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INTERVIEW

“We want to bring the true essence of a pleasant life to our customers”

Interview with Mr. Hensley Chen, Store Manager, MUJI Zurich Glatt

We continue our series on companies which helped during the crisis. For this month, we are very happy to introduce MUJI. MUJI is appreciated all around the world and was eagerly awaited in Switzerland until the grand opening of its first Swiss shop in Zurich Glatt on October 2019.

Can you briefly introduce MUJI and its business in Switzerland?

MUJI is an abbreviation of the Japanese “Mujirushi Ryohin” which translates to “No brand quality products”. We are an internationally successful company in the field of fashion and lifestyle articles. We currently have close to 1,000 stores worldwide with approximately 20,000 employees. MUJI Switzerland AG, with our new permanent store at the same address, currently employs more than 30 staff.

Traditionally, Japanese people have, through their respect for nature, been able to blend into their local environments and enjoy the time spent with their families throughout the four seasons. MUJI values the richness of such good traditional values. While maintaining a



MUJI's first store in Switzerland at Zurich Glatt.

close relationship with our customers, we want to continue to propose to our customers the true essence of a “pleasant life” that is neither “imposing” nor “bound by current trends”. It is my understanding that Swiss people also place a large emphasis on their environment.

We would like our customers in Switzerland to see the similarities between the Swiss and Japanese cultures and see how MUJI can contribute to the local community and enrich their lives through our products.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a shock for everyone; how have you reacted to it?

While news about the Covid-19

outbreak already began to spread at the start of the year, we only actually began to feel its effects in April.

Customer traffic in the mall where we are situated gradually declined, and the decision by the Federal Council to implement the lockdown was sudden.

During the first few days of the lockdown, both our physical store and online store were closed.

Soon after, we came up with measures to cope with the situation and resumed operations of our online store about a week later.

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We want to bring the true essence of a pleasant life to our customers

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会見

INTERVIEW

Since most of our staff could not report for work due to the various restrictions set by the authorities, MUJI registered for short-term work with the authorities to minimize the possibility of laying off any staff.

What kind of internal measures have you implemented at MUJI?

Firstly, to prepare for our re-opening on the 11th of May, we made sure that proper measures were taken to protect our customers and staff alike in light of the current situation.

While adhering to distancing regulations advised by the authorities, we made several demarcations in the store to maintain that distance. We provide masks, gloves and alcohol disinfectant for staff use, and alcohol disinfectant for our customers at the store's entrance. Floors and shelves in the store are cleaned with disinfectant daily. We quarantine clothes that were fitted on for more than 8 hours to reduce the risk of any virus spread through contact.

Your company is also helping others; what kind of help are you providing?

In May, MUJI Switzerland AG donated 50 Aroma Diffusers and Essential Oils to an organization in Geneva called Hôpitaux Universitaires Genève (HUG), which consists of various healthcare facilities. Our aim was to help to create calm and relaxing working environments for healthcare workers who



“No brands, quality products”: MUJI proposes fashion and lifestyle articles

might have been feeling stressed out during the lockdown period.

You also helped in other countries; can you tell us where and why?

In Europe, we have donated products such as:

Beds – For healthcare workers who were unable to travel home during the initial phase of the outbreak.

Socks – For healthcare workers who were unable to travel home during the initial phase of the outbreak.

Free-cut Raincoats – For healthcare facilities that did not have enough medical gowns.

Masks – For civil servants who use masks on a daily basis but did not have access to sufficient amounts.

Why was it important for MUJI to do something?

We believe that whenever a MUJI store opens in a new country or city, we inevitably become a part of that community.

As a part of the community, we thought that it was only natural to help out others who are in need when we have the means to do so.

What do you expect in the coming months?

While things will gradually return to how they were over the next few months, there will be some inherent changes.

People are now placing a greater emphasis on their health and living spaces, and how to improve on the quality of life.

Since MUJI's philosophy is to communicate the meaning of living a “pleasant life” to our customers, we believe that there will be an increasing number of customers who will begin to understand and appreciate MUJI's concept and philosophy.

In the coming months, we look forward to increased brand awareness for MUJI and deeper integration into the Swiss community.

Covid-19: Latest measures taken in Switzerland and Japan

The situation has slightly evolved since last month. On July 6, the Swiss Government made wearing masks mandatory on public transport. At the same time, the government de-escalated from the state of emergency, letting the cantons handle the containment of the number of cases themselves. The situation varies greatly from one region to another, and this will therefore provide the necessary flexibility to deal with it on a case-by-case basis. The Jura and Vaud cantons have already taken additional measures, such as requiring masks to be worn in shops. Others

reduced the maximal number of persons allowed in bars and night-clubs down to 100 to reduce the risk of an unmanageable cluster.

A 10-day quarantine is also necessary when returning from [29 countries](#).

Following the recommendations of the EU Council, on 20 July, the Federal Department of Justice and Police FDJP intends to remove 19 countries from the list of countries considered to be a high risk. Japan is one of the countries currently included. Travelers from Japan will be free to visit Switzerland starting from July 20, without restrictions.

The list redacted by the EU council, adopted by Switzerland as well, is based on reciprocity. Japan is therefore expected to also lift the inbound restriction for EU and Swiss citizens in the near future. For the moment, however, no announcement has been made. Japanese citizens travelling back to Japan are still subject to a two-week quarantine upon return, and Swiss travellers are not yet authorized to enter Japan (a few exceptions apply). Therefore, we strongly recommend all travellers to check before planning any trip.

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TREND

White Paper on International Economy and Trade 2020

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry has published its annual White Paper on trade, and it was impossible to ignore the ongoing pandemic and its economic consequences.

The spread of COVID-19 has had the worst effects on the world economy since the Great Depression in the 1930s. The White Paper shows the states and structures which were mostly affected by the novel coronavirus crisis worldwide.

By nature, a virus especially affects urban centres, where most of the economic activities are concentrated. Plus, by forcing us to reduce face-to-face interactions and limiting the number of people in a same place, a pandemic has repercussions on both demand and offer. This is unprecedented, particularly at this magnitude.

Among the recommendations which the paper gives, emphasis is put on the importance of international cooperation, calling for an upgrade of globalization and the building of resilient supply chains. The acceleration of digitalization is also a key aspect as it would allow

us to better cope with potential future crises. Lastly, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals remains an essential aspect to take into consideration in order to cope with the current and future global crises.

活動

ACTIVITY

White Paper on International Economy and Trade: 2020

- The world is facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. COVID-19 has limited our face-to-face interactions, creating new challenges for the global economy and international society.
- To overcome this ongoing crisis, we should achieve a resilient economic and social system to flexibly respond to shocks and ensure sustainable development.

1. The Coronavirus Pandemic Triggers a Global Economic Crisis	Quarterly World GDP (IMF)	3. Globalization Past, Present and Future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Great Lockdown recession is the worst since the Great Depression. ✓ Nature of COVID-19 crisis: limit on face-to-face interactions → "supply shock" + "demand shock" → "employment/ income shock" ✓ International collective actions are needed to deal with the current global crisis on infection and economy. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Globalization has fostered exchange of goods, people, money, and ideas, developing the world economy. ✓ Globalization lowered the cost of moving goods, moving ideas, and moving people (face-to-face). ✓ Both telepresence and telerobotics allow workers to perform tasks inside another nation without actually being there. ✓ Online communication has spread more rapidly due to COVID-19 crisis.
2. What Coronavirus Reveals About the Structures of Our World	Global supply chain disruption	4. The Way Forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The supply chain disruption can be seen in efficient production system (inventory, cross-border production sharing), flexible logistics (land, maritime, air), and human mobility within/across borders. ✓ Geographic concentration of production of vital supplies. ✓ Shortage of medical products and emergency measures. ✓ Limit on face-to-face interactions show the value of digital technology. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We aim to achieve a resilient economic and social system to deal with crises flexibly and to ensure sustainable development. ✓ We aim to enhance global governance to prevent divisive forces and to bring unifying forces for international cooperation, to make the emergency measures temporary, and to deal with true global challenges. ✓ We aim to have resilient supply chains to prepare for and to deal with the next crisis. ✓ We aim to turn this crisis into an opportunity to promote digitalization and evolution of communication.

The White Paper 2020 is available [METT's website](#)

革新

INNOVATION

Leading pharmaceutical companies jointly working on new antibiotics

On July 9, global leading pharmaceutical companies joined their forces to cope with the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) by jointly creating the [AMR action fund](#).

Antibiotics-resistant infections are rapidly spreading. Thousands of people are dying every year because current antibiotics - possibly the most powerful tool in healthcare - no longer suffice.

According to the AMR action fund, the antibiotic pipeline is close to collapsing. Despite the huge societal costs of AMR, there is no viable market for new antibiotics.

Therefore, promising antibiotics never actually make it to the market.

The mission of the fund is to overcome key technical and funding barriers during the late stages of an

antibiotic development. The fund was created by world-leading pharmaceutical companies, including Japanese ones such as Chugai Pharmaceutical, Daiichi-Sankyo, Eisai, Shionogi and Takeda, as well as Swiss ones such as Roche and Novartis.

The fund was also developed in collaboration with the World Health Organization, the European

Investment Bank, and the Wellcome Trust.

Concretely, the fund will invest more than 1 billion dollars in smaller biotech companies to bring 2-4 new antibiotics to patients by 2030. The fund will also provide industry expertise to support the clinical development of novel antibiotics.



Screenshot from the [presentation video](#) of the AMR Action Fund

Agenda

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AGENDA

- ✓ **Switzerland Food and Nutrition Valley Webinar**
 Target audience: Japanese companies looking to collaborate with Swiss start-ups and Swiss Institutes (Other companies can also join).
 July 21, 2020, 9-10.20am (Swiss Time)
 Webinar in English/Japanese (simultaneous interpretation)
 Program and registration [here](#) (Japanese), the program is also available in English following this [link](#)

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online:
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

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