

Interview with Consultant Yvonne Burton



Yvonne Burton

Technology and Business Communications Consultant
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Q1: What is your current work? And how did you start doing this work?

I am founder and principal consultant of Burton Consulting International. I specialize in business communication and Tech Fluency (i.e., proficiency and ease of using technology tools) skills development for Japanese individuals and companies.

In the course of my work over the years since I moved home from living in Japan, I saw talented Japanese professionals who, due to lack of confidence in their speaking abilities or technology knowledge, were not performing at the high level they were capable of. I created Burton Consulting International to use my Japanese cross-cultural background, my 20+ years of technology business analysis expertise, and communications experience. My goal is to help these Japanese business leaders and professionals overcome the language, technology, and cultural communication barriers limiting their productivity, progress, and success in doing business globally.

Q2: What is your impression of Boston as an ecosystem for startups?

On the east coast, the two main innovative and dynamic cities are New York City and the Boston area. Both have great universities and skilled talent from all over the world. Boston has greater advantages for start-ups especially in the life sciences and technology arena. Its institutions foster creativity, and spark collisions of intellect and perspective to create a perfect storm that breeds innovation.

Boston also provides the systems, support infrastructure, and financial opportunities that nurture the entrepreneurial and offer companies all they need outside of their own expertise to build successful enterprises.

Q3: How was your experience being a speaker in CIC's Startup City Acceleration Program organized in collaboration with JETRO?

It was a validating and wonderful experience. This is the reason I created my business, to assist Japanese companies of any size develop the necessary skills and confidence to effectively communicate and collaborate globally and create business success. I am thrilled that CIC and JETRO recognize the need for these types of programs, especially now with the ever-increasing interdependencies in global business, and that both organizations are committed to providing these start-up companies, made up of talented and innovative individuals, with the necessary guidance, support, and technological tools to function, thrive and succeed in the global marketplace.

Q4: What was your impression of the Japanese startups who met in the Startup City Acceleration Program?

My impression is always of amazement and admiration. These are incredibly brilliant people who are experts in their fields of endeavor. They understand the challenges facing them in doing business with international counterparts and are investing the time and resources necessary to develop the skills needed for their success. They came willing to learn and engage, participated with questions that allowed for deeper comprehension of the training materials.

One of the most essential criteria needed in these times is the right mindset. These start-ups from Japan are venturing out of their comfort zone and challenging themselves in new and different ways. They have the mindset for learning, exploration, and expansion. This will further develop their critical thinking skills, create new operational opportunities for their businesses, and open new modes of interacting with colleagues within their own companies and externally.

Q5: Do you have any tips/advice for Japanese startups who are hoping to expand overseas in Boston?

Build on the connections you are making with mentors, speakers, and the participants in the program. These relationships will serve you throughout the years of having your business. It is possible to create strong relationships and community virtually – it just takes planning and effort.

Also I recommend working to create a culture of continuous learning in your organization. Continue learning and developing skills outside of your expertise. Do not be afraid to make mistakes - that is how you grow, gain insights, and improve the next time. Make Tech Fluency (technology skills) training a part of your company strategy. Using tech tools effectively is key to collaborating globally.

Differentiate yourself—Boston (or any innovation center) is a magnet for start-ups looking for assistance. How is your company going to stand out? Highlight your uniqueness by focusing on creativity, agility, and adaptability. Build a strong presentation with a solid plan, strategy, objectives, and milestones. Demonstrate deeper benefits. Go beyond money.