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Growth Opportunities for Swiss Medical Device Companies in Japan



Charles Ochsner, Lawyer,
CH Project Management Ltd, Tokyo



Martin Stricker, Director,
G&S Japan K.K., Tokyo



Susana de Azevedo Wasch, Head of Global
Regulatory Affairs, Geistlich Pharma AG

A seminar on the Japanese medical devices industry was held in Bern on February 12. It was organized by JETRO in collaboration with Switzerland Global Enterprise (S—GE), Medical Cluster, ConCep+ and Swiss—Japanese Chamber of Commerce (SJCC).

It was a unique occasion to gather experts from the sector that gave useful advices on doing business in Japan and talked about their experience in Japan.

H.E. Mr. Maeda, Ambassador of Japan in Switzerland, pointed out the high growth potential of the medical technology market in Japan, a country that counts the most ageing population worldwide.

Following his welcome address, presentations were made by experts of the sector. The seminar also included a panel discussion and was closed by a networking

aperitif.

It attracted a total of 50 participants from the field of the medical technology or pharma industry.

Highly health conscious population

Japan is a 30 billion dollars market, the second biggest market in the world, after the USA. This is of course due to a population of more than 125 million inhabitants, but this is also thanks to a highly health conscious population. Indeed, as Martin Stricker, Director at G&S, Tokyo, said: “the Japanese go twice as often to the doctors than their European counterparts, the average hospital stays is three times longer than in other OECD countries”. These facts make Japan a top

growth destination for foreign medical devices companies, a destination that already counts 45% of foreign companies in the field.

Success in Japan: a few tips

Before entering the Japanese market, it is essential to conduct market studies to understand the specific needs of the Japanese customers; particularly in a country where the customer rules the game.

Martin Stricker said: “Do your homework before entering the Japanese market”. To make it in Japan, the candidate company should keep in mind that Japan is unique in many points.

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H.E. Ryuhei Maeda,
Ambassador of Japan to Switzerland

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A clear understanding of the Japanese sociocultural aspects is crucial and should not be underestimated. To sum up: patience, long term objectives, hierarchical organization and group oriented. However, Charles Ochsner, lawyer and general counsel at CHPM in Tokyo, insisted on the fact that if a company overcomes all the inherent difficulties of the Japanese market, then it should be rewarded by a great success. He further emphasized: "Once the company is successful in Japan this is a label of quality and a door opener to enter other Asian Market".

Regulatory agency

Regarding the approval process of medical devices, the very first step is to contact the PMDA

(Pharmaceutical and Medical Devices Agency): the Japanese regulatory agency, working together with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Their regulators will supervise and actively assist the applicant to acquire necessary licenses, approvals, registration or any other regulatory requirements. In the case of dispute, Charles Ochsner said we should keep in mind one of the rules of the Japanese business manners: "the peaceful resolution of conflicts". Resulting from this rule, Japan counts 1 lawyer per 7,000 inhabitants, whereas Switzerland has 1 lawyer per 900 inhabitants!

Which entity to choose?

Mr. Ochsner also described the different options one can have when entering into Japan: distributors, branch or subsidiaries. To find a distributor is the best option in term of costs, but in terms of market share and image the best is to have a subsidiary. It shows the Japanese partners that the foreign company is planning a long-term presence, and in Japan long term is a synonym of trust.

Experience in Japan

Representatives of the company Debiotech and Geistlich Pharma both showed how important it was to have a good network in Japan. Dr. De Azevedo, head of Global Regulatory Affairs at Geistlich Pharma AG, went through the



Panel discussion



Networking aperitif

whole regulatory process to get a certification in Japan, which is very long and requires a good understanding of the Japanese standards. She enthusiastically concluded: "I loved this challenge!".

Panel discussions

The event ended with a panel discussion perfectly conducted by Beatus Hofrichter, CEO of the think-tank ConCep+. The discussion was about the perspectives of the Medtech Sector in Japan. Among other ideas, Martin Stricker imagined that Japan could be a medical tourist destination and Charles Ochsner saw a bright future in Japan for Swiss companies active in robotic.

At last the event was a new occasion to hear the services offered by organizations like JETRO and S-GE.

Japan's current economic situation

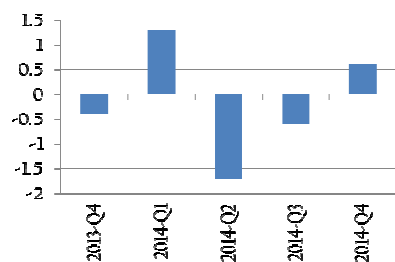
According to the Bank of Japan, "Japan's economy has continued its moderate recovery trend" (report issued in February 2015).

As shown on the graph, Japan's GDP grew 0.6% in the fourth quarter of 2014, marking an increase by 2.2% at annualized rate.

Japan's exports increased 17.0% in January 2015 from the previous

year, up 22.6% for Asia, 16.8% for North America and 8.2% for Western Europe. Due to the recovery of exports and to the downfall in oil prices, the trade deficit declined 57.8% on the same period.

The consumer price index increased 2.4% over the year to 103.1 in January 2015 (2010=100).



Gross Domestic Product, Changes from the previous quarter (seasonally adjusted)
Cabinet Office

動向

SITUATION

About 700 participants in Japan Night 2015

Japan Night 2015 took place on January 22, in Davos, on the occasion of the World Economic Forum. This event gathered this year about 700 participations. A variety of Japanese food was provided, including sushi, maki, noodles...

A total of 47 types of sakes were also offered, one per Japanese prefecture.

Participants enjoyed very much this large variety of sake. Some of them said: "It goes well with Washoku (Japanese cuisine)"; "Each bottle of sake is unique and beautiful".



Yoshiko Kijima, Chairman of the Board,
Mitsubishi Corporation



Variety of Japanese sake

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ACTIVITY

Paintings inspired by Japanese art exhibited in Zurich

From February 20 to May 10, 2015, Kunsthaus Zürich holds an art exhibition called "Monet, Gauguin, van Gogh... Japanese Inspirations".

It displays a total of about 350 paintings, woodblock prints and artefacts by European and Japanese artists.

Focusing on the years from 1860 to 1910, Kunsthaus Zürich's exhibition is devoted to the admiration

and inspiration drawn by the great masters of this period from Japanese pictorial motifs and characteristic style.

"Monet, Gauguin, van Gogh... Inspiration Japan", February 20—May 10, 2015, Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, Zurich

On the right: Claude Monet Water-Lily Pond, 1899 Oil on canvas, 89 × 93 cm State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow (with permission of Kunsthaus Zürich)



文化

CULTURE

革新

INNOVATION

Development of green car infrastructures in Japan

Infrastructures related to electric vehicles as well as fuel-cell vehicles are being developed rapidly in Japan.

More charging points than gas stations

According to Nissan Motor Corporation, Japanese No. 2 automaker, Japan has now a total of 40,000 electric charging points, including the ones located in private homes, against 34,000 gas stations.

Acceleration of the development of hydrogen infrastructures

Toyota Motor Corporation, Nissan Motor Corporation and Honda Motor Corporation have agreed to jointly accelerate the development of hydrogen infrastructures for fuel



Showcase of Nissan's Leaf
(Geneva Motor Show 2012)



Showcase of Honda's FCEV Concept
(Geneva Motor Show 2014)

cell vehicles (FCVs).

As mentioned in a joint press release (February 12, 2015), "For hydrogen-fueled FCVs to gain popularity, it is not only important that attractive products be launched—hydrogen station infrastructure must also be developed".

To this end, the Japanese govern-

ment adopted in June 2015 the "Strategic Road Map for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells". It does not only subsidize the installation of hydrogen stations, but also includes measures to encourage the demand for setting up hydrogen station.

Agenda

- ✓ Late March to early April: Enjoy cherry blossoms at Ariana Park in Geneva
On commemorating last year's 150th anniversary of the diplomatic relationship between Switzerland and Japan, around 20 cherry trees are donated to the city of Geneva from JCG (Japan Club of Geneva). This is a symbol of friendship between Japanese community and local residents in Geneva.
Furthermore, ten additional cherry trees will be planted this year from March 16 to 20.

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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