



**COMERCIA**  
L I M I T E D

*Transforming Ideas into Commercial Reality*

# The Road from Windsor to Yokohama

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Arrows to Japan Symposium – The Road to Business Success

BIS Conference Centre, London

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# Agenda

- Introduction to COMERCIA
- Introduction to and Background on ICON
- Why Japan?
- ICON's Journey
- Observations
- General Tips for SMEs



# COMERCIA

- Based in London
- Provides commercial assistance to SMEs and technology companies in the areas of:
  - Entry strategy for new product/services to market
  - Expansion into new verticals
  - Introduction of product & services to overseas markets
- Partners with its clients to secure initial sales in new markets and territories
- Provides assistance in growing commercial resources and capability



ICON ([www.iconCFD.com](http://www.iconCFD.com))



- Prior to forming COMERCIA, David was Commercial Director at ICON for 8 years
- ICON was established 1992, HQ in Windsor, UK
- Present throughout Europe, USA and Far East
- Provides Computational Fluids Dynamics (CFD) software & services expertise to industry
- A Pioneer in the industrialization of open source-based CFD processes over last eight years
- Supports the following industries:
  - Automotive, Aerospace, Built Environment, Personal Care and Defence amongst others





# Typical ICON Customer

- Koenigsegg, Swedish Hypercar manufacturer
- Designed a car over 6 months capable of 440 kph
- Aerodynamics assessed using “**iconCFD**” process & cloud-computing powered by Fujitsu and HPC Wales



Source: Koenigsegg Automotive AB ([www.koenigsegg.com](http://www.koenigsegg.com)) & HPC Wales ([www.hpcwales.co.uk](http://www.hpcwales.co.uk))

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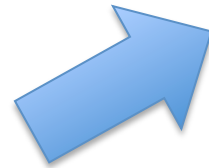


# Entry into Japanese Market

In 3 years, Icon developed both a foothold in and secured an investor from Japan.....



ICON HQ, Windsor



IDAJ HQ, Yokohama



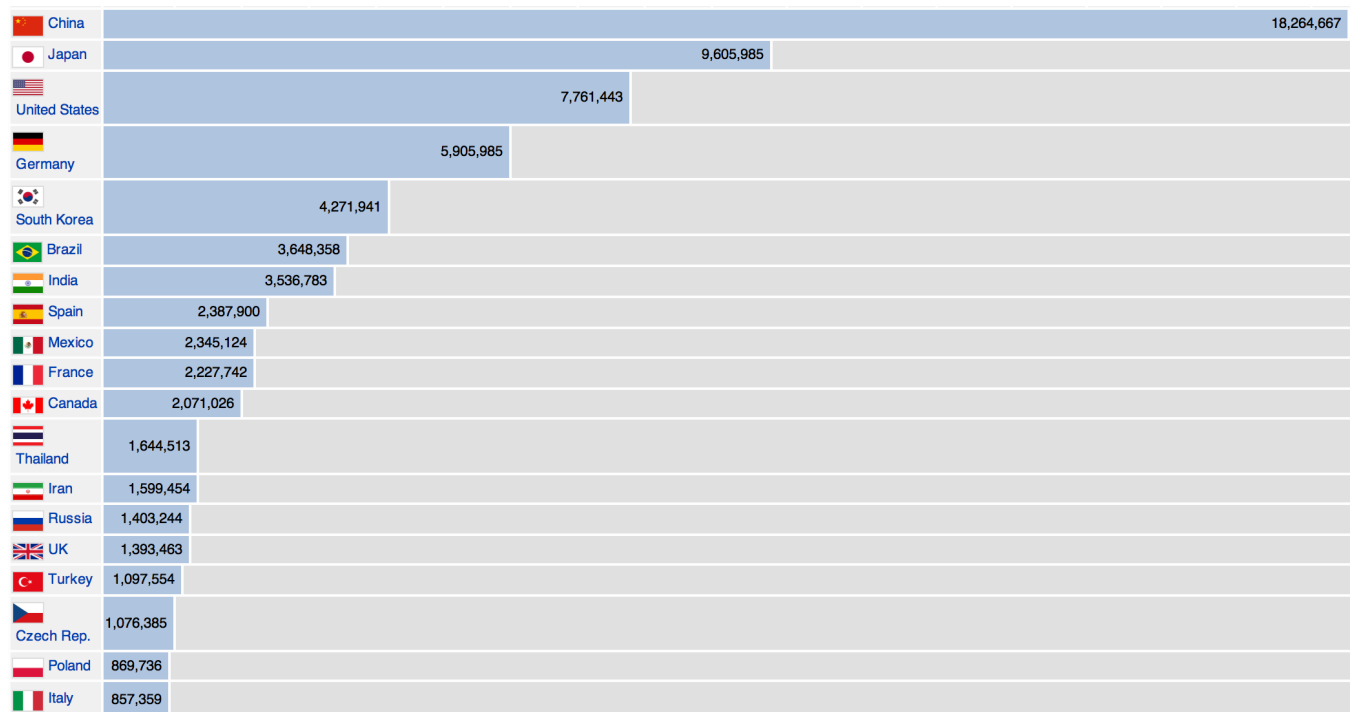
## Why Japan?

- Prior to 2010, Icon had focused upon mainly customers in Europe (with some early penetration into the USA)
- A strategy to expand into the Far East was an integral part of Icon's desire to become a global player in CFD technology
- ICON had proven an open source-based CFD process could be both productive and cost-effective
- Japan is technology - driven and receptive to new innovation – and was a natural choice



# Why Japan?

- ICON had existing customers of its CFD process for automotive design in Europe and USA
- Japan has a diverse & significant auto industry



Motor Vehicle Production by Country Source : OICA 2010







# Icon's Journey



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# 2010: Planning & First Visit

- Given the language and cultural differences between Japan and the UK:
  - Icon sought help and guidance from UKTI
- Via their “Overseas Market Introduction Service” (OMIS),  
**UKTI in Tokyo:**
  - Provided assistance in identifying and contacting various companies of interest to Icon
  - Identified potential academic and commercial partners
  - Made initial approaches to target contacts
  - Produced a report summarising the fact-finding activity
  - Arranged meetings with Icon-selected and interested parties
  - Assisted with travel arrangements
- Enabled a first productive ICON visit to Japan





# 2011: Natural Disaster in Japan

- ICON places Far East plan on hold for 6 months when:
- 11<sup>th</sup> March 2011 – Tsumani disaster strikes in Japan
  - Nearly 20,000 people died or missing 1/3 million remain in temporary accommodation after 12 months



(source: National Police Agency of Japan Feb 2012)

- ICON secures its first Japanese customer at the end of the year



# 2012: Building Relationships

- Further visits to Japan and increase in customers
- Meeting with   
Japan External Trade Organization
  - Provided data on Japanese business protocol
  - Information on employment costs, salaries, etc.
  - Offered an option of Japanese “quick start” office
- Q4 Strategic Japanese partnership announced with premium reseller for 2013

*“ICON And IDAJ Enter Into A Global Partnership & Strategic Distribution Agreement To Serve The Far East Market”*

(source: iconcf.com press statement 29/10/12)



## 2013: Further Progress

- Further visits in Japan
- Reseller partnership evolves into investment relationship

*“IDAJ Co., Ltd. Acquires a Controlling Stake in ICON Technology & Process Consulting Ltd.”*

(source: iconcfd.com press statement 13/3/13)



[www.idaj.co.jp](http://www.idaj.co.jp)



# Observations

- Japanese business culture based upon hierarchy and formality
- Trust is an important attribute in any quality business relationship, none more so than in Japan - this takes time to build don't rush or expect instant results
- Dress code, punctuality and posture are essential elements for conducting meetings in Japan, take time to plan and brief staff



# Observations

- Check in advance with your hosts whether a translator should attend a meeting, if so ensure that a pre-brief meeting is held with the interpreter.
- Reduce content of Powerpoint presentations – each message takes twice as long to deliver
- Ad hoc selling in Japan is less likely than in some other regions so be prepared for long sales cycles – but this is balanced by quality, long-term relationships
- Try to find a local partner



# General Tips for SMEs



- Arrange a Japan Rail Pass prior to travel
  - <http://www.japan-rail-pass.com> (7days pass: £161 standard or £215 first class)
  - Rail is the principal form of transport inter-region
- Book hotels well in advance and shop around – Japan can be expensive
- If travelling alone, consider using smartphone apps for assisting with reading of signs and food menus, etc. For example “Camdictionary” ([www.instig.com](http://www.instig.com)) - other translators are available





## General Tips for SMEs

- Print out maps in advance of meeting locations with Japanese place names to hand to taxi driver for transfer from train stations
- If on a first visit, ensure that a local partner or trade association can advise you on various aspects to make the most out of your business trip





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