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New heights

*Philippe Roux-Dessarps
Park Hyatt Tokyo*



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Learning from European successes and failures

Disaster relief and readiness

Japanese Red Cross helps Tohoku rebuild

Grey market

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EURObiZ Japan welcomes story ideas from readers and proposals from writers and photographers. Letters to the editor may be edited for length and style.

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Contributors



David McNeill explains how Tokyo can learn from recent European Olympic experiences, page 8.

David writes for *The Irish Times*, *The Economist* and other international publications. He is co-author of the acclaimed

collection of survivor stories from the 2011 disaster, *Strong in the Rain*.

"As someone who has lived in Tokyo for 14 years and seen it transformed, largely for the better, I want to see the city put on its best show in 2020. But as a taxpayer I'm worried that the Olympics will trigger an orgy of infrastructure spending that will raze much of older Tokyo and leave us all deeper in debt. The piece this month is partly about attempts to get this balance right."

Originally from the UK, Rob has been living in Tokyo for more than a decade. He writes on a range of topics, from travel and culture to business and finance.

"Working on the elderly care story, the first and biggest challenge was deciding which aspects of elderly care to focus on. From life-saving treatments to quality-of-life products, the elderly healthcare market is vast and varied, and that forms only a

Rob Goss reports that elderly care products are booming, page 20.



portion of a 'grey market' that ranges from 'silver' travel to online gaming for seniors."



Rod Walters interviews a sake sommelier, page 40.

Working from a solar-powered home on Shikoku, overlooking the Seto Inland Sea.

Rod has been a writer and translator in Japan since 1991.

"You may be surprised to learn that sake, Japan's oldest alcoholic beverage, is produced around the world. Until recently, sake appreciation has been a generally disorganised affair, with potential consumers frustrated by a lack of reliable information. The Sake Sommelier Association was established to remedy this situation."



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Olympic fever, costs and a new ambassador

Winning the 2020 Olympic bid was a major achievement for Tokyo. But lost in the euphoria has been the question of cost. Certainly, the Games will provide a short-term boost to sectors such as construction, marketing and tourism. However, in the long term, will the Olympics be economically good or bad for Japan?

Objective studies done of past Olympics have shown that some cities have gained from hosting the Games, while others have suffered. Nagano is still paying off its ¥1 trillion debt for the 1998 Games, which went so far over budget that a local Olympic Committee official ordered all the accounting documents burned.

Certainly, the 1964 Tokyo Games provided a huge boost, at a time when Japan was still rebuilding from the war. But today, as the country struggles with massive debt, on-going Tohoku reconstruction and high corporate taxes, is it

justifiable to spend ¥300-400 billion on a two-week event?

This month, David McNeill (page 8) has a fascinating take on how Tokyo officials can learn from European Olympic successes and failures. Will Tokyo 2020 be another London or Athens?

Speaking of Tohoku, the Japanese Red Cross Society reports that about 100,000 people still live in temporary housing in the northeastern region, more than three and a half years after the triple disaster. The JRCS was a key player in rebuilding efforts, and remains so today. We get an update from director general Hiroshi Narita (page 14).


The ageing of Japanese society has been well documented, but not everyone is seeing it as a bad thing. As Rob Goss explains (page 20), medical-device manufacturers are developing new and



interesting products to help treat Japan's rapidly greying population.

Also this month, *EURObiZ* offers its congratulations to Mr Viorel Isticioaia Budura (pictured), as he takes over the post of European Union

ambassador to Japan. Having served as Romania's ambassador to China, Budura brings a wealth of experience to his new position. We wish him well.

We also offer best wishes to outgoing ambassador Hans Dietmar Schweisgut as he assumes a similar post in China, and thank him for his support of our magazine. 

Mike de Jong
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ROBERT WALTERS



Olympic hurdles

Learning from European successes and failures

Text **DAVID MCNEILL**

Tokyo's bid to host the 2016 Olympics was sunk by indifference. After years of rising economic insecurity and public debt, residents here were lukewarm about hosting the world's costliest sporting extravaganza.

It took disaster to rekindle Tokyo's passion for the Games: The International Olympic Committee (IOC) noted that the fresh bid was backed by 70% of the city's population, up 14 percentage points from the period before the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

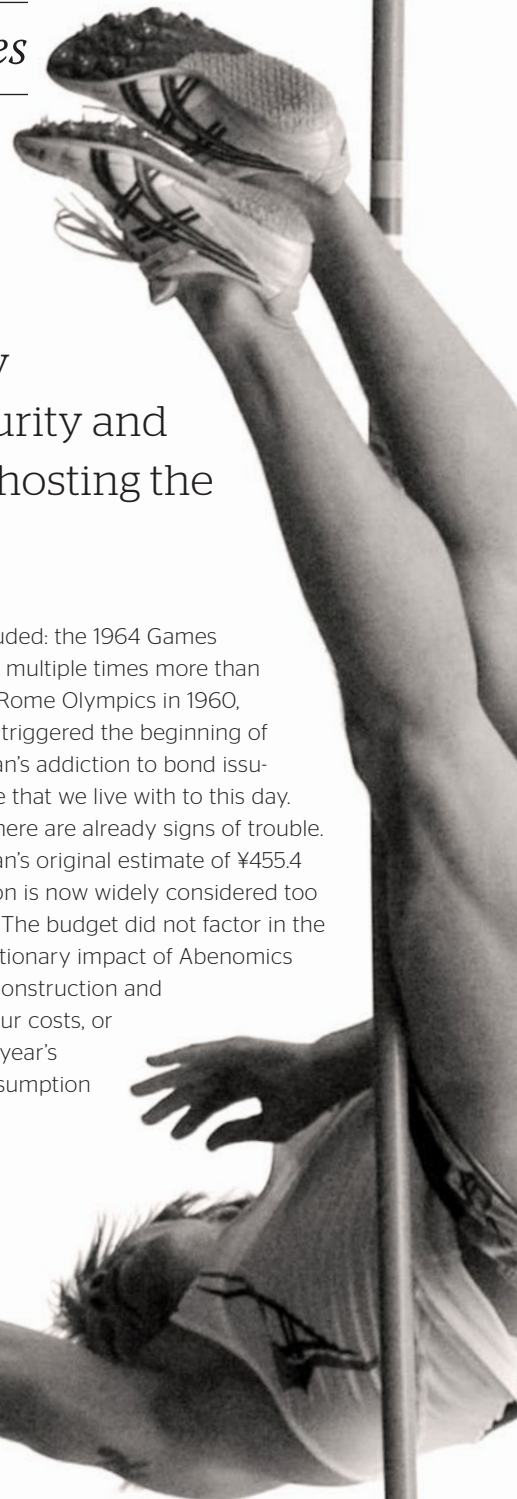
There was another reason for the successful bid: London. Japanese Olympic officials have repeatedly expressed admiration for the inspirational and efficient 2012 Games. Tokyo hired the same

UK-based agency that handled London's PR to bat for the Japanese capital at the IOC. Tokyo's then-governor, Naoki Inose, acknowledged the influence of the British capital after his city won. "I saw first-hand how they inspired people all over the world," he said.

Tokyo's government has sold the idea that the 2020 Games will help Japan recover – and many believe it. But the government also said the Games would pay for themselves – and that's being optimistic. Not a single Olympics since 1960 has met its cost target. The average overrun has been 179%. And Japan

included: the 1964 Games cost multiple times more than the Rome Olympics in 1960, and triggered the beginning of Japan's addiction to bond issuance that we live with to this day.

There are already signs of trouble. Japan's original estimate of ¥455.4 billion is now widely considered too low. The budget did not factor in the inflationary impact of Abenomics on construction and labour costs, or this year's consumption



tax hike of 3%. Japan's media says the city's new calculations show the Tokyo government's share of the costs (for building or renovating 12 facilities) is likely to be more than double its first estimate of ¥153.8 billion.

The real prospect of overrun has set up a contest between two competing versions of Tokyo in 2020. Governor Yoichi Masuzoe promised to make Tokyo the planet's No. 1 city by the time the Olympic juggernaut rolls into town. Much like 1959–64, city planners want to use the Games as a launch pad for a great leap forward, pushing through long-delayed projects and elbowing aside obstacles. "The preparations for the Tokyo Games will act as a catalyst for a stronger economy," Masuzoe said in his first speech to the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly.

The plans include a million hydrogen-powered Tokyo households, new luxury hotels and railway lines connecting an expanded Haneda Airport. An "Olympics road" will connect the Tokyo waterfront – where most of the new facilities will be located – to Toranomon. Mori Building – which operates the Toranomon complex – will remake much of Azabu and Roppongi. Mitsui will remodel part of Ginza, Hibiya and Nihonbashi. Mitsubishi Estate also has plans for Otemachi and Marunouchi.

This growth spurt risks creating a mishmash of

competing plans – with no clear vision. Hiroo Ichikawa, professor of Urban Policy at Meiji University, is one of many experts who want to create a new Cabinet post of Olympics minister to coordinate 2020. "History has taught us that the relative strength of a nation hinges largely on whether it has a major metropolis that can serve as a nucleus of growth, and how that city compares with others around the world."

Tokyo must survive as a competitive global city, he says.

But attempting to mimic the 1964 Olympics would be a "nightmare", insists Kengo Kuma, one of Japan's most revered architects. He says Tokyo planners and businesses are following

“ NOT A SINGLE OLYMPICS SINCE 1960 HAS MET ITS COST TARGET ”

a path of development laid down in the rapid-growth 1950s: towers, shopping centres, open plazas – what he calls "20th century clichés". The planners still compare Tokyo to younger cities like Beijing, he laments. At heart, he says, Tokyo is still a 20th century city struggling to become a 21st century one.

Beijing splurged nearly \$43 billion on its 2008 Summer Games, partly in an attempt to replicate the transformation of Tokyo in 1964. The money paid for a new transportation system and other infrastructure, but also provided the excuse for years of official vandalism that razed neighbourhoods, disrupted old communities, and replaced much of the city's charm with bombastic Olympic showcases.


Europe offers another lesson. The 2004 Summer Games had cost Greece €9 billion, excluding the price tag for new infrastructure, such as a metro

system. Greek taxpayers were left holding the bag for about €7 billion. The cost of the Athens extravaganza has been blamed for the country's subsequent slide into recession, poverty and economic pariah status. Many of the expensively built Greek stadiums now stand empty and unused.

Tokyo has been studying these examples carefully over the past year (after winning the bid), ahead of the presentation of final venues to the International Olympic Committee next February. The city has launched a review of its venues; and, while cagey about the results, it is clear that several will be scaled down or scrapped. "Nobody wants to see venues left to the elements, or destroyed like those in Athens," one said, speaking off the record.

As the most recent and successful Olympics, London is the biggest influence on this review. Tokyo officials say they were impressed by the use of temporary or remodeled facilities, such as the London Aquatics Centre, which was given two new spectator wings for the 2012 Games. The officials are mulling scrapping plans to build a stadium in Yume-no-shima, near Shin-kiba, and moving basketball and badminton games to remodeled stadiums elsewhere. Others may follow.

Changing the blueprint for 2020 is not without controversy. One of the selling points of Tokyo's bid – that all the main venues would be within 8km of the Olympic Village near Tokyo Bay – now is seen as unlikely. Cost is likely to trump that pledge: Tokyo fears the roughly ¥410 billion in cash it has set aside for the Games will run out before all the stadiums are built.

Hosting the Olympics certainly will put Japan's gleaming, efficient capital back on the world stage. But the lead-up will also raise a key question: can the city be revamped for the Games in a way that protects its heritage – and avoids adding to the burdens of one of the world's most indebted countries? This debate is likely to sharpen in the year ahead, especially since Japan recently passed an ominous landmark – ¥1 quadrillion in public debt. 

Tomohiko Taniguchi

Special advisor to Prime Minister Abe

Text **MIKE DE JONG**

Professor Tomohiko Taniguchi of Keio University is a special advisor to the cabinet of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. As a former business journalist for Nikkei Business Publications – three years as the European bureau chief in London – Taniguchi is often called upon to speak for the government in the foreign media. He recently talked to *EURObiZ Japan* about the government's outlook for the remainder of its current term.

Can you give us your view on how Abenomics has progressed?

Abenomics is undergoing one of the most testing periods for the reasons that the first arrow, monetary policy, has more or less run its course – although the Bank of Japan still has room to do one other quantitative easing attempt. The second arrow, of dynamic fiscal policy, is an ongoing process. Which means that there's very little

ammunition to be added to the second arrow. And the third arrow – which is about structural reforms and bringing about changes in the Japanese supply-side equation – by definition, takes a lot of time.

Given the maturity of the Japanese economy and the fact that Japan is losing, not gaining, population – the only way for such a country to grow is to stimulate its labour productivity.

Unless it can grow its labour productivity, it's virtually impossible for Japan to grow substantially. But unlike stimulating demand, stimulating labour productivity is a hard task.

One thing that is for sure is that you don't have any panacea to solve this long-standing problem – which is why Shinzo Abe and his administration are counting on many different initiatives. The biggest of late has become Womenomics. By including more women in the labour force – and by promoting them to break glass ceilings – chances are that Japan could get new stimulus from an unknown corner of its economy, to the extent that it would stimulate labour flexibility, mobility and productivity.

The TPP [Trans-Pacific Partnership] is another area. By opening Japan's economy still further, and encouraging Japanese industrialists to be outgoing – and, by the same token, encouraging foreigners to invest more in Japan – the Japanese industrial culture [and] many things should also change.

You mentioned TPP. How much importance does the prime minister place on an Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union?



“ JAPAN HAS BECOME
MUCH **LESS SHY** ABOUT
ANY TRADE DEAL ”



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“UNLIKE STIMULATING DEMAND, STIMULATING LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY IS **A HARD TASK**”

Tomohiko Taniguchi

One thing I can say to your readers is that Japan has become much less shy about any trade deal. The clear example is the one that Japan has forged with one of the biggest agro-exporters in the world, namely Australia. This is something that should have been beyond anyone's imagination. That Japan, a country which gives heavy protection to farmers, can forge such a deal is evidence that it has become much less shy about trade deals.

Despite the then-prevailing consensus, Shinzo Abe surprised his counterpart in the United States when he made a visit to Washington, D.C. in February of last year and announced that Japan would be willing to join the negotiation process for the TPP. Shinzo Abe also became very much bullish on the expectation that Japan and the EU could forge a very ambitious, wide-ranging economic partnership agreement, despite the fact that there are many stumbling blocks.

It was the Japanese side that first mentioned the timeline – or the deadline – for negotiations, saying that until the end of 2015 we should do this and this and that. When Shinzo Abe made that announcement, there were only a limited number of countries in the EU that were willing to come along with

Japan. But now, there's a prevailing consensus that yes, the EU and Japan could make it happen by the end of next year.

In the minds of policy-makers in Japan, there is a hope that, by pushing these two negotiations [TPP and EPA] in tandem, there's going to be a mutually stimulating effect between the two fronts.


Are we soon to see further initiatives on structural reform?

Next year, there will be a growing number of stations for fuel cell cars. Right now, Toyota remains the only company that has a fuel cell car in its line-up. But I think this is one area European automotive manufacturers can aim for. I know there's ample technological knowledge accumulated ... so the Japanese auto market will be one in which aspiring auto manufacturers around the world should test their cutting-edge models.

The pharmaceutical industry – it's been remarkable to see how the period [for approval] has been shortened [here] for new drugs. When it comes to the pharmaceutical industry, European companies are on the cutting-edge, and I would assume that European companies would find even wider room to

sell their products in a shorter period of time.

The consumption tax issue is contentious. In your opinion, do you think the government will go ahead with next year's planned increase?

Conventional wisdom holds that they will go ahead with it. Why do I say so? Bank of Japan governor [Haruhiko] Kuroda has never failed to stress the importance of Japan undergoing another hike in the consumption tax, citing it is a measure of credibility for Japan – seen from a foreign investors' perspective. The Ministry of Finance, for a very good reason, is another powerful advocate of this course. My view is, Shinzo Abe has not decided yet. He knows that in either direction, [it] will cost a huge amount of his political capital. If he proceeds as scheduled, economists would criticise the decision, saying the Abe administration has killed the fledgling economy. If he backs off, it would cause similarly serious criticism from a broad range of society, saying Shinzo Abe is not strong enough to carry out the plan that he promised. So either way, it would not come without any damage done. But simply put, I know he has not decided yet. 

Disaster relief and readiness

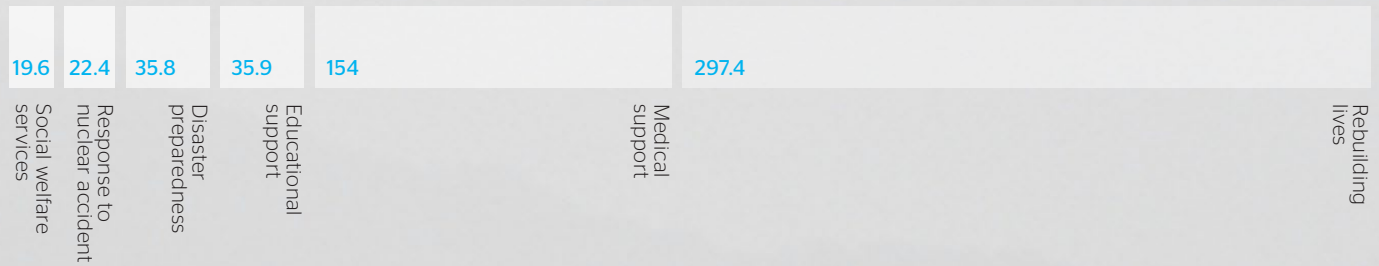
Japanese Red Cross Society helps Tohoku rebuild

Text MIKE DE JONG



How Red Cross donations from around the world have been applied in Japan

(US\$ millions)



Also received: **Crude oil from Kuwait** (400.6), **Emergency support/administrative costs** (35.3)

To donate to the JRCS or register for membership: <https://donate.jrc.or.jp/jrc/application/registerEmailEn>

Although it has now been more than three years since the tragic earthquake, tsunami and nuclear catastrophe of northeastern Japan, the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) remains as busy as ever.

Immediately after the disaster, the organisation rushed into service, setting up emergency centres and sending medical support to the affected areas, which included the hardest-hit prefectures of Iwate, Fukushima and Miyagi. Nearly 900 medical teams were dispatched to the region, drawing on support and supplies from the society's 92 hospitals across the country. The Red Cross helped establish temporary facilities to treat patients, set up domestic emergency response units and mobile health teams.

The JRCS even sent out volunteers nearly 300 times to offer psychological support to people displaced from their homes and in temporary evacuation centres.

All of this work was supported by more than \$1 billion in worldwide donations sent from Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in more than 100 countries.

"The Japanese Red Cross mainly deals with the emergency phase by sending out medical teams and relief aid," says Hiroshi Narita, JRCS director general of organisational development, through an interpreter. "But because there were a lot of donations and support from around the world, we were able to start reconstruction projects. That was very new for the Japanese Red Cross."

The result has been some remarkable projects in support of the thousands displaced from their homes by the triple disaster. Red Cross donations have helped build nearly 800 prefabricated homes in nine locations across the affected region. This has helped maintain a sense of community for people who lost their homes, including many elderly who otherwise might have been left isolated.

"At the moment, we help out with psychological care for those people living in prefabricated houses," says Narita. "This is permanent housing."

The JRCS also helped build temporary gymnasiums, childcare facilities and indoor playgrounds known as "smile parks" across Fukushima, an area where outdoor play is limited due to concerns over radiation from the disabled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. The JRCS even organised summer camps in Hokkaido, where children from disaster-hit areas could develop physically and heal emotionally by playing together and making new friends.

JRCS donations also helped to buy new heaters and appliances for people in temporary housing.

"We were also able to send out a lot of household electrical appliances [to 133,000 households]," adds Narita. "And during winter, we sent heaters to people in 729 locations."

Perhaps one of the largest projects undertaken by the JRCS was the

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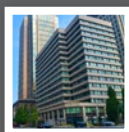
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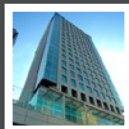
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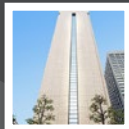
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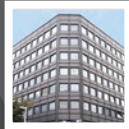
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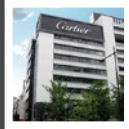
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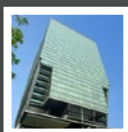
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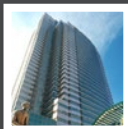
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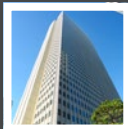
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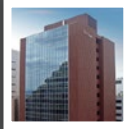
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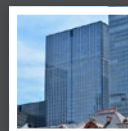
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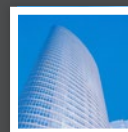
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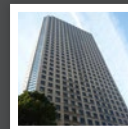
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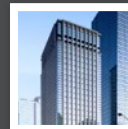
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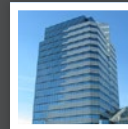
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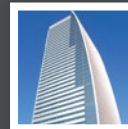
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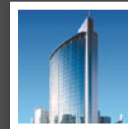
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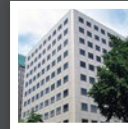
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Hiroshi Narita of the Japanese Red Cross Society.

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Yuki and Teruko Kumagai received six home appliances donated by JRCS.

© JAPANESE RED CROSS SOCIETY

“AT THE MOMENT, WE HELP OUT WITH **PSYCHOLOGICAL CARE** FOR THOSE PEOPLE LIVING IN PREFABRICATED HOUSES”

Hiroshi Narita

reconstruction of the Kesenuma Municipal Motoyoshi Hospital, in Miyagi prefecture, which had filled with mud during the tsunami. The JRCS contributed half the funds for major repairs on the facility and to supply medical equipment. The hospital has handled more than 23,000 outpatients since the reconstruction.

The Red Cross hospital in Ishinomaki, Miyagi prefecture, was one of the few facilities in the region that survived the disaster. But as a result, it was overrun with patients. Donations are now helping to construct a new hospital ward, slated for completion next year.

While Narita points out that there are still reconstruction projects that need to be supported, disaster readiness for the future is also an important focus for the JRCS. The organisation is currently developing educational programmes

and disaster preparation “tool-kits” for students and teachers.

“We are providing education tool-kits to teachers, so they can tell the children what actions need to be taken to save themselves.”

These tool-kits include instructions on what to do during an earthquake and a video teaching children how to move to higher ground in the event of a tsunami.

Narita says that out of the 3/11 tragedy, the JRCS developed a three-step programme for disaster readiness and relief: first, learning how to help oneself; second, knowing how to help others; and third, receiving outside help. He says the school programmes currently focus on step one, with step two to follow soon.

With most of the large-scale recovery projects nearly finished, the focus now for the JRCS is on helping people get on with their lives and build a sense

of community. Many residents from the areas near the Fukushima nuclear plant will likely never be able to return to their homes. These people need emotional, as well as on-going financial, support.

“We’re not asking for more money for reconstruction,” he says. “While much has been achieved in the past three years, we recognise that the recovery process will not be complete at the end of this project period. With the plight of the survivors on-going, we will remain active in delivering assistance for years to come by using the money [we] receive.”

“We also still have a cash-grant donations system, which gives out money directly to affected prefectures.”

Since medical teams and relief activities are supported by membership fees and donations, Narita says the JRCS would be “grateful” for further donations from the public and corporations. [e](#)

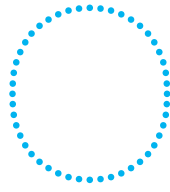


“CULTURE IS
REALLY SHAPED
BY THE
ENVIRONMENT”

Eric De Groot

Cultural lessons in housing and construction

Text **MIKE DE JONG** Photo **PADDY O'CONNOR**



ne can gain many insights from one's chosen profession, including valuable lessons about a foreign culture. Eric

De Groot has learned much about his adopted country during his 25 years in Japan's construction and building materials industry, including a notion he calls "semi-permanence".

"The built environment is treated much differently in Japanese culture than in the West," says De Groot, president of spray foam insulation manufacturer Icynene Asia-Pacific and member of the EBC Construction Committee.

"Buildings here are meant to serve the people who use them and have no — or very little — sentimental or intrinsic value on their own. Once their usefulness no longer justifies their upkeep, they are replaced."

The reason for this is that the Japanese have historically used wood for building — making homes and other structures that are vulnerable to earthquakes, typhoons, floods and fires. It's one reason that, even today, Japanese homes have a shorter lifespan than those in places such as Europe, where many last hundreds of years.

"The way it's expressed today in the housing industry is that you look at the average life cycle of a house being 25 years — basically, from brand new to zero value," says De Groot. "It's completely opposite to the way most [Western] people think about what should happen in housing values. An older house, if maintained, should increase in value. It's completely counter-intuitive to the way people think about real estate value."

De Groot does add that many Japanese are now realising the waste of constant rebuilding. And the government is also promoting construction of longer-lasting structures, including the notion of the "100-year house". But the vast majority of new homes are still of the low-cost variety, or what De Groot calls "put it up now and we'll worry about what it's worth down the line".

"I don't think the thought that buildings are not permanent was a part of their culture," De Groot adds, "but it certainly became part of their experience, which then informed the culture.

Culture is really shaped by the environment. So much of the [Japanese] attitude to housing — and to buildings in general — is because of the environment they live in."


A Canadian who traces his European roots to his Belgian grandfather and English grandmother, De Groot arrived in Japan during the bubble era of the mid-1980s. After briefly working for a foreign trade office and a Canadian lumber exporting group, he moved over to Forbo, the Swiss commercial flooring giant, in 2003. After a decade there, he switched to his current firm in January of this year.

As one of the few non-Japanese employed in Japan's notoriously conservative, hierarchical and insular construction and housing industry, De Groot credits his success in finding a niche. His current firm was the first to make light-density polyurethane spray foam for insulation — now used in 7% of all new housing starts in Japan. With the Japanese government focusing on reducing energy wasted in poorly insulated buildings — and mandating that every home be insulated by 2020 — De Groot senses a real opportunity for Icynene's products.

He advises newcomers looking for success in Japan to find a similar route.

"I'm endlessly fascinated by the challenges of marketing foreign products in Japan — and of how and why some products are wildly successful here. Others find a comfortable and profitable niche far off anyone's radar [especially the radar of giant local rivals who could destroy them with a wave of the hand]. And others crash and burn in spectacular fashion," he says.

"There's no one answer, of course, but key is researching the particularities of the relationships between the players in each industry — and especially the competitive environment.

"My advice to most businesses, given the risks, is to aim for the comfortable niche, secure it and hold it as a beachhead, then try to expand from there," he continues. "Especially in an industry as unfamiliar with foreign products and services as the construction and building materials industry, I think the high-end niche is an achievable and realistic space to aim for." 

Do you like natto?

Time spent working in Japan: 25 years, almost all my working life.

Career regret (if any): Still a work in progress.

Favourite saying: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Favourite book: *The Wages of Guilt* by Ian Buruma.

Cannot live without: Rock 'n' roll.

Lesson learned in Japan: Patience.

Secret of success in business: Hire good people, make sure they know the goals, then get out of their way.

Favourite place to dine out: Anywhere with good *junmai-shu*.

Do you like natto? You're kidding, right?

Grey market

Business opportunities of an ageing population

Text **ROB GOSS**

Here's a conversation starter for you. It is estimated that in Japan, by the year 2020, adult nappies [diapers] will outsell those for children. Admittedly, that is a sensational statistic. But, even so, it accurately highlights both a problem and an opportunity in this country.

The problem is demographic. Fully one quarter of Japan's 127 million people are aged 65 or older. By the year 2050, when the population is expected to fall as low as 95 million, people over 65 will account for 38% of the population.

The opportunity is what is sometimes referred to as the "grey" or "silver" market – medical care products for the elderly. And it goes way beyond nappies.

Stefan Linde Jakobsen, president and representative director of Coloplast Japan, expects to see increased demand for his company's ostomy, urology and continence care products.

"For example, there will be more elderly cases of colorectal cancer; and although diagnostics and treatment are continuously improving, I expect to see low single-digit growth for ostomy bags," adds Jakobsen, who also is chairman of the Danish Chamber of Commerce in Japan. "For catheters [used for bowel and bladder control], I see similar growth."

"From a business perspective, there are going to be more patients as Japan ages," adds Jeffrey Annis, president of Biotronik, a German biomedical technology company specialising in heart rhythm management and vascular intervention. "Common sense would say there is, therefore, a great opportunity for medical healthcare companies in Japan."

Annis, also a member of the EBC Medical Equipment Committee, does

burden on hospitals, while providing 24/7 monitoring and peace of mind for patients.

"If you go to a hospital in Japan, it's not uncommon for a doctor to see 100 outpatients a day. Of these patients, [many] are going for prescriptions or routine checks. They don't necessarily need to go," says Annis. "How to better manage this as Japan ages? One option is what we call telemedicine. There is no doubt that [it] is going to grow."

“FROM A BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE, THERE ARE GOING TO BE **MORE PATIENTS** AS JAPAN AGES”

Jeffrey Annis

admit that Japan's shrinking tax base might make it difficult to fund its health-care system. As a result, he believes European manufacturers have a responsibility to help Japan keep healthcare costs under control without jeopardising quality.

In this regard, a home monitoring system for pacemaker patients is one potentially cost-saving idea that Biotronik is pioneering here (and globally). The system can help relieve the

Here's how telemedicine works. Patients with traditional pacemakers require hospital check-ups every three to six months. But Biotronik provides pacemaker patients with a cardio messenger – a unit that looks like a Wi-Fi router – that automatically hooks up to Japan's 3G network. Doctors can check patient data online and send them alerts when required. The result is a reduction in hospital visits and more thorough monitoring.

The system has been given Japanese government approval; and, with Biotronik not facing any local competition in the cardiac rhythm machine market, the path ahead looks smooth. Yet, there are always hidden hurdles when dealing with the Japanese market.

One anticipated issue for telemedicine is what some see as a cultural reluctance in Japan to being treated at home. For that, Annis says doctors and hospitals need to do more to educate patients. Some hospitals are even employing medical engineers or device nurses, whose role is to explain new technology and products.

"I think the issue is not the cultural mindset, but the need to set up services and support for elderly people to receive nursing care at home," says Izumi Hamada, head of government affairs at Philips Electronics Japan. "The government is pursuing a regional holistic care system linking medical and nursing services, which is really a key to tackling the needs of an ageing population," adds Hamada, who is also secretary general of the EBC Medical Equipment Committee.

As the EBC white paper suggests, Japan's regulatory structure and reimbursement regime are two other issues

that could prevent companies bringing high-quality – and groundbreaking – products to the Japanese market.

"In Japan, products are not reimbursed to the same extent as in the EU, which significantly affects usage patterns," says Jakobsen. "Because patients have to pay a portion out of pocket for products and treatments, it often leads them to extend the use of products – or use inferior products. With that, companies often have to try and knock down their prices, or they just can't compete."

Biotronik's Annis adds, "In our market, the number of patients is growing; but, because of government reimbursement cuts, total revenue in the market is falling."

Clinical evaluations and product approvals also have a reputation for being costly and lengthy in Japan. For example, clinical tests are often required for products that have been slightly modified or improved. Even after approval, medical equipment is subject to surveys on its actual use.

That said, Jakobsen believes progress is being made. Approval times are becoming shorter.

"Japan is still a very bureaucratic country, but things have begun moving

quite quickly in the right direction over the last five to seven years," he says. "Wound care dressings used to take three to five years for approval, but now it's less than a year once we have our internal records in order."

Jakobsen adds that the Japanese government is increasingly keen to reward innovation, which is good news for European companies like Coloplast, which invest heavily in being innovative.

"Japan wants to reward major breakthrough innovation, ideally linked to Japan building up a globally competitive healthcare industry," says Jakobsen. "Japan is now also willing to listen to quality-of-life arguments for funding, not just pure lifesaving cases.

"Overall, the healthcare market is growing only in the low single digits, but if you find the right product and have – or can find – the funding, there are opportunities," he continues. "For European companies, Japan is opening up in a way it wasn't 10 years ago."

One of those areas is adult nappies.

"Japan is already the second-largest adult nappy market in the world, and probably will see continued decent growth with the demographics shifting further," says Jakobsen. ☺





Trevor Webster

Area Manager, Japan, deVere Group

Text **CHRISTOPHER S THOMAS**
Photo **GENEVIEVE SAWTELLE**

“I don’t want to scare people,” says Trevor Webster. “Or maybe I do. The world is changing.”

Webster is area manager, Japan, for the deVere Group, and considers his services crucial amid increasing volatility in the markets and in society. Given the diminishing outlook for government pensions and other support, the onus is now very much on the individual to plan for their own future.

Regarding the markets and society, “We’re in way too much debt, and we’re not saving enough,” he says. “People are going to have to work longer and save more. We’re going to see much more volatility, which increases the need for

guidance from financial advisors such as the deVere Group.”

As a wealth manager, he advises clients on retirement planning, estate planning, and strategic business decisions regarding their own finances.

DeVere’s client base in Japan is predominantly foreign expats, due to the firm’s international expertise and outlook. But there are numerous Japanese clients as well, with many balking at repatriating their overseas assets to Japan, where there is very little yield.

“Our clients all have a few things in common,” Webster adds. “They’ve worked overseas, they’ve accrued overseas assets. And they want those assets to work for them once they return to Japan. Our Japanese clients want the

same thing as anyone else – a better yield on their hard-earned cash, and advice on whether to buy real estate or some other opportunity.”

Expats have an additional reason to be cautious: “The passage of assets at death can be quite difficult, and the penalty severe – depending on what nationality you are and where you reside. The net beneficiary often ends up being the state.”

Even within the market here, the business is changing and the deVere Group’s operations are changing with it. “Judging by what we’re seeing now, we’re going to see, in a lot more mobile professionals, a much more transient, globetrotting working population. Globalisation is here, and it’s not going to go away.”

These globetrotting workers cannot



possibly know about the steadily evolving regulatory environment in each place they work, so Webster's team helps with that, too.

Even for an established player in the Japanese market like deVere, there are plenty of challenges. "The biggest challenge this business faces, in Japan or elsewhere, is ignorance," says Webster, "and laziness. People tend to put their future on the shelf, then suddenly realise that they are not doing enough to secure their future. The message I would convey is that retirement planning is the most important thing you can do."


Given the dearth of such planning around the world, governments face a major problem looming, to support

a greying population with little money in the bank.

"Individuals have to start taking responsibility for themselves instead of relying on the government for retirement benefits," he adds.

Webster helps clients plan for their future, but this doesn't mean he's willing to predict the future. "If you think about 20 years ago, 1994, it's a completely different world, unrecognisable. In 20 years, it is likely to be just as different. It's impossible to know what changes there will be, what technologies, what disasters will occur. So you have to be prepared for anything."

One thing is certain: the importance of wealth management will grow from experienced advisory groups focused on the client.

Before joining the world's largest independent wealth management firm, the British-born Webster spent 13 years in the Royal Air Force as an avionics engineer. He also spent seven years as a professional bobsleigh racer, representing Great Britain to the Olympic standard. His time in athletics informs his current work. "There are many parallels between business and sport at the highest level: attention to detail, teamwork, tolerance and empathy, as well as a lot of hard work," says Webster. "My experience in this field has helped me understand the people in the businesses we come into contact with in terms of what motivates them and how they make decisions. Everything matters!" 

A close-up portrait of Philippe Roux-Dessarps, a middle-aged man with dark hair and blue eyes, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a blue patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is dark and out of focus.

New heights

*Philippe Roux-Dessarps,
GM of Park Hyatt Tokyo*

Text **MIKE DE JONG**
Photo **BENJAMIN PARKS**

In the 2003 Hollywood film “Lost in Translation”, Bill Murray’s character, Bob Harris, looks to Scarlett Johansson’s Charlotte and says, “I don’t want to leave.” Can you blame him?

The scene from the award-winning film is set in the moody and sophisticated bar atop the Park Hyatt Tokyo — a space that is as much a part of the story as the characters themselves. The film made the Shinjuku luxury hotel world famous and continues to attract visitors every year.

“Yes, [the film] has definitely helped, and people still talk about it,” says Philippe Roux-Dessarps, the hotel’s Paris-born general manager. “I think the film is better than a hotel brochure. Whenever I go to trade shows — whether in the US or Europe — if I meet a travel agent who has seen the movie, then he has been to the hotel. So it makes the hotel an easy sell.”

Roux-Dessarps says the film not only helps his hotel, but also sells Japan as an attractive destination for foreign visitors. That, he believes, helps the entire industry, which is finally bouncing back after the double whammy of the Lehman shock (2008) and the 2011 Tohoku natural disaster. Roux-Dessarps says two major initiatives are also helping — a lower yen and the winning bid for the 2020 Olympics.

“I hear it talking to travel agents outside Tokyo. I hear that the Olympic Games have sent a wake-up call outside Japan, where people are thinking, ‘Well, if it’s good enough for the Olympic Games, it’s good enough for me’”, he says.

“The yen is helping on the corporate side, where we see Tokyo again becoming a financial hub and being of interest for foreign investment. We definitely see that.”

Serving two tours of duty at the Park Hyatt — one during the so-called bubble era (mid-1980s to early 1990s) and the second starting just days after the Lehman crash — Roux-Dessarps has seen different sides of the hotel industry. Where once there was easy expense accounts and money flowing, customers now are more demanding. They want value for their yen, and they want top-quality amenities.

The Park Hyatt Tokyo offers both.

Having opened in 1994, the hotel’s 177 rooms (including 23 suites) are spread lavishly across the top 14 storeys of the Shinjuku Park Tower. Along with the New York Grill — a favourite for wedding proposals and weekend brunch — the Park Hyatt boasts three restaurants, two bars, a lounge and deli. In the 47th floor fitness facility, guests can work up a sweat while enjoying a spectacular view of Mount Fuji.

It’s for these reasons that the Park Hyatt remains a popular place for foreign and domestic visitors.

“Actually, our international mix has grown,” says Roux-Dessarps. “We’ve

seen the Japanese segment remaining at the same level, but what has really grown tremendously are the foreigners. [Many are] from the US and Australia; also from emerging markets and South-East Asian countries, which are growing quite rapidly. Thailand, with [Japan’s easing of] visa rules, has definitely helped us.”


While business is bouncing back, the Park Hyatt GM believes there are areas for improvement. He feels the industry as a whole needs to dispel the myth that Japan is too expensive.

“There are still some strong, pre-conceived ideas,” he says. “Even now, when the dollar is almost at ¥110, Japan is still perceived as an expensive destination. Every time I meet travel agents in the US, I reiterate the fact that, at our price point — with the product that we provide and the number of employees that we have per room — we certainly are the best deal on the planet.”

“So Tokyo is not expensive. Tokyo is not polluted. Tokyo is not completely gridlocked in traffic. These are the three things that really stick in people’s minds.”

Roux-Dessarps came to Tokyo after previous stops at Hyatt properties in Europe, Tahiti and Guam. He believes governments and tourism officials here could do more to promote the country.

“We can all play a part in that. I understand it’s not necessarily the government’s priority in terms of GDP proportion, [our industry] is maybe not the most important. But I think tourism brings a lot of by-products; and so by bringing in more leisure and corporate [visitors], that has a ripple effect on other aspects of the economy.”

“We also have a responsibility to sell Tokyo and Japan as a destination,” Roux-Dessarps concludes. “But we also see that a lot more can — and should — be done. It’s a country with great potential, but is not necessarily sold to its fullest potential overseas.” 



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Reaching for the sun

Ciel et Terre's floating solar power plants

Text **ALLISON BETTIN**

It's a warning we've all heard: water and electricity do not mix. If they do, it surely will not end well. But one French-Japanese collaboration is setting out to prove that this is not always the case.

It all began just five years ago when Ciel et Terre, a French solar energy company, saw a unique application for traditional solar panels. "In 2009 we [had] the first idea of using a large body of water to be able to install PV [photovoltaic devices], because in France you have a lot of industrial bodies of water that are used for absolutely nothing," says Eva Pauly, Ciel et Terre's international business manager.

So instead of installing solar panels on traditional surfaces like rooftops or on ground-mounted systems, Ciel et Terre became the first company in the world to build large-scale floating solar power plants on existing reservoirs.

The concept sounds otherworldly, but, in reality, generating energy from floating solar panels is not really any different from rooftop generation. "It's like a giant LEGO game," says Pauly. Solar panels mounted on recyclable plastic buoys are joined together to form a large floating grid, which is then anchored to the lake's floor. A waterproof electric cable transfers this energy to a lakeside power converter, which hooks up the electricity to the utility grid.

Catering to countries with limited space, the idea proved successful in early pilot projects in France. But what Ciel et Terre realised was that it was doing business in the wrong place. "We have quite a lot of barriers in Europe to building PV power plants," says Pauly, citing expensive grid-connection costs and a lengthy certification process. "So all this lack of viability forced a small company like us to think, where would our product be most suitable?"

That place, they decided, was Japan. A sensible choice

“WHERE WOULD OUR PRODUCT BE MOST SUITABLE?”

Eva Pauly



Sheeplands farm reservoir, Berkshire, UK

© © CIEL ET TERRE INTERNATIONAL


for a country so determined to become energy-independent that it's been considering ideas as wild as a solar plant orbiting in space. With an extreme shortage of land, plentiful sun, and strong government support for renewable energy sources, Japan appeared an ideal fit for Ciel et Terre's floating solar panels.

And they proved to be so last year with Japan's first floating solar panel project in Okegawa city, north of Tokyo. Commissioned by West Holdings Corporation, the Ciel et Terre installation produces over one megawatt of energy for the city's utility grid, enough to power about 400 households annually.

With the success of the first pilot project in Japan, Ciel et Terre was able to set its sights on grander opportunities. This meant

liaising with Japanese technology company Kyocera. "It's very important to have high-quality panels on our system, and Kyocera is one of the best panel manufacturers in the world," says Pauly. "And it's a Japanese company, which was important for us as well to be able to propose a local system that uses local content."

After a lengthy wooing process, Kyocera agreed to collaborate with Ciel et Terre on construction of the largest floating solar project in the world. "Ciel et Terre is a pioneer in this field, and no other vendors have a proven track record of completing such sizeable installations," says Ichiro Ikeda, general manager of the solar energy marketing division at Kyocera.

This past September, construction began on a three-megawatt installation just west of Osaka in Kato city, with solar panels supplied by Kyocera, floating platforms from Ciel et Terre, and financing from Century Tokyo Leasing Corporation. The collaboration aims for a whopping 60 megawatts to be generated by floating panels installed in various parts of the country by March 2015. Applying the Okegawa project calculations, that could power around 24,000 households annually. 

What IT's all about

Abenomics, globalisation and best practices

Text **DAVID UMEDA**

As the globalisation of Japan's economy intensifies, there are domestic industries aggressively responding with proprietary IT solutions.

"IT spending is on the rise as companies around the world and across industries embrace new developments in technology – such as cloud services, infrastructure virtualisation, big data and mobility – to generate new business opportunities while also reducing costs long term," explains Tomokazu Betzold, Director of Information Technology at Robert Walters Japan.

Japan Telegärtner has responded to the increasing demand for broadband networks and faster LAN connections, as well as to the sophisticated infrastructure that came with the expansion of FTT.

"We have established a sales system that

mainly deals with data and voice products, and fibre optics connection parts," points out Shin Iwamoto, President and CEO. "As the use of mobile phones increases, we are also providing various types of coaxial connectors for mobile communication base stations and wireless LAN systems."

Needed skill sets

Highly specialised personnel skills are needed in the implementation, maintenance and improvement of global ICT networks – critical in meeting global standards of greater transparency in operations and best practices in corporate governance.

In filling key IT job positions, certain industries are experiencing the greatest challenges as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration intensifies its efforts to boost competitiveness through regulatory reform – Abenomics' third arrow, and perhaps the most challenging one.

"Many traditional companies in Japan will face challenges in filling key posts for talented IT candidates," points out Lanis Yarzab, Managing Director

of Spring Professional Japan. "This is mainly due to legacy hiring systems which are based – first and foremost – on age and salary matrices, without due consideration to capability and talent."

Yarzab goes on to explain that, unfortunately, Abenomics' arrows do not address how companies can reform hiring in order to boost ICT. "This is where innovation would come from new ideas outside a matrix," she concludes.

While the role of IT in doing business in Japan will change dramatically as the year progresses in 2015, some requirements remain constant. "This [new developments in technology] has led to a surge in demand for qualified IT professionals, especially among the bilingual workforce here in Japan," says Betzold of Robert Walters.

In Japan, IT remains at the core of a globalising economy. [e](#)

Gerard Mulligan

Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce

www.ijcc.jp

Text and photo **MIKE DE JONG**

The formal economic relationship between Ireland and Japan dates back to 1973, with the Japan-Ireland Economic Association. The Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce was created in January 2008, with the backing of the Irish government and embassy in Japan. EURObiZ Japan spoke with Gerard Mulligan, the IJCC's newly elected president.

How many companies are represented by the IJCC and which are the leading firms?

We've got over 100 members, of which just over 30 are corporate members. And we cover all sectors: electrical, pharmaceutical, IT, financial services, education, legal and hotels. Some of the bigger contributors would be the Toyoko Inn Group ... and Diageo, which is synonymous with various well-known Irish brands such as Guinness and Baileys Irish Cream. In the pharmaceutical sector we have Takeda, which is a big, well-known global company; the Conrad Hotels; and food-service equipment supplier, H&K. They would be among our bigger companies.

Can you tell us two or three success stories – Irish firms with which the chamber has worked?

We work very closely with Toyoko Inn, which is beginning to have a huge presence in Asia, but are very interested in making inroads into the Irish market. They've actually bought a very famous residence in Ireland called Abbeville, the residence of a former prime minister of Ireland. They are looking to develop that. Obviously, Diageo is a company we work with closely as well. The Guinness brand is such a powerful brand in Japan. And a number of Irish whiskey brands have been making inroads as well, since Irish whiskey is going on a global boom again.

In what other areas are Irish firms making a mark in Japan and worldwide?

We've got a number of multinational and domestic companies who are ICT-related, so technology would be a strong point for Ireland at the moment. There is software development, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, as well as food items such as pork, beef, and high-grade dairy and nutritional products. Not many people know this, but Ireland is a huge player in the aircraft leasing and aviation services sectors. That's a huge business in Dublin. And [discount airline] Ryanair really forged a business model globally. They took the market by storm; people said they wouldn't last, that people would never fly with them. But now, you find that every country and every airline is trying to adopt that business model to some extent. So it's been very successful.

Are there any new Irish products that are becoming popular in Japan?

Maybe it's not unique, but Irish whiskey is making a significant impact on exports to Japan. In addition, Ireland is providing software for biometric security to a number of Japanese government ministries. And, we could also highlight Corvil, which deals in high-frequency trading software. They're actually supplying the Tokyo and Osaka stock exchange [now called the Japan Exchange Group]. We're also playing a key role in the thoroughbred horse racing industry, for high-grade nutritional feed and services.


Are there things that Irish businesses can learn from Japan?

In the service sector, it's about service quality. More than anything, service quality here is taken as a given. What



the Japanese are really after is service perfection, and their diligence and dedication to that concept is just fantastic. I think the rigour they bring to that whole process is phenomenal. The amount of effort, time and thought they invest in it actually exceeds what a lot of other countries can think about.

Ireland has benefited from membership in the European Union. Are you confident about the future of the EU?

I think we all have to be confident in the future of the EU. The important thing that people seem to forget is that currently people think of the EU as solely an economic body, with the sole objective of developing business and the economies of Europe. But you've got to remember, one of the reasons it came into existence was that – within the 20th century – there were two world wars that were started on the European continent. And so, European countries haven't always lived in peace and harmony with each other. So, with that as one of the fundamental objectives ... the European Union brings a lot more to the table than just economic gain. It's about supporting environmental concerns ... raising living standards, improving educational opportunities for the poorer countries, and helping smaller and poorer countries build their infrastructures so they can compete in the economic environment. I think, at the end of the day, these are going to be some of the reasons the European Union will continue to exist. 



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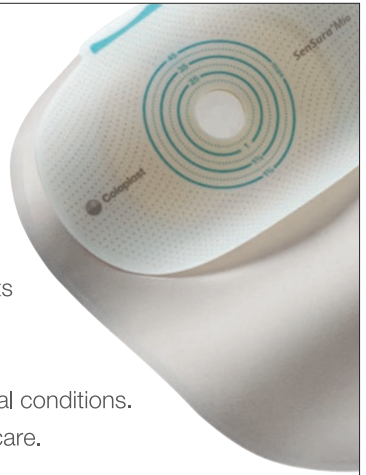
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Hong Kong's example

A victory for UK-style democracy



Despite the many usual shenanigans illustrated by members of a Japanese prime minister's cabinet, it is clear that the big story this month is Hong Kong. That feeds nicely into the narrative of Scotland's referendum, when a comfortable majority decided to stay within the UK. In Hong Kong, the story is the amazing resilience of democratic systems and their powerful hold over people's minds.

The UK came quite close to losing Scotland in a referendum where the bar for separation was set at a mere 50%. But the Union survived, and the long debate prior to the key vote is a model for similar debates worldwide. Where were the riots and police that you would see in so many other countries when the stakes were so high? The most dramatic event was the sight of David Cameron on TV as he tried to defuse the prospect of becoming the first Etonian to allow several million citizens to slip away.

Many in the media have accused Britain of betraying Hong Kong. What strikes me is the opposite. The people fighting China's manifestly corrupt and brutal regime in Hong Kong are inspired by the virtues and ideas born in the country that colonised them for 150 years.

Britain had a remarkably hands-off view of its Hong Kong colony and was perfectly happy to allow a small, efficient government to exist, focusing on trade and making money. It did not try to erase Hong Kong's Chinese identity — it simply ignored it. True, the colonial governor was powerful but he was always under the control of the democratically elected British parliament.

These developments for democracy are remarkable in an age when many

people are looking east — towards the seemingly successful regimes established by Russia and China. Yet, Russia's sense of national pride is based on dangerous brinkmanship in the Ukraine and easy petro-dollars.

“WHEN
DEMOCRACY IS
GENUINE, IT
PROVIDES A
FANTASTIC WAY
FOR CITIZENS TO
COMPLAIN”

China is being challenged on its own doorstep by its most sophisticated and open city. Time and again Hong Kong residents have fought against swapping UK colony status for the Chinese alternative. They fought against patriotic textbook changes pushed by the Beijing government, and against a white paper, which foolishly referred to Hong Kong's legal personnel as “administrators”. Now they are fighting a fake type of universal suffrage, which allows only candidates who have been vetted by a pro-Beijing electoral commission.

And contrary to the shameful call by a major Western accounting firm to back off, Hong Kong citizens are acting completely lawfully.

Indeed, full universal suffrage based on international standards is written into the Basic Law, even if the speed of the process is not stated.

I marvel how the Brits were able to sneak this explosive promise through. The Chinese were adamant that Britain needed to clear out of Hong Kong in 1997, even though in legal terms the Brits owned Hong Kong island (but not the adjacent mainland territory called the New Territories, whose lease ran out in 1997). The Chinese said bluntly that they simply did not accept the original 19th century treaty, which gave Hong Kong to Britain.

Deng Xiaoping was one of the toughest leaders China has ever produced, ordering troops to open fire on Tiananmen Square demonstrators in June 1989. Yet he was somehow persuaded by the UK to sign up publicly for full democracy in one of the most crucial cities in Asia. This is Britain's great achievement in Hong Kong.

When democracy is genuine, it provides a fantastic way for citizens to complain, threaten and even carry out major change without plunging a country into disorder. Like a chain mail shirt, it is tough and flexible at the same time. The recent success of democracy in the UK — both in terms of surviving the Scottish referendum and in its ability to inspire Hong Kong residents — should make any leader think very carefully before weakening democracy in his own country.

Let's hope politicians in Japan are taking note. 



DAN SLATER
is director of the
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Mastering marketing

James Hollow at the BCCJ
16 September 2014

Text and photo **ALLISON BETTIN**



Neon colours, huge fonts and a cluttering of graphics. From an outsider's perspective, these are the quintessential elements of Japanese advertisements. But to grow a successful marketing business in Japan, you've got to go much further. James Hollow, president of the successful marketing agency Lowe Profero Japan, shared his insights at an event hosted by the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan.

Lesson 1: Know your audience

Hollow first gained footing in Japan as a marketing strategist for a multinational media company. After a few years, he founded his own media start-up called Alien Eye in 2004, which aimed to make humorous videos in Japan. "We were British people, we like humour, we like to do clever, slightly sarcastic-type creative stuff," said Hollow. But cultural differences made this idea a flop – he found the Japanese sense of humour more slapstick than sarcastic. "[Sarcasm] just doesn't go anywhere in Japan," said Hollow. It was his first big lesson in entrepreneurship: know your audience.

Lesson 2: The right idea

Hollow's company Alien Eye had grown into a sturdy media firm by the time it was acquired by Lowe Profero in 2013, with clients like iTunes and Le Creuset. One of the biggest campaigns after the acquisition was for Norton anti-virus software, which he says had

a track record of boring advertisements.

To shake things up, the team created a 1980s-style superhero/robot that fought metaphorical computer viruses. The campaign was strongly reminiscent of old school manga and was a smash hit in Japan. "If you find a creative or cultural genre and stay very true to it, and really try and work with it without insulting it – and without annoying the people that love it – then you can make it a great thing," said Hollow. The viral videos garnered more than one million hits, and Norton gained the number one market share in the antivirus industry.

Hollow credited the campaign's success to its simple, solid idea. "It was kind of a counterpoint to all the technology stuff," he said. "It showed, actually, that [after] all the hype around technology as a scalable platform, nothing scales up faster or in a more compelling way than an idea, a really good idea."

Lesson 3: Technology as a solution

Japan is a technical person's paradise. In terms of revenue, it has the most profitable app market in the world. "It's a very mobile culture, it's a very urban culture; lots of people spend time commuting," said Hollow. "But I think also there's an appreciation of quality – that people will buy apps that they think are worth it. There's lots of money to be made if you come up with the right solution."


His team found that opportunity in a unique problem in Japan: epilepsy

“NOTHING SCALES UP FASTER OR IN A MORE COMPELLING WAY THAN AN IDEA”

treatment. Here, most people visit their family doctors, who tend to prescribe outdated epilepsy medicines instead of sending them to specialists. Seeing mobile apps as a potential solution, James and his team created Epi Diary, an app where epilepsy patients can record their condition and send it to their doctor before an appointment. Doctors would be able to prepare beforehand and prescribe more modern medicines.

"It's just an example of how really thinking hard about a particular set of circumstances created a block that technology can help fix," said Hollow.

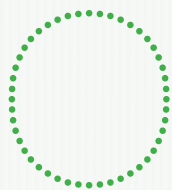
Lesson 4: Know yourself

Hollow ended his BCCJ talk with a few personal insights. "You've got to believe in the validity of your own experiences," he said, because not everyone can be a Facebook mastermind. "We can aspire to be someone like that, but you don't get there by aspiring. You get there by analysing your own experiences and sort of understanding what that means to you on your journey – and making that relevant to what you're doing and how you present it to clients." 

Sustainable Development//

Good for the environment and good for business

Text **GEOFF BOTTING**



Over the past few decades, Japan has poured its efforts into energy efficiency. Its factories consume relatively small amounts of power, while its citizens have been in the habit of heating or cooling their homes sparingly, room by room. The moves have been prompted mainly by high energy costs and energy shortages. Nonetheless, Japan today views itself as a world leader in energy conservation.

Yet, in some areas, awareness of sustainability is notably lacking, according to the EBC Sustainable Development Committee. Japanese homes leak energy like sieves, while agriculture continues to rely on potentially dangerous chemicals.

Companies and individuals here often argue in favour of maintaining the status quo, citing the prospect of higher (short-term) costs. The government is doing little to help the situation, providing "very few incentives to encourage consumers and businesses to change", the committee says in the EBC 2013 white paper.

Sustainable Development Key advocacy points

- **Improving awareness** - The government should raise awareness to point out the advantages of sustainable practices.
- **Organic food** - Abolish tariffs which make products exorbitantly expensive, and eliminate the need for certificates on every shipment.
- **Building construction** - The government should introduce incentives to make sustainable buildings more attractive to both builders and buyers.

Sustainable development refers to practices today that won't impose a burden on the environment tomorrow. The committee is one of the few within the EBC that is based on a concept rather than an industry. In the years since its inception, member firms have come and gone, and have spanned the industries of food, building construction, energy and consumer products.

They generally fall into two groups:

those that offer products and services that are sustainable, such as building insulation; and those that provide other companies or organisations with expertise, such as consulting.

Committee chairman John Mader, a senior project manager at Lend Lease Japan, is engaged in the latter category. Among his firm's activities is advising construction outfits on sustainable practices at worksites and helping clients certify their green buildings under the US-based Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system.

"More companies are thinking about sustainability in a holistic sense, such as 'Are we turning off the lights?' and 'Are we recycling the trash?'" he says.

The committee's objective is to help increase awareness about sustainable development in Japan and to work towards gaining better market access for European firms with sustainable products and expertise.

"The people who come into Japan with sustainable development products face the same tariff and non-tariff barriers as everyone else," adds Mader. Organic food is a prime example. It faces onerous

“MORE COMPANIES
ARE THINKING ABOUT
SUSTAINABILITY IN A
HOLISTIC SENSE”

John Mader

government certification procedures. Perhaps it's no surprise, then, that organic food accounts for only 0.4% of Japan's total food sales, about a 10th of the rate in Europe, according to the committee. "The availability is much lower than in Europe, and it's much more expensive," Mader notes.

One interesting angle about sustainable development, according to the committee chairman, is how the movement has led some companies in recent years to "discover" sustainability lying right under their noses. "You have companies that previously had not considered themselves sustainable, but then came up with a sustainable angle," says Mader.

A hypothetical example could be a maker of pots and pans. "They might sit down and say, 'Well, because our products are so durable – or are made by a process that doesn't use a lot of energy – then they're actually sustainable products.'"

And so the company would use sustainability as an angle in its marketing and might even become successful in Japan – if it fills the right niche. Foreign companies expecting to crack the

market here for eco-friendly products need to offer something unique and largely unavailable, according to the committee chairman. "If you have an energy-efficient air conditioner from, say, Italy, and you want to know if it will make it in Japan, then the answer is maybe not," Mader says.

In the case of another committee member, Saint-Gobain Japan, products include building insulation and other energy-saving materials for construction.

The firm aims to offer its technology and expertise, nurtured over many years in Europe, to Japan, where homes are notoriously under-insulated. People here spend the winters shivering and the summers sweating while at home.

The committee, as well as the EBC Construction Committee, has been making the case that the immediate benefits of the widespread adoption of higher levels of insulation are glaringly obvious: comfort and considerably lower utility bills.


The bigger picture involves global warming. Buildings are major producers of CO₂. That means more efficient insulation would help Japan

meet, among other things, its international commitments on curbing global warming.

The stumbling block is a lack of mandatory building standards aimed at energy conservation, in particular for properties under 300 square metres.

"The builders don't feel the obligation to install a good level of insulation, because they want [their projects] to cost less," says Valerie Moschetti, head of the Sustainable Habitat Initiative at Saint-Gobain. "In general in Japan, the people who build the houses are not the people who live in the houses.

"In Japan, when people talk about eco-houses, they talk mainly about high technology. They don't think about the envelope."

Indeed, a world of scarcer and expensive resources demands that people take a more holistic view of energy consumption. That may entail higher short-term costs. But the key benefit of sustainable development – apart from creating a safer and more comfortable environment for the future – is that over the long-term, costs come down. Apart from saving the environment, that's simply good business. 

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“

WE NEED
TO KEEP THE
STANDARD HIGH

Xavier Chapelou

”

Xavier Chapelou >

Sake sommelier

Text and photo **ROD WALTERS**

Dressed in a conservative black suit and discreet tie, Xavier Chapelou stands in front of the class with his nose deep inside a wine glass containing a pale, transparent liquid. He inhales deeply, swirls the glass around, inclines it to his nose and inhales again. "I'm getting lychee ... rose ... and hints of gingerbread." At first it sounds as though he's speaking his native French, but the words are English. "What about you? Anybody?" he asks the class. "Yoghurt? Yes!"

An expert in wines, Chinese liquor and sake, Chapelou is conducting a tasting at the Certified Sake Sommelier course. This time it's a *junmai ginjo* from Kyoto, but the class will try many other types including aged sake, with characteristics similar to sherry, and even sakes brewed in Finland and Holland. The students are from all over Europe, as well as one man from Hong Kong. Most are intimately involved in the food and beverage sector, but there's even a Japanese housewife living in London who is taking part to gain new insights on a familiar drink.

Chapelou is an acknowledged pioneer in bringing sake to international attention. He comes to Japan every year to teach a similar Advanced Sake Sommelier course at breweries in Kyoto and Kobe. Participants come from Europe and across Asia.

In 2004, Chapelou was the first person from outside Japan to pass the Kikisakeshi sake sommelier course offered by Japan's Sake Service Institute, and he has been in charge of sake and Chinese beverages at the Dorchester in London for over five years. In 2006, he established the Sake Sommelier Association (SSA) in London with his wife, Kumiko Ohta. Ohta grew up surrounded by the culture of sake in rural Shizuoka, and is now recognised as an expert. Today, alumni of the first courses in London are educating new sake sommeliers around the world.

With the number of sake breweries declining from 2,175 in 1995 to 1,260 today, Chapelou felt a sense of crisis. With many young Japanese turning their backs on sake, perceiving it as an old man's drink, he saw the need to rekindle their interest in the national beverage. Knowing from personal experience how readily Japanese follow trends from abroad, Chapelou decided the best way to help revive sake was to establish the custom of pairing it with Western food in restaurants outside Japan, and then importing this culture back into Japan as the new fashion.

Participants on the sake sommelier course were astounded by the range of types and tastes that sake offers. In restaurants outside Japan, the choice is typically limited to hot or cold, or a couple of pricey *ginjo*. For one student who runs an *izakaya*-style eatery in the suburbs

of Venice, the course was a revelation. "I thought I was offering a good selection, but now I realise there's so much more to choose from. I'm going to revise my sake list completely, and Xavier's going to help me source some of the sake we tried."

Besides its education activities on the consumer side, the SSA also provides brewers with an opportunity to break into overseas markets through the London Sake Challenge, a competition to pick brands that will do well in Europe. The products are judged by the SSA's qualified sommeliers at the one-day event at Harrod's tasting room in London.

"Other organisations that hold wine competitions add sake as an afterthought," says Chapelou. "They judge 600 sake at a time, which is ridiculous. Nobody can maintain their discernment for so many. But the London Sake Challenge is only for sake, and we limit the number of entrants."

Breweries from all over Japan vie for recognition and approval to gain advantage in the expanding European market for sake.

Back in the classroom, students have finished their written tests and have done their blind sake tasting. Unusually, everybody has passed this time.

"I was very surprised. This group was especially well-qualified," adds Chapelou. "But normally a certain percentage fail to make the grade. We need to keep the standard high." **e**

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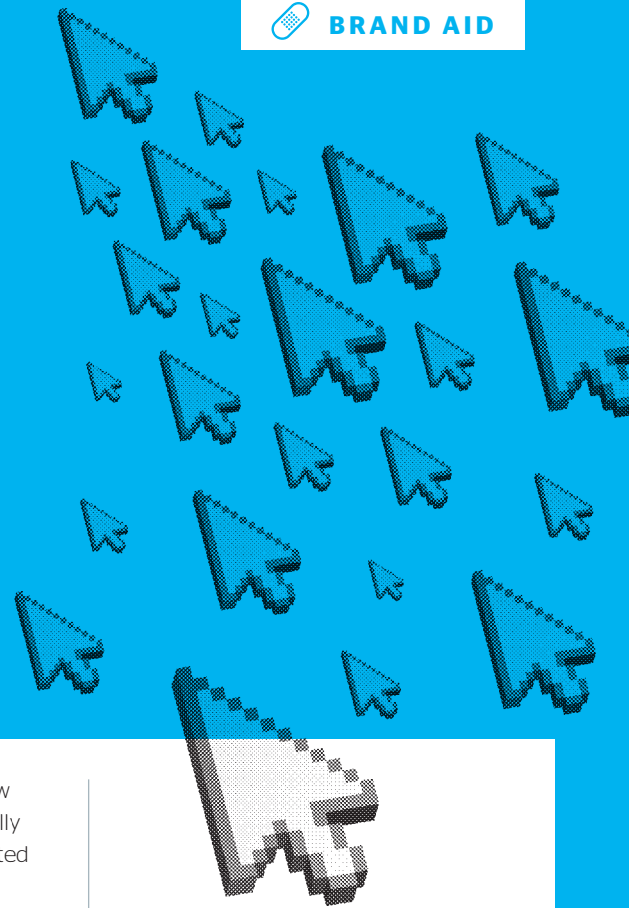
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Building brand

Rediscovering the virtue of sharing



The digital world in which all brands now live has resulted in three megatrends: the socialisation of media, the consumerisation of business, and the digitisation of information. Whether on the agency side or in-house, as custodians of brands, all marketers and communicators are faced with increasing complexity in building brands and brand loyalty. Simply getting your brand message out is not enough anymore. Brands must become “living brands” – nimble and agile as persons, relatable and able to speak at the speed of now. They share vision and values with people more openly – and are open to people’s participation. Sharing happens on multiple platforms and goes far beyond telling consumers to share content, or like a brand video or message.

Obviously, the key to successfully building a brand – or loyalty to that brand – is determining what consumers truly want. Big data, social analytics and a multitude of other tools now exist to assist us in drilling down as far as individual consumers – to assess what kind of behaviour they really desire from a brand. But often, it is better to take a step back and look at the big picture. This is what Edelman has done in its “Brandshare” survey.

The trigger for undertaking this survey was a simple thought. The digital world has brought to us a profound shift in the meaning of “share”. It has gone from a virtue to a click. So, we set out to determine what would happen if brands were to rediscover the virtue of sharing. We looked at which sharing behaviours

would be important to people, how important those behaviours actually were to people, and if people wanted more of them. Also, finally, the link to real business value – did sharing behaviour by brands actually influence consumer and purchase behaviour?

Globally, the results were overwhelmingly supportive of our thesis


“WE IDENTIFIED SIX DIMENSIONS OF SHARING APPROPRIATE TO BRANDS THAT RESONATE WITH CONSUMERS”

that consumers want brands to share – some 90% of respondents indicated such a desire. Yet, only 10% felt that brands were actually sharing well.

At this stage, the reader is probably thinking, “Yeah, that makes sense. But share what?”

We identified six dimensions of sharing appropriate to brands that resonate with consumers: shared dialogue, shared experience, shared goals, shared values, shared product, and shared history.

Shared dialogue is all about creating a meaningful conversation with consumers and allowing them to share stories. The operative word here is “conversation”. That means creating a platform for listening to consumers and allowing them to express their opinions – not just putting out what you think is a meaningful message. Shared experience is about giving more experiences than just the product – and making each of those experiences special.

Shared goals and values indicate that the brand is aligned with what is important for people and that the brand is truly interested in helping them achieve success. Shared product is about giving people a voice in personalising the product through engaged input and feedback. Shared history is the realisation that your brand history is secretly seductive. Shared history may, in fact, be the glue that shows your brand has been consistent in its dialogue, goals and values over the long term. 



ROSS ROWBURY
is president of
Edelman Japan.



Eyeing *izakaya*

Photos **LEE CHAPMAN**

Tokyo is well known for having the highest number of Michelin-starred restaurants in the world. But what isn't so well known is the large number of old-fashioned, cheap and cheerful *izakaya* that the metropolis boasts. Their origins date back to the Edo era. These places normally serve simple fare, from *yakitori* to *gyoza*, along with whatever the owner has decided to cook that evening. All of it served with utterly unpretentious aplomb, making these tiny eateries perfect for dining, drinking and soaking up the past. **e**





PRIME RIB SET

Just how you like it!



The Outback's Prime Rib is juicy slices of delicious roast beef, cooked to perfection by our expert chefs, and available after 17:00 at dinnertime on weekends.



When it comes to our Prime Rib set, how hungry you are will decide which of our 3 distinct cuts of beef is your preference. From our Small Cut (250g), Medium

Cut (350g) to our robust Large Cut (450g) for hearty eaters.

ORIGINAL



Our versatile chefs can cook your choice of Prime Rib in 3 mouth-watering styles. We recommend the Original for those diners wanting to savour the pure flavour of juicy roast beef. If you're looking

to get the most out of a tender cut, then Seared quickly seals in the flavours. Our Flame Grilled style allows for a smoky, bold flavour that brings out the hearty texture of your roast beef.



SEARED

Whatever the cut and cooking style, all of our Prime Rib sets are accompanied by traditional au jus sauce, a choice of 2 freshly prepared sides, and a salad or a cup of the Soup of the Day.



FLAME GRILLED



Roppongi
03-5413-4870

Shibuya
03-5459-7751

Minami-Machida
042-788-3360

Makuhari
043-213-3256

Osaka Umeda
06-6457-7121

**Bar & Grill
Shinagawa Konan**
03-6718-2761

Shinagawa Takanawa
03-5798-3501

Ikebukuro
03-5928-1391

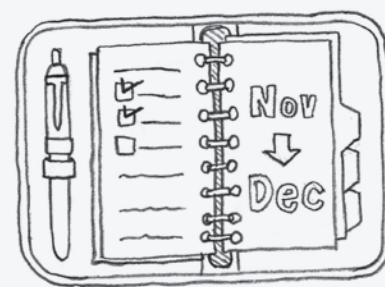
Ebina
046-292-4286

Nagoya Sakae
052-968-7800

WWW.OUTBACKSTEAKHOUSE.CO.JP/EN



Upcoming events

Compiled by **DAVID UMEDA**

► **Belgian-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce in Japan**
www.blccj.or.jp

Monthly Beer Gathering

17 November, Monday, 19:00-23:00

Venue: Belgian beer café in Tokyo

Fee: Pay for what you drink

Contact: info@blccj.or.jp

BLCCJ Annual Gala Ball

20 November, Thursday, 18:30-23:00

Venue: Conrad Tokyo, Shiodome

Fee: ¥21,000 (members), ¥25,000 (non-members)

Contact: info@blccj.or.jp

► **British Chamber of Commerce in Japan**
www.bccjapan.com

2014 British Business Awards

14 November, Friday, 18:30-22:30

Venue: Hilton Tokyo, Kiku Room, Nishi-Shinjuku

Cost: ¥27,000

Contact: info@bccjapan.com

► **French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan**
www.ccfj.or.jp

Lunch & Conference*

21 November, Friday, 12:00-14:00

Speaker: Toshiaki Kurokawa, president of Porsche Japan

Venue: Hotel Hyatt Regency, Shinjuku

Fee: ¥6,000

Contact: www.ccfj.or.jp

* In collaboration with the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan, German Chamber of Commerce in Japan and Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Japan.

► **Ireland Japan Chamber of Commerce**
www.ijcc.jp

Business Awards Dinner

20 November, Thursday, 19:00-23:00

Venue: Conrad Tokyo, Hamarikyu Ballroom

Contact: secretariat@ijcc.jp

IJCC Family Christmas Party

7 December, Sunday

Contact: secretariat@ijcc.jp

► **Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan**
www.iccj.or.jp

Finger Food Workshop

17 November, Monday, 19:00-21:30

Speaker: Germano Orsara, chef, Elio Locanda Italiana

Venue: Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

Fee: ¥4,000 (members), ¥5,000 (non-members)

Contact: promo@iccj.or.jp

Franciacorta Cuisine Workshop

3 December, Wednesday

Speaker: Vittorio Fusari, chef, Michelin-starred Franciacorta

Venue: Italian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

Fee: ¥4,500 (members), ¥5,500 (non-members)

Contact: promo@iccj.or.jp

ICCJ Gala Dinner & Concert 2014

5 December, Friday, from 19:00

Venue: The Westin Tokyo, Ebisu

Fee: ¥25,000 (members), ¥28,000 (non-members)

Contact: promo@iccj.or.jp

► **Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan**
www.sccij.jp

Year-end Party 2014

22 November, Saturday, from 18:00

Venue: Hilton Tokyo, Shinjuku

Contact: info@sccij.jp

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► **Multi-chamber Events**

Stora Enso Cup — Sweden-Finland Golf Challenge in Japan

28 November, Friday, 08:00-17:00

Venue: Taiheiyo Club Gotemba West, Shizuoka Prefecture

Fee: ¥18,000

Contact: iccj@gol.com and office@sccj.org

Joint Scandinavian Christmas Ball*

12 December, Friday, 18:30-24:00

Venue: The Westin Tokyo, Ebisu

Fee: ¥19,000

Contact: *respective chambers*

* The 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 in Japan.

Martin Fluck

*Director of operations for
North Asia, Oakwood Worldwide*

Oakwood is a global leader and provider of serviced apartments in more than 70 countries including Japan. In Tokyo, Oakwood operates three product tiers: Oakwood Premier, Oakwood Residence and Oakwood Apartments, each designed for a different lifestyle and need, and are in eight locations, including prime areas of Akasaka, Roppongi and Aoyama.

"At Oakwood, we are committed to consistent excellence to meet the continuing, as well as emerging, needs of our globally mobile clients and guests – providing the best possible home away from home," says Martin Fluck, North Asia director of operations, Oakwood Worldwide.



Photo **GENEVIEVE SAWTELLE**





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For details and reservations, please visit our website at oakwoodasia.com

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