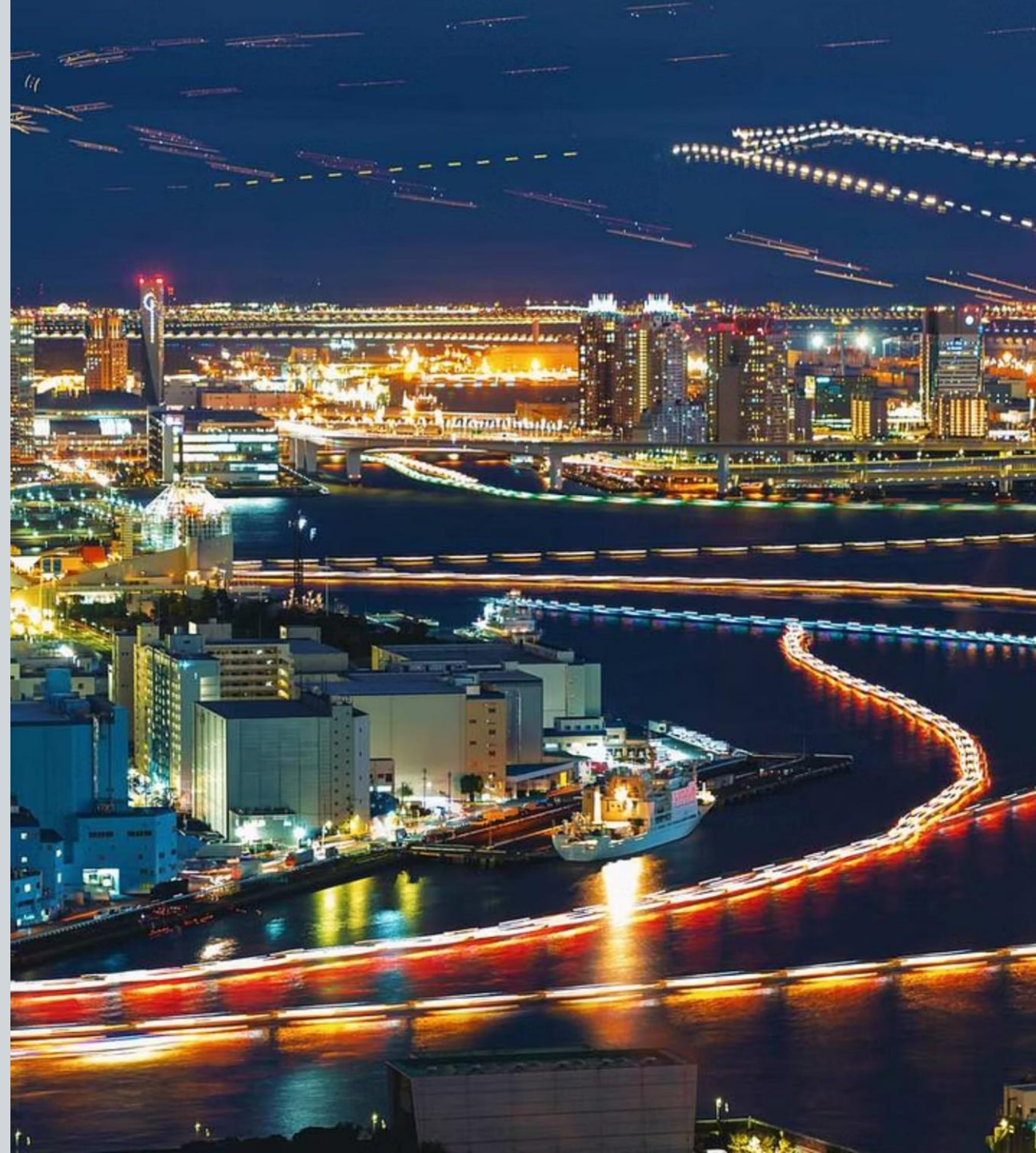


Helping Japanese Food and Drink Businesses Win in the UK

Mark Field
CEO - Prof Consulting Group

A strategic guide to winning in the UK market through an OEM strategy, prepared for JETRO.

JULY 2026



Prof Consulting Group

Our Story

Founded in 2019, Prof Consulting Group was launched as the culmination of nearly a decade leading the **\$9 billion Private Label division for Coles Supermarkets** in Australia.

Prior to this, significant expertise was garnered in the UK's fresh food manufacturing industry through senior technical roles supplying leading European retailers and global QSR brands.

Today, the group operates a team of **35 associates**, all of whom have held extensive senior leadership roles at household-name brands or retailers.

Why Us

- **Retailers First, Consultants Second**
Authentic, hands-on industry experience that goes beyond theory.
- **Execution-Focused**
An operating model built around delivering tangible results, not just recommendations.
- **Trusted Partners**
Long-term, referral-based clients who trust us with their most complex challenges — in the trenches alongside them.
- ⇒ **Best-in-Class Credentials**
Industry credentials that bring immediate credibility across retail, manufacturing and supply chain.

ABOUT US

Prof Consulting Group

Meet Mark

20 years international food manufacturing supply OEM products to leading retailers, Food Service and QSRs

10 years leading international sourcing strategy for a major retailer, identifying and building supplier capability and strategic partnerships

Today consulting across high growth grocery markets supporting Retailers, Private Equity, Food Brands and Government delivering consumer focused outcomes

OVERVIEW

The UK

74M+

Population

Highly multicultural — a diverse consumer base with strong appetite for international food and drink.

24hrs

Distribution Reach

Highly developed food distribution network capable of reaching the entire country within 24 hours.

£719

Avg. Household Income (p/w)

Strong consumer spending power supporting a thriving premium and specialty food market.

Highly Multicultural

The UK's diverse population creates genuine and growing demand for authentic international food and drink products, including Japanese cuisine and ingredients.

Mature Grocery & B2B Channels

Well-established grocery and B2B channels offer multiple routes to market, from major supermarkets and discounters to foodservice and specialist trade.



SCALE AND MATURITY

UK Food Manufacturing Sector

The UK food and drink industry is one of the most advanced and competitive markets in the world, offering significant opportunity for well-prepared Japanese exporters.

Market Scale

Total grocery market **£230 Bn**, forecast to reach **£300 Bn by 2030**. Food and Drink is the UK's largest manufacturing sector.

Retail Consolidation

Highly consolidated sector with **6 retailers leading trade**. Approximately **65% of Food & Drink is produced domestically**, with ~87,000 retail outlets spanning supermarkets, discounters, and convenience.

Logistics Excellence

Highly efficient distribution and manufacturing capability, underpinned by **industry-leading 3PL capability** and a two-tier supply base supporting both brand and OEM manufacturing.

Supply Chain Capabilities



OEM Capability Growth

Strategic growth of retailer Own Brand has created a mature and highly capable OEM manufacturing ecosystem across the UK.



Market-Driven Investment

Market strength has driven continuous investment in value, efficiency, and food safety standards, raising the bar for all suppliers.



Retail-Oriented Infrastructure

Highly retail-oriented in pack size, formats, efficiency, and procurement, making integration straightforward for capable exporters.



Flexibility & Agility

Multi-tier system providing variable MOQ and agility, with continued investment and new entrants increasing choice for Japanese exporters.





GEOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUCCESS

The Importance of Location



Proximity & Connectivity

UK ports, airports, road, rail, and ferry networks provide exceptional access to raw materials, transit infrastructure, and regional distribution, positioning manufacturers close to both supply and demand.



Supply Chain & Infrastructure

Robust storage, utility networks, and energy infrastructure support efficient manufacturing operations, while strong communications networks enable seamless coordination across the supply chain.



People, Land & Regional Opportunity

Access to skilled and non-skilled labour, competitive land values, and regional regeneration programmes and incentives create strong conditions for long-term investment and growth.

Determined by Tradition



Midlands & Northern England

Large-scale distribution networks and logistics hubs, high-volume food processing and distribution across chilled, frozen, and ambient categories, with well-established capabilities in fresh foods and ready meals.



Grimsby / NW Lincolnshire & West Country

Grimsby leads in seafood, innovation, and fresh food with high-volume storage capacity. The West Country is home to thriving dairy, livestock, and horticulture industries.



Scotland, Northern Ireland & Wales

Scotland offers premium seafood, alcohol, and agriculture. Northern Ireland and Wales share strengths in intensive farming, dairy, livestock, and fresh food production.





GEOGRAPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUCCESS

Making Location a Success Factor



UK-Based Manufacturing & Market Proximity

In-market production places you closer to trade customers, enabling faster response times, stronger buyer relationships, and seamless regulatory navigation within UK food standards.



World-Class Logistics Infrastructure

Highly efficient, well-established, and ultra-competitive logistics networks ensure reliable distribution, optimised supply chains, and consistent product availability across the UK.



Regional Centres of Excellence

Leveraging proven regional expertise and market understanding, UK manufacturing hubs offer specialist capabilities that translate directly into competitive advantage for international exporters.



OEM TO CREATE A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Why OEM for Exporters

Proximity to Market

Closer to customers and retail buyers, enabling faster response and stronger relationships.

Reduced Supply Chain Exposure

Mitigate global disruption risks with in-market manufacturing capability and finished goods availability.

Supply Chain Wins

Improvements in stock management, distribution efficiency, shelf-life, and product availability.

Regulatory Compliance

In-market production facilitates compliance with UK food regulations, labelling, and standards requirements.

Commercial Strength

Access to established, proven distribution networks and increased end-customer confidence in your product.

Preparing for OEM Success

01

Define a Strategy

Be clear on your success factors and what you need from a partnership to achieve your goals in the UK market.

03

Assess Capacity & Growth Potential

Understand accessible capacity and your ability to scale to meet future UK demand as you grow.

05

Understand the Market & Utilise Local Expertise

Invest in understanding the UK landscape and engage in-market expertise to accelerate entry and avoid costly missteps.

02

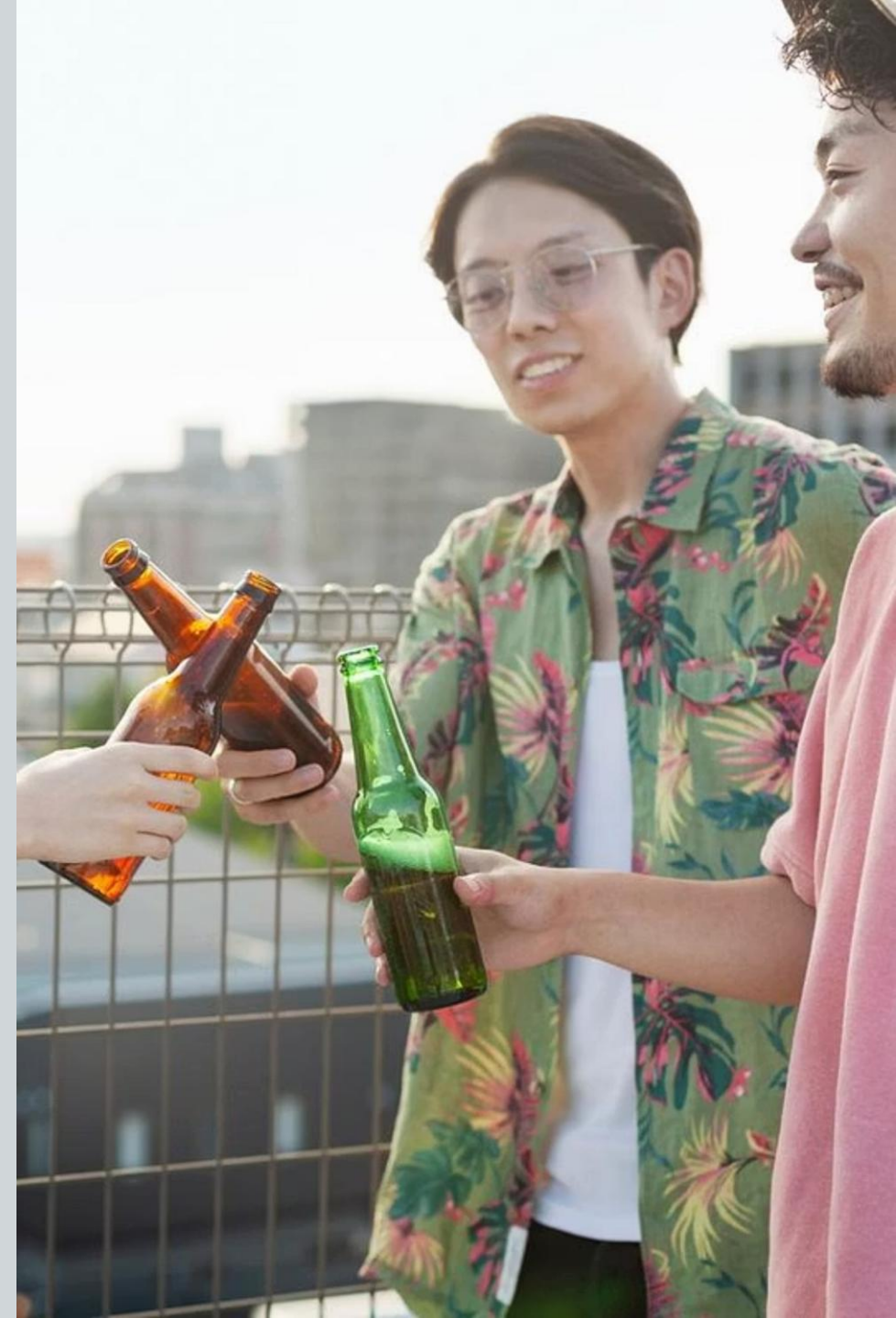
Appraise Business & Food Safety Track Record

Understand and communicate your manufacturing credentials, certifications, and food safety history.

04

Clarify IP & Specification Ownership

Ensure a clear understanding of who owns the product specification and intellectual property within any OEM arrangement.



A COMPARISON

A Buyer's Perspective

Understanding how a UK buyer evaluates their sourcing options is critical for Japanese exporters seeking to position their OEM proposition effectively.

Export / Importing

Wins: Authentic, traditional products; strong marketing narrative; value orientation for the consumer.

Risks: Global supply disruption; stock level inconsistency; extended value chain complexity.

OEM

Wins: Traditional recipes and brand recognition maintained; improved stock availability; in-market responsiveness.

Risks: Quality and consistency management; account management capability requirements.

Local (UK) Production

Wins: Ease of trade and distribution; simplified regulatory compliance; agile replenishment.

Risks: Potential loss of traditional cuisines, authentic flavours, and original quality credentials.

Key Challenges

Quality & Consistency

Maintaining the authentic taste, quality standards, and consistency that define a Japanese food or drink product when manufactured at distance from the origin is the primary challenge of any OEM model.

Account Management

UK buyers expect strong, responsive account management. Japanese exporters must invest in in-market representation to manage retailer and distributor relationships effectively.

Regulatory & Labelling Compliance

UK post-Brexit food regulations, labelling requirements, and ingredient standards require careful navigation, particularly for products with complex ingredient declarations or allergen profiles.

Protecting Brand Integrity

Ensuring that IP ownership, product specifications, and brand standards are contractually protected within any OEM partnership is non-negotiable for long-term commercial security.



Practical Steps

01

Develop a Strategy

Start with a clear, documented OEM strategy aligned to your brand, category, and commercial objectives in the UK.

03

Visit Sites & Assess

Conduct thorough site visits and technical assessments before committing to any OEM partner relationship.

05

Embed Standards & Maintain Engagement

Support with your own technical expertise to embed quality standards and maintain regular, structured engagement with your OEM partner.

02

Research the Market & Manufacturer Capability

Map the UK manufacturing landscape for your category, understanding who can produce to your specification and standards.

04

Test and Learn

Start with a controlled trial, rigorously test against your quality benchmarks, and use findings to refine before scaling.

06

Engage a Local Specialist

Appoint in-market expertise for speed of response, local knowledge, and to build the relationships that accelerate commercial progress.

THINKING DIFFERENTLY

Being an OEM Supplier?

The OEM model does not only apply to sourcing, it can also be reversed to create a powerful new growth engine for Japanese food and drink businesses.

Reverse the Model

Consider delivering OEM supply into the high-growth Asian-inspired food sector within the UK, manufacturing for UK retailers and brands under licence.

Benefit from Authenticity Growth

The UK market's appetite for authentic international foods is accelerating. Japanese producers are uniquely positioned to supply this demand with genuine provenance credentials.

Unlock Value & Volume

OEM supply contracts provide volume certainty and revenue diversification, a strong commercial complement to direct brand sales and export activity.





THINKING DIFFERENTLY

Market Expectations for Supply

To succeed as an OEM supplier, or to secure an OEM partner, Japanese businesses must demonstrate alignment with what the UK market genuinely requires.



Market Understanding

Demonstrate a clear understanding of the UK market opportunity, consumer dynamics, and competitive landscape relevant to your category.



Food Safety & Responsible Sourcing

Food safety accreditations, responsible sourcing practices, and full material data sheets (MDS) are non-negotiable requirements for any UK retail or OEM partner.



Defined USP & Purpose

Be able to clearly articulate your unique selling proposition and the purpose behind your brand, UK buyers need a compelling reason to list.



Supply Chain & Route to Market

Demonstrate credible supply chain capability and a defined route to market — including in-market representation and account management resource.

SUMMARY

How OEM Can Help You Win



Thinking Strategically

Market Understanding

Build Flexibility

Borrow Before Build

Success in the UK through an OEM strategy requires a long-term mindset. Think strategically rather than transactionally. Invest in understanding the market, facilitate a 'Borrow' culture before committing to build or buy, build flexibility within framework agreements, and ensure clarity on quality expectations and brand ownership from day one.



We'll Give Your Business an Advantage in Today's Dynamic Markets.



Innovative Strategies, Lean Approach

Practical, high-impact strategies delivered without unnecessary complexity or overhead.



Deep Consumer Insights

Grounded in real-world retail data and genuine understanding of the UK and global consumer landscape.

Email: hello@profcg.com

Phone: +44 208 616 7202

Web: www.profcg.com

Disclaimer: This information is provided in good faith based on reasonable research, referencing, and industry experience. All financial conversions have been updated to the best of our ability using available market information.

Prof.

Consulting



Contact us