more significant. In Finland, 20% of the board members of major corporations are female; in Japan, just 1.2%. I think that a major factor in this – along with attitudes – is childcare. In Finland, all parents have easy and inexpensive access to childcare facilities. Finland is already involved in providing the Japanese with some examples of how this can be done.

Do Finnish firms still consider Japan the top in Asian markets, or are they now looking more to China and other centres of trade?

I believe that the focus in Asia for Finnish companies has somewhat shifted during the last years. China took most of the attention 10-15 years ago; but many companies have found that China is not that easy, and there are uncertainties about future developments in the Chinese market. Therefore, there has been a rebound of interest in Japan, as well as new interest in other Asian markets. 



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Board of the Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce

European stock markets and Greece

An awkward peace



Now that Greece and the Eurogroup

finance ministers have struck a deal to extend the country's bailout terms, surely that removes the 'Grexit' risk? Not so fast.

The IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the ECB have criticised the Greek proposals for economic reform as too vague and unlikely to be enacted. By the end of the four-month bailout extension in June, which will see €7 billion lent out to the Greek government, we will see if the Eurogroup, or the IMF and the ECB are right.

The problem for Greece is that the budget surpluses demanded in return for the bailout funds could exacerbate social problems.

To put the problem into perspective, the government debt mountain has grown to become the equivalent of 175% of Greece's GDP. This debt is predominantly owned by the ECB, the euro zone bailout funds and the IMF.

The risk for those invested in European stock markets lies in an ongoing hardball approach that could be taken again by both the Greek government and the euro zone authorities in future negotiations.

Let's look at the two main risks and offer – from the point of view of the investor in European stock markets – the ideal outcomes.

The first risk is that the Greek government eventually persuades the Eurogroup at the next crisis (possibly in June) that the problem is not one of liquidity but of insolvency. Greece cannot repay its debts, but it – and its partners – want the country to stay in the euro. In this scenario, the Greeks would successfully challenge the euro zone authorities on the policies of austerity and debt repayment.

While the Greek negotiators will be lauded at home, this could quickly

imperil the future of the euro. And it will, once again, encourage populist political parties elsewhere to challenge similar bailout agreements – for example, pushing voters in Spain to support the anti-austerity populist party Podemos in this November's elections.

Throughout the euro zone, fiscal discipline will be put at risk. Governments of larger economies will be encouraged to view agreed to budget deficit limits with Brussels as irrelevant – and that breaking them is pain-free.

“
THROUGHOUT
THE EURO ZONE,
FISCAL
DISCIPLINE WILL
BE PUT AT RISK
”

A fiscal free-for-all would be a retrograde step for the euro project, for which closer fiscal union is a key objective. Peripheral euro zone government-bond yields will fall in price – and yields rise – as investors price-in the increased risk of the single euro currency breaking up.

Higher bond yields will translate into higher borrowing costs in those countries, and lead to slower economic growth and weaker corporate earnings. Peripheral stock market investors will wither.

The second risk is that euro zone authorities, mindful of giving

encouragement to radical political parties elsewhere, force Greece out of the euro.

This would certainly deter Spanish voters from electing a Podemos-led government. However, an important line will have been crossed.

By making it clear that the euro has an exit door, investors in peripheral euro zone government bonds will demand higher yields to compensate for the risk of potential exit and devaluation.

Stock markets will fall as local borrowing costs rise in line with higher government bond yields, in a similar scenario to what will happen on fears of a general breakup of the euro outlined above.

Ultimately, a balance needs to be reached that keeps Greece in the euro without giving succour to radical political parties elsewhere.

I think that after numerous scares, the Greek government will be given further concessions. Perhaps, it will see a real reduction in the outstanding stock of debt, which should be feasible, since it is mostly owned by official bodies.

This will help ease austerity, since less interest on debt means more tax revenue can be used to spend on social projects.

But there would be no ground given on structural economic reform.

This means the Greek government will have to continue to tackle not only tax collection problems, but also the problem of hugely inefficient state industries and services – which will mean taking on many of its own supporters. ☹

TOM ELLIOTT
is an international investment strategist with the deVere Group in London.



Specialist Profile

Matthew Nicholls

by Miyuki Seguchi,
Senior PR & Communications Executive



Creating a new team is seen as a positive for Robert Walters Japan, because it only happens when the firm sees a growing demand in a particular field, or when the firm thinks one of the consultants deserves more responsibility for a consistently high level of performance. The newly formed IT Contract Commerce team is one of the most recent examples of this.

Matthew Nicholls, Director of the Contract division, explains: “We just wanted to respond to what seems to be a really buoyant market. There’s a very strong demand for IT contract positions, such as SAP implementation specialists and IT helpdesk support in the medical sector, especially amongst pharmaceutical companies.”

Ben Mallinson is the manager whom Nicholls chose for the newly formed IT Contract Commerce team, saying it was a reward for Ben’s hard work and consistent high achievement. “Ben has demonstrated a consistent ability to forge long-lasting relationships with key clients,” adds Nicholls. “Not only is he one of the top-performing consultants in the business, but he also possesses all the natural leadership skills that we look for on the management team.”

The Contract division helps companies in almost all industries, with positions

ranging from IT specialists to HR administrator jobs, accountants and business-support roles.

“The biggest area we have is in junior HR positions; and, among them, internal recruiters are really popular,” points out Nicholls, adding that the demand for such positions is on the rise, since companies are trying to expand the size of their HR

division for further growth. Also, IT-related roles are highly sought-after, partly because IT companies such as gaming firms are keen to increase headcount for web developers and programmers, he adds.

Having experienced more than a decade in the recruitment field, Nicholls — a native of the United Kingdom — says he loves his current job at Robert Walters Japan. “The Japanese market is becoming more like the US or the UK market, with an increasing number of people taking a *haken*, or contract job,” observes Nicholls. “Contractors are almost seen as the same as permanent employees. The stigma that used to exist around *haken* is rapidly disappearing, with people embracing a more flexible lifestyle. Companies also like the flexibility around hiring specialist workers to help them with fixed-term projects.

“More and more candidates are open to consider *haken* jobs because it’s a much easier way to get into a great company,” he continues. “If you do a good job, the position can be converted into a permanent job.”

Asked about what is the strength of his team, Nicholls explains: “The Contract division of Robert Walters is heavily specialised, with a wider coverage than any other bilingual-specialist recruiter in Japan, so we’re the best in the market.”

“Helps
companies
in almost all
industries”

Olympic fever

London 2012 organiser Lord Paul Deighton at Shangri-la Hotel, Tokyo, 17 February, 2015

Text and photo **ALLISON BETTIN**

“Delivering the Games is a journey,” says Lord Paul Deighton, chief organiser of the 2012 London Olympics. “Frankly, the biggest need you’ve got is to hire a great group of people and to motivate them,” he added, at an event sponsored by the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ).

“You start out as the leader doing most things yourself, and you end up the commander of a massive army – hiring people who are able to go on that journey with you ... is really tough.”

With Tokyo’s 2020 Games drawing closer, the BCCJ invited Lord Deighton to share his expertise and advice for hosting a successful Games. For London 2012, Deighton says putting together a diverse organisation was key to delivering a solid event.

“Diversity was incredibly important to us,” he pointed out. “We knew we wanted to make it everybody’s Games, so our organisation needed to look like London (and) the UK.”

Tokyo clearly does not have the same ethnic diversity, but there is something Japan does have in the way of diversity: educated women. Speaking in support of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s push for Womenomics, Deighton said he couldn’t “think of a better opportunity to do that than through the Olympic Games ... making sure that women are just right through the organisation.”

Along with getting more women involved, Deighton also stressed the importance of including young people and the disabled in the decision-making process – things he and his organisation did right from the start in London.

Then there is a city’s infrastructure

– making roads, transport, government and security up to world standards. Deighton recalled discussions with the London civic government about regenerating the city’s east end. Ultimately, he said an Olympic event is tied to the heartbeat of a city, and it is imperative that an infrastructure exists to make the Games go as smoothly as possible – so that the “flavour” of a city can shine through.



“The Olympic games actually have magic dust,” Deighton added. “And if you’re on the organising committee, that is your dust to sprinkle and to share, and it’s extraordinarily powerful. You don’t have to reinvent the Games; you’ve already got something which will get you everything you need. You just need to do really well with what you’ve got – with Tokyo flavour.”

Lord Deighton told the BCCJ audience that the Tokyo 1964 Games were the first Olympics that he remembered as a boy. It is memories from that event that molded his philosophy on how London should host the Games nearly half a century later.

“When we were planning London 2012,” he recalled, “I was thinking, what are people going to remember about us in 50 years?”

As for London’s legacy, Deighton is especially proud of the epic torch relay, which spanned the entire UK over two months. “Quite often the challenge with the Olympic Games is that it’s very city-centric,” he said. “But you want to make sure the rest of the country joins in. The torch relay does that. We sent some of the most beautiful photos of our country all over the world.”

These photos must have had an effect on holidaymakers because Deighton notes that since the Olympics, London tourism is at an all-time high.

He concluded his talk by saying that an integral part of an Olympic legacy is the support received from the greater population.

“Ultimately, you have to have the whole country behind you,” through projects like Olympic

education in schools and promoting volunteerism in various communities.

“If you can get everybody believing it’s going to be great and everybody wanting it to be great, it really is extraordinary what you can accomplish,” he concluded.

“And I have absolutely no doubt that Tokyo will put on a spectacular Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020.” 

“SOME PEOPLE IN THE [HEALTH] MINISTRY **HAVE STARTED** TO UNDERSTAND THAT MEDICAL DIAGNOSTICS CAN BE A MAJOR TOOL”

Medical Diagnostics//

Saving lives and reducing costs

Text **GEOFF BOTTING**

It's no secret that Japan's healthcare system faces a future of challenges. An ageing population, combined with a shrinking number of working-aged people, is creating a growing number of patients needing care – with fewer people around to fund the system.

Japan's health administrators are busy working on ways of dealing with the strain. One approach is the increased use of medical diagnostic products. The idea is to boost prevention and early detection. Regular and sophisticated testing can pinpoint diseases at an early stage, before they become full-blown. The result is reduced costs to the system, not to mention a lightened ordeal for the patient.

Japan's medical authorities are starting to recognise the value of this approach, albeit slowly, according to Shuichi Hayashi, chairman of the EBC Medical Diagnostics Committee.

"It can be difficult to grasp this situation, but some people in the [health]

Medical Diagnostics Key advocacy points

→ **Access to IVDs** – The government should incorporate in vitro diagnostics in an expedited review programme already in use for medical devices.

→ **Reimbursement system** – Updated and new products should be reimbursed to fully reflect their clinical value.

ministry have started to understand that medical diagnostics can be a major tool with a lot of value for reducing total medical expenditure," he says.

The committee, in concert with several other industry associations, has been urging the ministry to streamline and speed up the regulatory processes, so that the latest and most effective in vitro diagnostic (IVD) products can

more easily enter the Japanese market.

A key issue is approval periods: the time from when product makers apply for approval to when it is granted.

The manufacturers have complained that the periods in Japan are unnecessarily long. "In the pharma and medical device fields, the situation has improved, but I'd say that for medical diagnostics it's the same as before," says Hayashi.

Still, the committee has reason for guarded optimism. Last year, it was part of an effort to get an agreement to make efforts to shorten the approval periods from the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency – an independent administrative body that works with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) to ensure safety and quality in the industry.

The agency drew up an agenda with a set of action items. "But, unfortunately, the implementation is slow, as happens in Japan," points out the committee chairman.

One issue concerns the hiring of



more reviewers, as labour shortages in labs have been blamed in the past for delaying the approval process. Although Hayashi has yet to see any staff increases, he says recruiting may start in April, when Japan's fiscal year begins, he says. "But it will take time to train them."

Hayashi believes that part of the overall problem can be explained by the esoteric nature of his industry. Medical diagnostic-related issues don't get the level of attention that pharma or medical devices do, from either the public or healthcare officials. He believes many people simply don't fully appreciate the potential of the methods and technologies available.

"Some older people, lab technicians or people in charge of medical diagnostics at hospitals may be interested in working [as reviewers] in such a field," he says.

"MHLW people aren't very familiar with medical diagnostics. In addition, every two years they are reassigned to different divisions."

Awareness-raising is especially important for a new field called "companion diagnostics". The revolutionary approach enables personalised treatment for patients. "Instead of providing the same treatment and medicine to all patients [suffering from the same disease], there is diagnosis beforehand to find out [which is] the best therapy or medicine for each individual patient," Hayashi explains.

The committee and its partner associations are urging Japan to set up a framework to pave the way for full implementation.

Linked to the approval issue are reimbursements. Industry officials want Japan's healthcare system to pay fees that truly reflect the clinical value of upgraded, new and innovative products. Japan's authorities have maintained a cost-containment policy, as a way of keeping a lid on expenses that are expected to spiral ever higher in the coming years.

But industry officials argue that the latest products are in line with

that goal, since over the long run they improve efficiency and enhance preventative care. Failing to offer reimbursements that recognise the added value, they stress, will discourage manufacturers from bringing their best offerings to the Japanese market in the future.

"This isn't an issue only in Japan," says Hayashi, referring to companion diagnostics. For the US Federal Drug Administration Agency and Europe, the discussions are also still under way."

In Japan, all the approvals and reimbursement costs are handled by the MHLW. In the United States, by contrast, the costs of advanced treatment are often out-of-pocket expenses covered by the patient.

"But in Japan, approval and reimbursement are always linked," adds Hayashi.

That means the authorities still need to clear the bureaucratic bottlenecks and look beyond the short term if the population is to remain healthy – at costs the nation can afford. 

What Learning Is All About

Long before Abenomics and a globalising economy, international education in Japan had been addressing the concerns of families with multicultural, multilingual backgrounds. Representatives of leading schools share insights into issues such as weighing the merits of short-term goals; teaching leadership skills in a society interconnected through social media; and having students develop integrity and character.

“At Seisen International School, our guiding principles create the learning environment that is essential to develop integrity and character in our students. We educate young women for social and cultural transformation, nurture faith development, shape international mindedness and celebrate international diversity, side with the poor, reach out to the world with hospitality and hope, act as leaven for world-wide community building, reverence creation, and share all that we are and have.”

Sr Margaret Scott, School Head, Seisen International School



“Integrity and character come from understanding and respecting our place in this world; and international schools are fantastic places to discover what it means to be a part of something far bigger than most are fortunate enough to perceive in their lifetimes. International schools challenge diverse communities to strive for common goals and understandings; as a result, the preconceptions of all stakeholders are challenged, tempered, and transformed. Integrity and character deepen as a result.”

Greg Culos, Director of Development, Aoba-Japan International School

“Environment is one of the most critical components to form a person’s character, and early childhood (2-6 years) and middle childhood (6-11 years) are the key stages. Schools take a significant role in building a child’s character. At Yoyogi International School, we provide an environment where children gain internationalism, respectfulness, ethics, integrity, critical thinking skills and a broad viewpoint as well as high academic skills, in a warm, secure and nurturing place.”

Yuko Muir, Director, Yoyogi International School



“At NewIS, our multiage and multilingual approach to teaching and learning builds social (SQ) and emotional (EQ) intelligence and skills, as well as the traditional cognitive or academic ones (IQ), through collaboration at every level and access to multimedia resources in any language. A “translanguaging” education replaces monolingual education for students, who virtually all are emerging bilinguals or multilinguals. Continued development, irrespective of age, replaces standardisation — as is also most appropriate for future global leadership.”

Steven Parr, Founding Director/Head of School, New International School of Japan

“Education is a process of self-construction, and its goal is the formation of a complete, integrated adult — capable of living in, and contributing to, society. This goal is met when the environment provides optimal conditions suitable to each stage of the child’s natural development.

Setting specific short-term goals is counter-productive, as any real learning is neither incremental nor linear, and rather takes place in ways that cannot be easily measured or fully appreciated until many components come together.”

Pete Juds, Head of School, The Montessori School of Tokyo



“Learning is all about investigating, thinking critically, taking appropriate action by applying knowledge and then reflecting on the process. When students follow this learning process, they are savvy consumers and producers of social media. They are aware of the world around them and how they can make an impact. When students use and interact with authentic audiences through social media, they see the educational value as well as the social value.”

Kirsten Welbes, Director of Admissions and Community Relations, Canadian Academy



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Catherine O. Endo, School Head, Saint Maur International School

“The best international schools have a learning programme that is as much about developing integrity and character as it is about academic rigour. Providing opportunities for students to develop as a person through social engagement, service and leadership is no longer an extracurricular activity, but an expectation, and is vital for preparing students for a career and life beyond the classroom. Such skills are planned, explicitly taught, assessed and reported on, giving them the profile they deserve.”

Craig Coutts, Head of School, Yokohama International School



“Education is learning; but it’s more than just learning the ABCs or 123s. It’s exploring, experimenting, and learning by experience. It’s more than the books. It’s outside, it’s inside, it’s in the home, it’s at school, it’s in the community — it’s everywhere. Children learn when given an open environment, free of restrictions and limits. Education is the road children follow to reach their full potential in life.”

Shazia Kitahara, Owner & Director, Sunshine Kids Academy

“It is said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. In an era of lifelong learning, this maxim is more significant than ever in our development as 21st-century learners. Whether at the macro-level through strategic planning or at the micro-level where teachers plan units of inquiry and students develop their learning goals, every journey begins with a single step. Let’s journey together!”

John Murphy, Principal, Osaka YMCA International School



Japan Council of International Schools



JCIS exists to create a forum for the continued development and improvement of international education in Japan and the enhancement of the school experience for all families seeking an international education. We encourage all expatriate, international and internationally minded families to consider what JCIS members might be able to offer as they seek excellence in international education for their child.

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TAIP hosts an annual conference and specialised workshops by professionals in the education field from North America and Europe; a number of smaller events for development and networking; videos and other information from many of its training sessions on the TAIP website; and resources for parents, school administrators and others in the field.

<http://tokyopreschools.org/new/>

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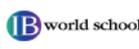
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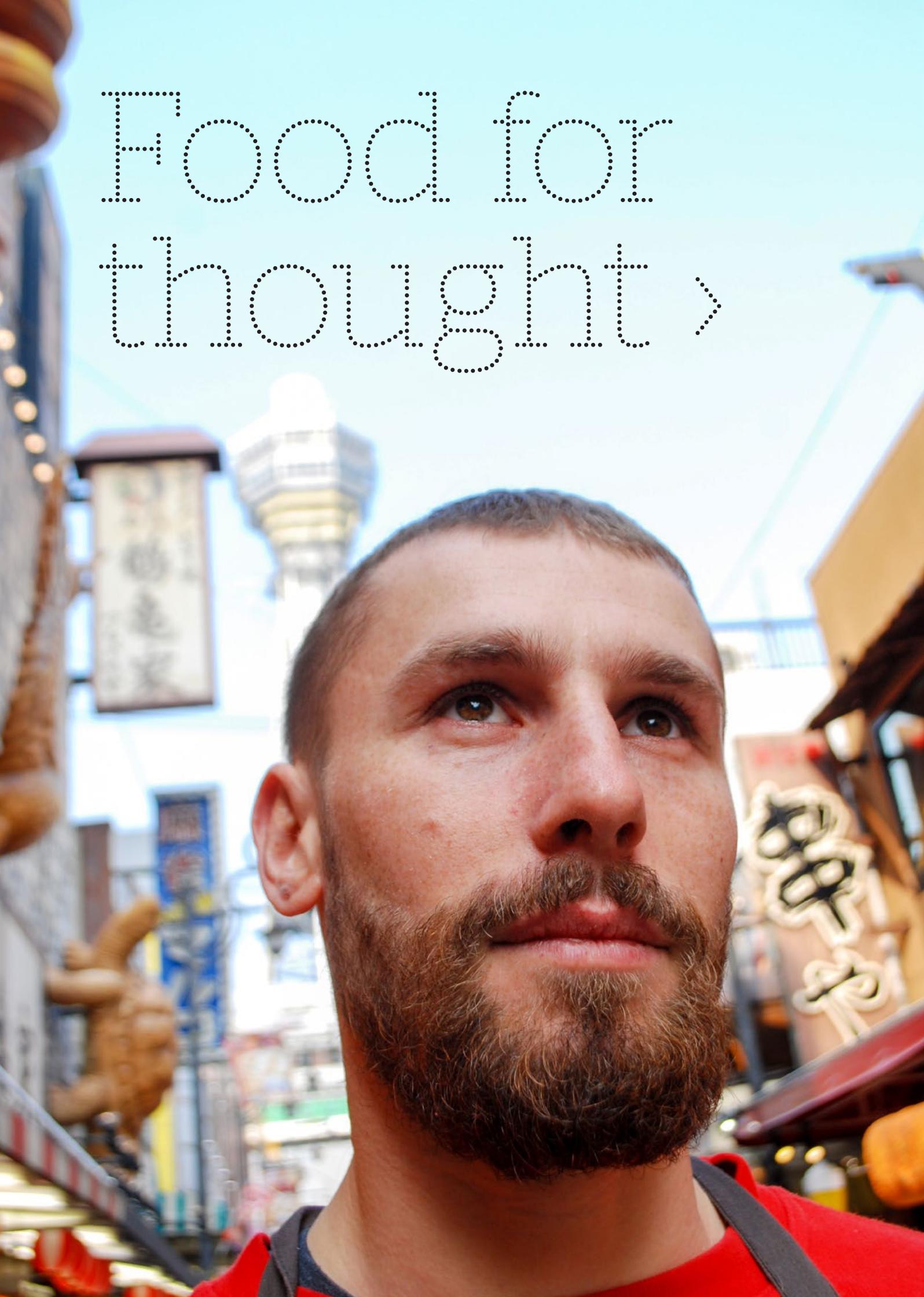
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“A CHANCE TO **LEARN AND CONNECT** WITH THE CITY, THROUGH ITS FOOD, ITS KNIVES, AND ITS PEOPLE”

Daggers slicing at Eat Osaka

Text **TIM MAUGHAN**

The knife slashes into the bright orange carrot, splaying rough vegetable fragments across the cutting board. The resulting cut is ragged and uneven, displaying a raw texture, which, as Arisa Daggers notes, would later make for a soggy product. Pulling out a higher-quality instrument, Arisa slices through the vegetables like, well, a hot dagger through butter. The smoother finish, she says, will eventually make for a tastier meal.

It's all in a day's work for the Osaka native who teaches Japanese fine cuisine at her cooking school for foreign visitors. Arisa started Eat Osaka with husband Ben and two partners last summer, as a way of keeping tourists from overlooking their favourite city.

It was also a chance to teach visitors about the distinct cuisine from the mercantile metropolis.

"Osaka has great food and people, but tourists tend to use it as a hub to explore Kyoto and Kobe," says Ben. "We realised that there was a gap in the market of teaching and eating. So we wanted to use delicious, down-to-earth food to create a *genki* atmosphere."

At Eat Osaka, the roles are clearly defined. Ben and fellow Englishman-partner Sam Crofts look after the business side, while Arisa and Crofts' wife Mai conduct the lessons. Ben says the

process is simplified to reassure tourists who might have had misconceptions about the length of time needed to learn about cooking Japanese fare. Travellers, for example, may have heard that it can take a decade to become a qualified Japanese sushi chef. For people spending just a few days in Osaka, stories like that can make preparation of a meal seem "intimidating and impenetrable," he says.

At Eat Osaka, an emphasis on solid cookery and a no-frills presentation allay some of those fears. A placard in the dining area shows what dishes are on offer, while a menu lists the ingredients and cooking procedures such as for *dashimaki* (rolled omelette), pickled carrot, and Japanese rice burgers. Noodles are made from scratch, as customers mix flour and water by hand then stamp the resulting dough, contained in plastic bags, for three to four minutes.

"We want it to be as fun and interactive as possible," says Ben, "and we don't want to have any dead time, so Arisa talks about the food during the preparation."

Despite being located in Shinsekai, one of the city's most lively districts, customers hear not a murmur from the outside world inside Eat Osaka. The business is tucked away on a side street, though just a short walk from the Tsutenkaku tower, an Osaka landmark.



Arisa Daggers leads her Japanese cooking class at Eat Osaka.

After Ben confirms menus and numbers via email, he buys the necessary ingredients. He then meets customers at the tower before guiding them to the cookery class. There are lunchtime and evening lessons. All classes are pre-booked, so customers do not randomly walk in off the street. The business also has no exterior signs.

Attention is paid to the tools of the trade that Arisa soon demonstrates. As mentioned, cheap knives make for poor-quality food, so the Daggers use only the finest-quality Osaka-made cutting utensils.

Attention to such detail is important in a business like Eat Osaka, where authentic surroundings and food are the selling points. When the partners secured the property, they laid down a new floor, and built the tables and chairs themselves. Meticulous attention was paid to creating, as partner Crofts says, "an experience, a chance to learn and connect with the city, through its food, its knives, and its people."

Each class lasts between two and three hours but, interestingly, there is no official or defined time limit. Customers pay one fee at the conclusion of a class, regardless of how long it lasted. This open-ended approach means that preparation, cooking, and eating are not constrained by the clock.

"We are not mercenary about the way we run our classes," Ben concludes. 

Candidate perspective:

Using a professional recruitment agency

“Why should I use a recruiter? I know the HR Manager and I can contact them directly to set an interview by myself ...” All professionals with strong contacts in the market have thought this at one time or another during their job search. And, for the most part, it is true. They *are* able to get that interview; and with their experience and skills, they would most likely be able to secure a job offer as well. But, unfortunately, there would most certainly be critical questions left unanswered. “Is the job being offered the job I *really* want?” “Was there enough negotiation regarding salary?” “Am I happy with the overall package, benefits and remuneration?” “Do I know the real risks surrounding the position?” “And what should I be concerned about before I begin?”

While answers are needed before deciding on a job offer, they are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to secure at an interview. If presented incorrectly by the candidate, inquiries can result in a rejection.

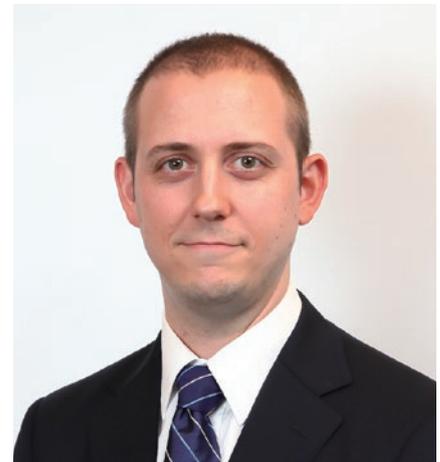
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Regarding the job description, it is vital to fully understand every aspect of the document, which, in turn, will provide priceless insight into the corporate culture, corporate priorities and, of course, the job itself. But there are times when the company cannot provide a job description because there wasn't enough time to prepare one, or the old job description is now out of date, or the position you are applying for is brand new and no one *really* knows what the job description would be, etc. Luckily for you, though, the Consultant knows all about the role, from the countless meetings they have had with the company and they are well positioned to explain everything to you. But if you are not utilising the services of a Consultant, you will lose out on this essential information. After all, if you don't understand the details of the position you are applying for, how can you confidently and logically say that you will be successful in that role?

Lastly, knowing the real reasons to why the position is open is critical. All companies undertake recruitment to solve a problem — whether that problem is as obvious as someone leaving the firm or retiring, or a deeper dilemma such as the company losing market share and needing to expand its sales force. Whatever the problem, it is essential to understand the company's current situation and why they



“How could you possibly present yourself as the solution to their problem if you don't know what the problem is?”

**James Perachio, Operations Manager,
Intelligence Global Search**

have chosen to hire someone for this role — why they have decided to consider you. The Consultant is able to delve deeply into the company's current situation and convey that priceless information to you — allowing you to prepare adequately. After all, how could you possibly present yourself as the solution to their problem if you don't know what the problem is?

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The paradigm of contradiction

Trust continues to plummet in Japan



Every year, our firm puts out what we call the Edelman Trust Barometer. This survey of people in 27 countries gauges how much they trust the institutions of government, media, business and NGOs to do the right thing.

The results of the 2015 Trust Barometer are startling when it comes to Japan, showing that people in this country are less trusting than anywhere else.

Trust in Japan hit a watershed in 2012. After the Great Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami (11 March, 2011), trust in the four institutions plummeted, as Japan moved from being a largely trusting nation to heading the ranks of the “distrusters”. Fewer than half of those surveyed said they trusted the four bodies, with government recording a bottom-scraping 25%.

In 2013, the Japanese public remained deeply sceptical, with trust in the four institutions falling to below 50% apiece.

Last year saw a bit of a trust rebound, thanks to high expectations for the

government of Shinzo Abe (prime minister since December 2012) and its economic policies known as Abenomics. However, trust for all institutions remained below 50%, with the exception of business, which hovered around 52%. This rebound was accompanied by the burning question as to whether the economic revival was sustainable or a mere “dead cat bounce”.

Now, in 2015, the jury has handed down its verdict, and Japan is less trusting than ever.

Our latest survey found that, out of 27 countries, Japan ranked as the most distrusting country of all, with overall trust falling from 44% (21st) to a pitiful 37%. Trust dropped for all four institutions in Japan, erasing the gains of the previous year.

Why did this happen?

Our theory is that Japanese society is at the cusp of change – perhaps a transitional period that is creating a paradigm of contradictions, prompting

the Japanese to continue to lose faith in their institutions.

While people here seem to want a more assertive, stronger and prominent Japan, they are also concerned over legislative changes – such as the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets law and the government’s reinterpretation of collective self-defence and possible changes to the pacifist constitution.

On the economic side, the high expectations for Abenomics have been bogged down by an increase in the cost of living triggered by the falling yen.

One of the big callouts from this year’s Trust Barometer is the plummeting trust in the media. This seems to be a result of their trying to find a new business model in an environment of declining audiences, and of issues surrounding non-factual reporting admitted by one of Japan’s more prominent newspapers.

Japanese people were shocked to learn – perhaps for the first time ever – that not everything reported in the domestic media was sacred truth. This scepticism seems to have shaken their confidence in media objectivity, causing many now to prefer confirming visuals on television, using a search engine or going to a company’s homepage for information, rather than to the media.

In all, it will be interesting next year to see where trust heads depending, perhaps, on whether the economy recovers.

Japanese trust declines in all institutions

Trust in the four institutions of government, business, media and NGOs in Japan, 2014 vs. 2015

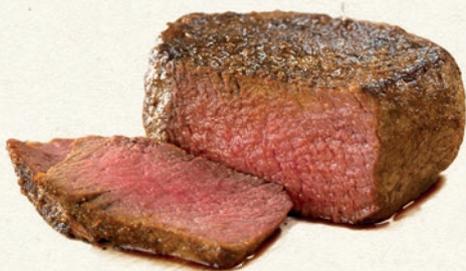
■ Total trust
■ Trust a great deal





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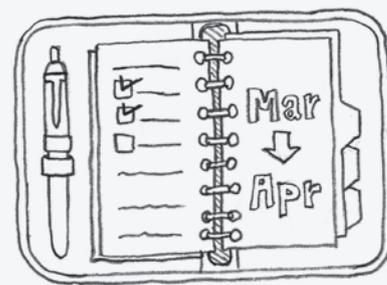
Ebina
046-292-4286

Nagoya Sakae
052-968-7800

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Upcoming events



► **Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Japan**

www.blccj.or.jp

Monthly Beer Gathering

16 March, 20 April, 18 May, Mondays, 19:00-23:00

Venue: Belgian beer café in Tokyo

Fee: Pay for what you drink

Contact: info@blccj.or.jp

Belgian Beer and Food Academy III

21 April, Tuesday, 19:00-22:00

Venue: Hilton Tokyo, Shinjuku

Fee: to be confirmed

Contact: info@blccj.or.jp

Belgian shop at Belgian Weekend Yokohama

21-24 May, Thursday-Sunday, times to be confirmed

Venue: Yamashita Park, Motomachi-Chukagai

Fee: Pay for what you buy

Contact: info@blccj.or.jp

► **Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce**

www.ijcc.jp

Emerald Ball

14 March, Saturday, 18:30-midnight

Venue: Tokyo American Club, Azabudai

Contact: secretariat@ijcc.jp

I Love Ireland Festival

15 March, Sunday, 10:00-17:00

Venue: Yoyogi Park, Shibuya

Contact: secretariat@ijcc.jp

St. Patrick's Day Parade

15 March, Sunday, 13:00-15:00 (approx.)

Venue: Omotesando

Contact: secretariat@ijcc.jp

Compiled by **DAVID UMEDA**

► **Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan**

www.iccj.or.jp

Italian Olive Oil Day

30 May, Saturday, 11:00-19:00

Venue: TV Asahi "umu", Roppongi Hills

Fee: Free entrance

Contact: support@iccj.or.jp

► **Swedish Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan**

www.sccj.org

SCCJ Sakura Party – with Haiku

2 April, Thursday, 19:00 - 21:00

Venue: Happon-en, Shirokanedai

Fee: ¥8,000

Contact: office@sccj.org

► **Multi-chamber event**

3rd edition of Giving Back To Japan – The Road Towards Reconstruction*

11 March, Wednesday, 19:00-21:00

Speakers: Martin van der Linden, van der Architects; Shawn Lawlor, Canada Wood Japan

Venue: Tokyo American Club, Azabudai

Fee: ¥6,400 (must be pre-paid) (includes food and drinks)

Contact: nccj@nccj.jp

* Organized by the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in Japan in collaboration with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

► **Multi-chamber event**

Nomunication – Joint Nordic Chambers and the ACCJ*

13 March, Friday, 19:00 - 21:00

Venue: Embassy of Sweden

Fee: ¥4,000 (members), ¥5000 (non-members)

Contact: Respective chambers

* American Chamber of Commerce in Japan, Danish Chamber of Commerce in Japan, Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Japan, Icelandic Chamber of Commerce in Japan, Norwegian Chamber of Commerce in Japan, and Swedish Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan

MARCH

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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

► **Multi-chamber event**

BLCCJ/CCIFJ/SCCIJ Joint Golf Tournament

11 April, Saturday, 8:30-16:30

Venue: Hanao Country Club, Chiba

Fee: ¥21,000 (own transportation), ¥25,000 (by bus)

Contact: Belgium-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Japan; French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan; or Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan

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- Permanent listing of the company on a "PREMIER Members" page of the EBC's website
- Listing of the company on a "PREMIER Members" page of the EBC's annual White Paper
- Company logo in "Blue-Star Sponsors" section of the EBC's annual White Paper
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- Recognition quarterly in the monthly EBC Magazine – EURObiZ Japan
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For more information please contact the EBC Secretariat.

Alison Murray, EBC Executive Director.

Tel: 03-3263-6222. E-mail: ebc@gol.com



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THE EUROPEAN (EU) CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN



Peter Wesp

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For more information please contact the EBC Secretariat.
Alison Murray, EBC Executive Director.
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EUROPEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL IN JAPAN
THE EUROPEAN (EU) CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN



David Swan

*Managing Director, Japan & Korea,
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