



THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

JOURNAL

Vol. 58 • No. 2 • February 2021 • ¥1,000

THE VOICE OF GLOBAL BUSINESS IN JAPAN

EVENT

ACCJ/NAJAS Business Leaders

A conversation with Boeing Japan
President Will Shaffer

TECH

Telemedicine and the NHI System

How to solve Japan's innovation
bottleneck in healthcare

HR

Share, Support, and Engage

Experts offer tips for successful
onboarding in a virtual age

Bring the Lab Home

Healthcare x Digital winners
Bisu share their vision for
health startups



The ACCJ Is Working for You



During these challenging times, it's more important than ever to make sure you and your employees stay connected, informed, and engaged, especially when other professional development activities are less accessible.

ACCJ members benefit from a virtual ecosystem that helps member companies stay informed and connected, at a fraction of the cost of travel and conference fees. This invaluable resource includes the following benefits:

- ▶ **Connect** with more than **70** special interest committees
- ▶ **Engage** with over **30** virtual meetings and Webinars in an average month
- ▶ **Access** subject matter experts, government representatives, industry colleagues, and a variety of guest speakers
- ▶ **Influence** advocacy efforts that reach regulators and lawmakers with the voices of more than **3,000** members

TAXATION & COVID-19 STIMULUS PROGRAMS FOR SME IN JAPAN

FREE WEBINAR OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS & DELEGATES



COVID-19 RECOVERY: REHEARSING THE FUTURE

THE 4TH ACCJ COVID-19 MEMBERS SURVEY

COVID-19 LEGAL ISSUES

CONTRACTUAL LAW
EMPLOYMENT LAW
FORCE MAJEURE

THE ACCJ SME CEO COUNCIL PRESENTS THE SME ROUNDTABLE
A WEEKLY OPEN FORUM FOR SME MEMBERS
4PM EVERY TUESDAY

MAKING SENSE OF COVID-19 NUMBERS IN JAPAN
A WEBINAR WITH SA...

ASK ME ANYTHING: LEADERSHIP, CREATIVITY AND A DURING CRISIS
WITH MICHAEL ALFANT

LET'S DO LUNCH

THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN VIRTUAL TOWN HALL MEETING
FRIDAY APRIL 3, 15:30-16:15

WHAT TO DO IF AN EMPLOYEE TESTS POSITIVE:

WE ASK A DOCTOR, A LAWYER, A PR EXPERT AND A REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL

THURSDAY MARCH 26
14:00 - 15:00

FREE COVID-19 WEBINARS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS & THEIR DELEGATES

If you would like to explore membership opportunities, including extending these benefits to an unlimited number of employees, contact join@accj.co.jp for more details or call your ACCJ membership representative.

PRESIDENT

Jenifer Rogers

Asurion Japan Holdings G.K.

CHAIRMAN

Eriko Asai

GE Japan Inc.

TREASURER

Ryann Thomas

PwC Tax Japan

VICE PRESIDENTS

Yoko Furuyama (Kansai) P&G Japan G.K.

Deborah Hayden Finsbury

Amy Jackson Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)

Robert W. Roche (Chubu) Oak Lawn Marketing, Inc.

Eric W. Sedlak K&L Gates Gaikokuho Joint Enterprise

Yoshitaka Sugihara Netflix G.K.

Dave West Cisco Systems G.K.

GOVERNORS

Andrew J. Conrad Aflac

James C. Feliciano AbbVie

Harry A. Hill Better-U, Inc.

Mark Hosang (Chubu) Randstad K.K.

Douglas L. Hymas The Bank of New York Mellon

Tad Johnson Pratt & Whitney Aftermarket Japan KK

Saori Kanno REVLON K.K.

Mari Matthews Google Japan G.K.

Nancy L. Ngou EY Strategy & Consulting Co., Ltd.

Victor Osumi Delta Air Lines, Inc.

Frank Randolph Packard Triple A Partners Japan Co. Ltd.

William J. Swinton Temple University, Japan Campus

Simone Thomsen (Kansai) Eli Lilly Japan K.K.

Megumi Tsukamoto Caterpillar Japan LLC

SPECIAL ADVISOR

Christopher J. LaFleur

McLarty Associates

PRESIDENTS EMERITI

Debbie Howard (2004–05)

Charles D. Lake II (2006–07)

Allan D. Smith (2008)

Thomas W. Whitson (2009–10)

Michael J. Alfant (2011–12)

CHAIRMAN EMERITUS

Kumi Sato

Cosmo Public Relations Corporation

ACCJ EXECUTIVE STAFF

Laura Younger

Executive Director

THE ACCJ JOURNAL

Christopher Bryan Jones

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

To advertise or subscribe: comms@accj.or.jp

The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan

Masonic 39 MT Bldg. 10F, 2-4-5 Azabudai

Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan 106-0041

Tel: 03-3433-5381 ■ Fax: 03-3433-8454 ■ www.accj.or.jp

The ACCJ is an independent membership organization not affiliated with any government or other chamber of commerce. The ACCJ is a member of the Asia-Pacific Council of American Chambers and values its relationships with Japanese, American, and other nations' business organizations.

Disclaimer: The ACCJ will not accept liability for any damages caused by the contents of *The ACCJ Journal*, including, but not limited to, any omissions, errors, facts, or false statements. Opinions or advice expressed in the *The ACCJ Journal* are not necessarily those of the ACCJ.



5

PUBLISHER

Stepping into Tomorrow

In a year of transformation, *The ACCJ Journal* changes, too

7

PRESIDENT

Strategic Goals and Optimism

As we adapt, supporting our core pillars remains a top priority

8

LEADERSHIP

The 2021 Board of Governors

Meet those elected to lead the ACCJ as we look beyond the pandemic

10

EVENT

ACCJ/NAJAS Business Leaders

A conversation with Boeing Japan President Will Shaffer



38

Share, Support, and Engage

Experts offer tips for successful onboarding in a virtual age

14

EVENT

Japanese Textiles and Fashion

Investing in the continuity of history, culture, and art

18

MEMBER FOCUS

Fine Dining, On Demand

Seth Sulkin's new venture, Food-e, delivers Tokyo's best

23

TECH

Telemedicine and the NHI System

How to solve Japan's innovation bottleneck in healthcare

24

WHITE PAPER

Health and Retirement

Realizing a social security system for all generations

25

HEALTHCARE

Two Years of First

Challenges and changes bring a stronger voice for advocacy

26

INTERVIEW

Bring the Lab Home

Healthcare x Digital winner Bisu shares their vision for healthcare

32

FITNESS

Virtual Worlds, Real Gain

Evolving tech allows more exercise while staying home

36

MEMBER FOCUS

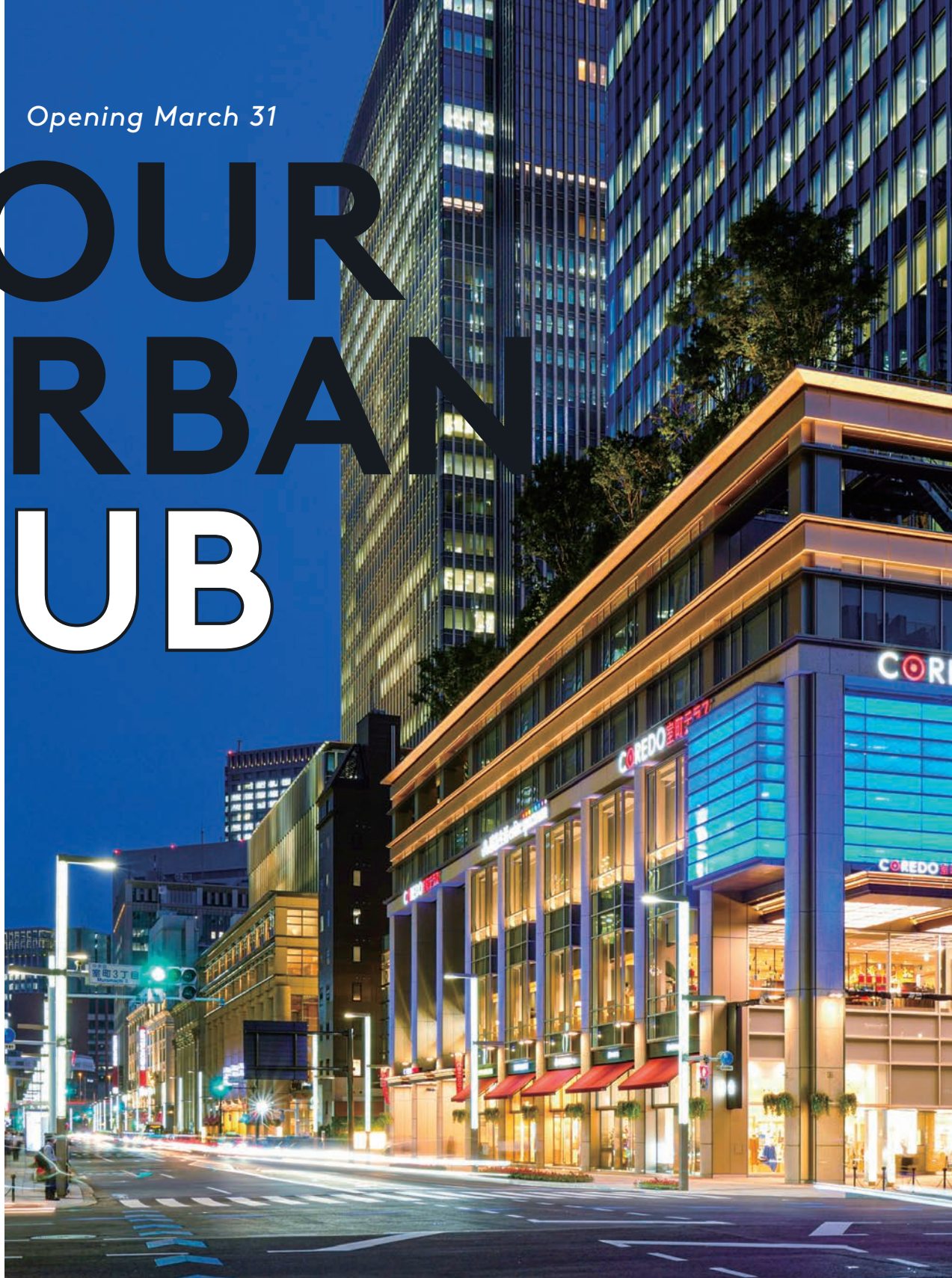
Green Tree Growth

MnK builds sustainable business and community in Niseko

Cover: Daniel Maggs and Wojciech Bula of Bisu. (Photo: Miki Kawaguchi/LIFE.14)

Opening March 31

YOUR URBAN HUB



*Enrich your workday at Tokyo American Club's
newest downtown retreat.*



TOKYO AMERICAN CLUB
NIHONBASHI

Talk to us about membership today.
03-4588-0687 | membership@tac-club.org
nihonbashi.tokyoamericanclub.org

Stepping into Tomorrow

The past 12 months have brought enormous change, and the next 12 promise the same. When I interviewed American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) President Jenifer Rogers for our January issue, she called 2021 “a year of transformation.” It’s the perfect description.

One thing being transformed is this very magazine. You may have noticed the new look, starting with the cover. This is the first issue in a new phase of *The ACCJ Journal*’s existence. Over its 58-year history, this important part of the chamber’s communications has been put together by a number of companies and many talented people. Now, we have brought the publication in house, and I am honored to continue as editor-in-chief—a job that I have held since the May 2016 issue—and to also take on the role of publisher.

Long Road to Here

As I was putting together this issue, I thought back to the very first magazine on which I worked. It was December 1995, I was living in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and I was hired as a designer to do layout for a publication focused

on this important industry. This month’s installment was penned by Healthcare Committee Co-Chairs John Carlson and Mark Kawai, who share with you some of the changes the committee has undergone to make it stronger and more engaged as a pillar of Japan’s business community.

We’ve also added a bimonthly tech column (page 23) written by Tim Romero, who is head of Google Startups Japan. You may also know Tim from his long-running business-related podcast *Disrupting Japan*. In this issue, he talks about telemedicine, the National Health Insurance system, and the need for changes that will unleash innovation in healthcare.

Health is, in fact, the theme of this issue, and I sat down virtually for a long and fascinating chat with Daniel Maggs and Wojciech Bula, the co-founders of Bisu, which won the Best Innovation Award and the audience-selected Moonshot Prize at the ACCJ’s inaugural Healthcare x Digital competition in December. When transcribed, our interview about their innovative home health lab topped 12,000 words. That’s a wee bit more than we can fit into *The ACCJ Journal*,



C Bryan Jones
Publisher and
Editor-in-Chief
cjones@accj.or.jp

We are all charting new territory in 2021—whether it’s your business continuity, the evolving nature of chamber communications, or changes to this magazine.

on the transportation industry. I didn’t imagine that it would turn into a career. At the time, I was primarily focused on music and was the bass trombonist in the city’s symphony orchestra. But it did, and I have worked on many magazines over the years. The most rewarding, though, has been *The ACCJ Journal*.

During my five years as editor-in-chief, I have come to know so many of the wonderful, talented, and generous members of the chamber and have experienced what makes the ACCJ special: networking, information, advocacy, and community. As a writer and editor, I’ve seen firsthand all these things we want to share with the community at large through the pages of this magazine.

Evolving Content

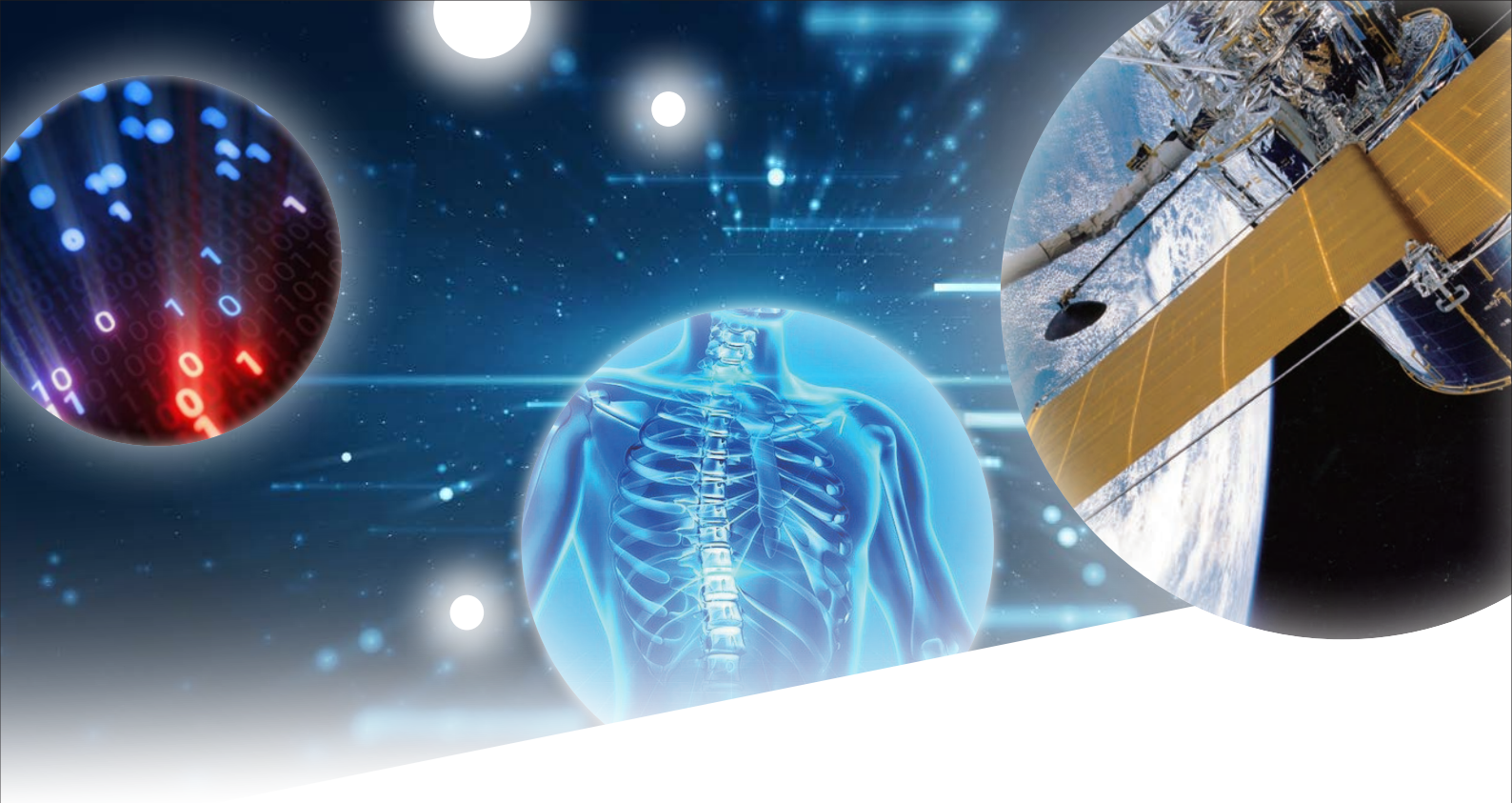
To that end, I would like to point out some new sections that you will find in this issue that help us share those things. We are pleased to add a regular healthcare column (page 25), which will be written by a variety of experts to bring you diverse and relevant perspectives

but I hope you’ll find the 3,500 or so that we did squeeze in to be interesting (page 26).

Step Forward

I titled this column “Stepping into Tomorrow” because we are all charting new territory in 2021—whether it’s your business continuity, the evolving nature of chamber communications, or changes to this magazine.

A great way to seize the opportunities as they arise is to be involved in the chamber. So, at the end of the book—on pages 45–47—we have a rundown of the many ways in which you can get the most out of your ACCJ membership, from getting to know new members to joining committees to speaking at events. Some even involve *The ACCJ Journal*. We have new sponsorship options that put your brand front and center, and we’re also looking for voices. Have a story idea? Want to write a column or article? You are always welcome to contact me at cjones@accj.or.jp to share your thoughts. ■



ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO INNOVATION IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



Langley Esquire is Tokyo's premier public affairs consulting firm specializing in government relations, strategic communications, and public policy. We help clients navigate the pitfalls and regulatory barriers of doing business in Japan so they can introduce cutting-edge products and services to the market. Regulatory change inevitably follows technological innovation and disruption. We are passionate about driving change in sectors key to Japan's future growth, including technology, healthcare, financial services, transportation, aerospace & defense, and more.



Stakeholder Mapping – Simplify the Complex

Identifying and visualizing the intricate web of stakeholders and their relationships is paramount to crafting your outreach strategy.



Policy Monitoring – Knowledge Is Power

We provide regular policy updates, as well as insight into pending legislation and regulations under consideration. Through our well-placed contacts, we leverage exclusive access to business intelligence and public policy that can guide your decision-making to keep you ahead of your competitors.



Government Relations – Influence Outcomes

Gain access to key government stakeholders to overcome regulatory barriers impacting your business. Our comprehensive approach includes planning and implementing a sustained engagement strategy to influence change.

To learn more, contact us or visit our webpage.

contact@langleyesquire.com • www.langleyesquire.com



Strategic Goals and Optimism

I am excited and honored to serve as president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) this year, although the start of 2021 has not been what many of us had expected.

On January 7, the Japanese government declared a state of emergency for Tokyo as well as Kanagawa, Chiba, and Saitama Prefectures, prolonging the business challenges and virtual fatigue that many are facing due to the pandemic. One week later, the declaration was extended to seven more prefectures, including Aichi and Hyogo, where our Kansai and Chubu chapters are located.

But there are reasons for optimism. On the pandemic front, the vaccine rollout—globally and in Japan—is proceeding more quickly than anticipated,

supporting the goal and outlining recommendations to mitigate climate change that can help Japan move towards more sustainable business practices.

On healthcare, pharmaceutical companies have worked tirelessly to produce a vaccine in record time, and multiple vaccines are already being rolled out. Our member companies in the healthcare sector have been part of that evolution, providing reliable platforms and tools by which businesses could remain open and deliver their services without interruption.

In December, the Health and Retirement pillar also released its white paper *Post Covid-19: Recommendations to Realize a Social Security System for All Generations*, which outlines key actions to ensure the long-term sustainability of Japan's social security system (page 24).



Jenifer Rogers
ACCJ President

As chamber leaders during the pandemic, we need to continue to evaluate how best to support the core ACCJ pillars.

and improvements in testing are encouraging. The government also remains optimistic that the Olympic and Paralympic Games will proceed this summer.

Key Points

On the business front, the adoption of telework has changed the mindset of Japanese companies regarding the viability of remote work, with many indicating they will continue after the pandemic. The crisis has also accelerated the use of digitization as the key tool allowing businesses to continue operations. The chamber has continued its policy of remote work for staff and the use of virtual programs, with hybrid meetings allowed where security protocols are followed.

In this year of transition, my strategic goals center on three points: transformation, agility, and resilience. In January, I began to work with the board of governors to create the strategy for 2021 and review the results of 2020. As chamber leaders during the pandemic, we need to continue to evaluate how best to support the core ACCJ pillars of networking, information, advocacy, and community in a predominately virtual world.

Advocacy in Motion

There are key chamber initiatives already underway in areas of sustainability, healthcare, and digitalization. On sustainability, the Japanese government announced in January its goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The ACCJ issued a statement

Another key focus this year is digital transformation. It is timely due to our increased dependence on digitalization to do business during the pandemic, a long history of active engagement and dialogue between the US and Japan on digital cooperation, and the proposed creation of a digital agency in Japan.

To propel Japan into the digital era, the chamber plans to publish a research paper entitled *Japan Digital Agenda 2030* this month. The report, produced in partnership with McKinsey & Company, provides actionable guidance on how Japan should prioritize digitalization to improve efficiency and productivity in the private sector and government. It profiles the unique role that the ACCJ plays in bringing the right parties together to shape the future of the US and Japanese business environments, as well as to strengthen the US-Japan economic partnership.

Considering all these developments, I believe the chamber is well positioned this year to embrace these opportunities and advocate for ways in which we can continue to improve the business environment for our members.

With a new administration in the United States and a recent change of prime minister and cabinet in Japan, the chamber will continue to engage proactively with government to advocate on key member issues.

I welcome your feedback and ideas as we work to continue the success and growth of the ACCJ at this critical time. Contact me at jrogers@accj.or.jp. ■

The 2021 Board of Governors

Meet those elected to lead the ACCJ as we look beyond the pandemic

The ability of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) to effectively advocate on behalf of the foreign business community is powered by the extraordinarily deep pool of talent among the membership. Each November, the chamber holds an election to fill open positions on the board of governors, with members voting on a slate prepared by the Nominations Committee.

The committee, comprising nine members representing women and men from a range of industries, company sizes, professional experiences, and cultures, identified candidates for the open positions of president, four Tokyo vice presidents, and six Tokyo governors. The Chubu chapter also nominated new candidates for vice president and governor.

The 2021 board of governors took office on January 1, and *The ACCJ Journal* spoke with many new and incumbent members. We published an extensive interview with President Jenifer Rogers in our January issue, and this month we would like to introduce the rest of the board.

Opportunity and Growth

The new year brings with it many of the challenges of 2020, but also a better understanding of the situation and how to adapt, as well as strong and innovative ideas for smoothing the path ahead.

First-time board member Victor Osumi, who is managing director Japan at Delta Air Lines, Inc. and an ACCJ governor, summed up the challenge and opportunity presented by 2021: “The ACCJ is there to support the members and their business communities as they make adjustments to the new normal. And we will all emerge stronger in the coming years.”

Finsbury Partner and ACCJ Vice President Deborah Hayden said that two of her goals are to “provide a voice for what is a small startup in Japan—fewer than 20 people—on decision-making at all levels within the chamber and to continue the battle to push for greater diversity across corporate Japan at all levels.”

Eli Lilly Japan K.K. President and General Manager Simone Thomsen, who is ACCJ governor-Kansai, said she is eager to “continue to strengthen the dialogue between the United States and Japan—and the two nations’ company leaders and politicians—to address today’s challenges and find solutions. The pandemic has challenged us in many ways, but it has also helped

us to challenge our thinking—especially when it comes to workstyle and digitization. So let’s continue the exchange and learn from each other.”

James Feliciano, who is president of AbbVie Japan and an ACCJ governor, also sees opportunity in the changes brought on by the pandemic. “I believe that 2021 is the year for executing on a lot of the great work that has been done over the past two years with our pillars. The time is now for strong advocacy to drive meaningful change to the benefit of Japanese society and the broader business environment.”

Engage and Nurture

Noting that member engagement is at the heart of the ACCJ, Governor Harry Hill, who is president and chief executive officer of Better-U, Inc., said: “Many of us are coping with Covid-19 and are figuring out how to maintain or restore existing business. The opportunity to network and expand business horizons has been severely curtailed. I believe the ability to meet and learn from a diverse group of businesspeople is one of the core benefits of the ACCJ, so restoring and creating new networking and information sharing opportunities—both online and in-person—must be our focus for 2021.”

Engaging young professionals is also a priority. ACCJ Governor and Caterpillar Director of Global Government and Corporate Affairs Japan Megumi Tsukamoto said, “Under Jenifer’s leadership, I would like to contribute to energize and activate the ACCJ further by incorporating new ideas and thoughts from younger leaders.”

Yoshitaka Sugihara, director and head of public policy Japan at Netflix G.K. and an ACCJ vice president, echoed this goal. He noted that the reorganization of the Digital Economy Committee into four committees “has brought opportunities to recruit a new generation of leaders. My priority is how to support those new leaders and make their committees more viable.”

Finally, Vice President-Chubu Robert Roche looked back at the chamber’s history as a strength for the future. “While many things have changed since my initial involvement with the ACCJ, one thing that hasn’t changed is the entrepreneurial spirit and the civic pride of our members. I hope we can build on this great tradition and create networking and business opportunities for our members that will lead to their success and the continued success of the organization.” ■



Jenifer Rogers
President
(Asurion Japan Holdings G.K.)



Eriko Asai
Chairman
(GE Japan Inc.)



Ryann Thomas
Treasurer
(PwC Tax Japan)



Yoko Furuyama
Vice President-Kansai
(P&G Japan G.K.)



Deborah Hayden
Vice President
(Finsbury)



Amy Jackson
Vice President
(PhRMA)



Robert W. Roche
Vice President-Chubu
(Oak Lawn Marketing, Inc.)



Eric W. Sedlak
Vice President
(K&L Gates Gaikokuho
Joint Enterprise)



Yoshitaka Sugihara
Vice President
(Netflix G.K.)



Dave West
Vice President
(Cisco Systems G.K.)



Andrew J. Conrad
Governor
(Aflac)



James C. Feliciano
Governor
(AbbVie)



Harry A. Hill
Governor
(Better-U, Inc.)



Mark Hosang
Governor-Chubu
(Randstad K.K.)



Douglas L. Hymas
Governor
(The Bank of New York Mellon)



Tad Johnson
Governor
(Pratt & Whitney
Aftermarket Japan KK)



Saori Kanno
Governor
(REVLON K.K.)



Mari Matthews
Governor
(Google Japan G.K.)



Nancy L. Nguo
Governor
(EY Strategy &
Consulting Co., Ltd.)



Victor Osumi
Governor
(Delta Air Lines, Inc.)



Frank Randolph Packard
Governor
(Triple A Partners
Japan Co. Ltd.)



William J. Swinton
Governor
(Temple University,
Japan Campus)



Simone Thomsen
Governor-Kansai
(Eli Lilly Japan K.K.)



Megumi Tsukamoto
Governor
(Caterpillar Japan LLC)



Christopher LaFleur
Special Advisor
(McLarty Associates)

Presidents Emeriti

Debbie Howard (2004–05) • Charles D. Lake II (2006–07) • Allan D. Smith (2008) • Thomas W. Whitson (2009–10) • Michael J. Alfant (2011–12)

ACCJ/NAJAS Business Leaders Series

A Conversation with Boeing Japan President Will Shaffer

Among industries affected by the coronavirus pandemic, few have felt the impact as strongly as airlines and aerospace. But despite the difficulties, the future holds promise on many fronts.

On January 27, the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) and the National Association of Japan–America Societies (NAJAS) welcomed Boeing Japan K.K. President Will Shaffer for the second installment in the ACCJ/NAJAS Business Leaders Series. The event was hosted by the Japan–America Society of Dallas/Fort Worth and moderated by *Dallas Morning News* aviation writer Kyle Arnold.

During the event, Shaffer, who was named president of Boeing Japan in August 2019—and had been deployed to the country twice as a US Navy aviator—shared his thoughts on the challenges facing the company and the industry, as well as the opportunities he sees in the Japan market.

Long Partnership

Boeing, a corporate sustaining member of the ACCJ, has a long history of collaboration in Japan. The company first opened an office in Tokyo in 1953 and has been the top provider of commercial jetliners to Japanese airlines—including All Nippon Airways Co., Ltd. and Japan Airlines, Co., Ltd.—as well as a major supplier of defense equipment, aircraft, and services to Japan's Ministry of Defense (JMOD). With more than 30 research and development partners, Boeing's investments in Japan have helped grow the local aerospace sector, creating jobs and driving innovation.

Boeing Japan also supports 30 non-profit organizations, has eight partnerships with universities, and funds an annual program for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education aimed at elementary and junior high schools.

Shaffer sees these deep roots as key to weathering the storm of the pandemic. “We have a strong supply chain here. We currently purchase \$5 billion worth of goods in Japan,” he said. “And while those [transactions] may take a dip—given the challenges of international travel for the next couple of years—we expect to continue a strong and great partnership.”

Defense Matters

While commercial air service may be what first comes to mind when thinking of Boeing, the company has strong ties to the Japanese government that are key to the nation's defense. “We have over 300 aircraft that are currently operated by JMOD. It's the largest fleet of F-15 and CH-47 aircraft outside the US,” Shaffer said. “On top of that, JMOD is the first international customer for our KC-46 and V-22 programs.” The CH-47 Chinook is a multi-mission helicopter, while the V-22 Osprey is a multi-role “tiltrotor” that combines the vertical takeoff capabilities of a helicopter with the speed and range of a fixed-wing airplane. The KC-46—also known as Pegasus—is a widebody tanker used for refueling military aircraft. All three can also be used for humanitarian and disaster relief purposes. The Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) is scheduled to receive its first KC-46 this year.



Photo: US Marine Corps



Photo: Marian Lockhart

- ▲ Maiden flight of the first KC-46 Pegasus tanker for delivery to Japan.
- ◀ The first V-22 delivered to the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, in July 2020.



Photo: Boeing Japan K.K.

Boeing Japan also ... funds an annual program for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education aimed at elementary and junior high schools.

The F-15 upgrade program, which offers next-generation technologies such as an advanced cockpit, AESA radar, a digital electronic warfare suite, the world's fastest mission computer, and modern sensors, is a great example of how Boeing works with Japanese companies. While the fighter jet was developed by Boeing, those deployed by the JASDF were assembled in Japan by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. The same applies to upgrades to the platform.

"We'll provide them the kits and they'll do all the installation work," Shaffer explained. "They tend to be on many of our defense programs and are the prime provider to the Japanese government. We give them the support to be able to do that effectively. So, we have this symbiotic relationship where we work together on the commercial side, and that's an important part of their business, but we also do a lot of work with them on their defense side, where we support them on sales, and they are the prime [partner] on our aircraft."

State of Travel

Of course, the dip in commercial aviation is a key concern right now as the coronavirus pandemic continues to make air travel difficult. The pandemic has all but brought the Japanese government's plans for 60 million visitors per year by 2030 to a standstill. Shaffer addressed the situation and expressed optimism on the domestic front and caution on international recovery.

When asked how Japanese travelers have reacted to the pandemic he noted that, by the end of last year, "with programs like the Go To Travel campaign, domestic traffic did rise pretty close to 50–60 percent." However, due to the current state of emergency in reaction to the third wave of the pandemic, "you see that dropping off significantly."

On the international front, "because of the challenges of coming in and out of Japan, [the traffic] is very small. It's five to 10 percent of normal. So, I think they [passengers] are comfortable getting on a plane, but the challenge of crossing borders is still difficult."

Shaffer is hopeful that regional travel in Asia may rebound sooner than global travel thanks to the relatively lower number of Covid-19 cases in the region.

"Japan tried last year to start opening up international corridors," he said. "They had travel open with many Southeast Asian countries, as well as China and [South] Korea. Many restrictions were still pretty high and there were a lot of requirements. It was really only for business travel that they did that. [But] you might see travel in this region, in a bubble area, open up a little bit faster."

Getting people in and out of Japan to North America and Europe is probably going to take a while longer."

Over the long term, Shaffer sees great opportunity in Japan for international travel. He believes inbound travel will also recover. "Japan offers a lot of great tourist attractions and continues to focus on their current tourism industry as a way of continuing growth within the country."

Peace of Mind

Even once travel restrictions are eased, helping passengers feel safe will be an important part of the industry's rebound. Shaffer said that Boeing has done a lot of research into the travel environment, including extensive modeling on the airplane cabin, to validate the safety of air travel.

"[We] conducted tests where we looked at ways that we could actually clean the inside surfaces so that they are safe," he explained. "We also looked at the airflow inside the aircraft. What we've found is that the likelihood of catching the coronavirus on the plane is relatively low, given that the air changes on the craft every two to three minutes, which is about what you see in an operating room in a hospital."

He also noted that the way in which air flows through the cabin in effect creates a separation that is important for minimizing virus spread, because the process reduces transmission.

"It's effectively as if passengers are sitting about seven feet apart, because the air flows from the ceiling down to the floor and is then pulled out from the floor and circulated through HEPA filters, where it is mixed with outside air." HEPA, or high-efficiency particulate air filters, are 99.9 percent effective at removing viruses, bacteria, and fungi, ensuring that very clean air is returned to the cabin.

The number of Covid-19 cases that have been traced back to air travel is very small—just one in every 27 million passengers according to the International Air Transport Association. With some 1.8 billion people having flown in 2020, that comes to well under 100.

Sustainability

The lull in air travel may have positive long-term effects and help the United States and Japan meet their environmental targets. Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga announced on October 26 that Japan will work to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, and on January 27 US President Joe Biden said the US should become a net-zero economy by 2050, calling climate change an existential threat.

I will understand problem solving, self-exploration, decision making, number relationships, healthy living, cause and effect, creativity, imaginative thinking and the natural world when I am big,

because I
play outside
when I am
little.



KPIS is a private co-educational international preschool for children from the age of 18 months to 6 years.

We offer a rich, educational experience that is child-centered and play-based, with a unique combination of exploration and discovery in the outdoors as well as independent and teacher-guided activities in the classroom.

When children learn and play outdoors during their early childhood years, they develop skills such as confidence, independence, creativity, increased attention and focus, perseverance and resilience.

These skills play a crucial role in later academic learning.

**NOW ACCEPTING
APPLICATIONS
FOR SCHOOL YEAR
2021-2022**

TERM 1 STARTS IN AUGUST

Visit kpschool.com
or call 03-5707-0979



KOMAZAWA PARK INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
FOREST KINDERGARTEN





Photo: Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd.



Photo: Boeing Japan K.K.

KHI held a ceremony in 2018 before shipping the first 777X parts to Boeing's factory in Everett, Washington.

Vehicles—whether on land or in the air—are a key source of CO₂ emissions. But designs are becoming more efficient, and Boeing has made great strides in this area. A next step is for airlines to update their fleets to more efficient models.

“I think one of the things this pandemic is actually driving is retirement of a lot of the older aircraft, and you’re seeing those get pulled out at a fairly fast rate across a lot of our customers,” Shaffer said. “And

believes that one of the important ways the aviation industry is going to get to carbon neutrality is through sustainable fuels. Shaffer explained that Boeing has committed to having all its airplanes able and certified to operate off 100-percent sustainable aviation fuel by 2030. He added that, in addition to sustainable fuels, Boeing is “still looking at alternate opportunities—but many of those, we think, are probably further out.”

Boeing has committed to having all its airplanes able and certified to operate off 100-percent sustainable aviation fuel by 2030.

what will probably happen is, as the traffic comes back, you’re going to see them replace these aircraft with newer ones.”

He explained that each generation of aircraft is significantly more efficient than the previous one. The 737 MAX reduces fuel use and CO₂ emissions by 14 percent compared with the 737NG that it replaces, for example. An even bigger improvement can be seen between the 787 and the airplanes it replaces—where savings in fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions fall in the range of 20–25 percent.

Looking at the path ahead, he noted that Boeing President and Chief Executive Officer David Calhoun

Those alternatives include hydrogen-powered and electric planes, although adapting these technologies to aircraft in the size class of Boeing’s passenger jets will require advancements.

Clearing Skies

With a drive to make air travel safe for passengers and the environment, and dedication to strong ties with Japanese business and government, Boeing is playing a leading role not only in seeing the industry through the turbulence of the pandemic but to a bright future. And for Shaffer, the chance to be back in Japan to guide the mission is a delight. ■

About Will Shaffer

Named president of Boeing Japan in August 2019, Shaffer is responsible for the development and implementation of the Boeing strategy in Japan, expanding the company’s local presence, pursuing new growth and productivity opportunities, leading government affairs and corporate citizenship programs. He is based in the Boeing Japan offices in Tokyo and reports to Sir Michael Arthur, president of Boeing International.



Prior to this, Shaffer served as Boeing Commercial Airplanes (BCA) director for Supply Chain Strategy for Product Strategy and Future Airplane Development. He was responsible for the development and management of the supply chain for future production systems and Boeing programs, including strategy, program management, and functional excellence. He earned a master of business administration degree from Harvard Business School and a bachelor’s degree in ocean engineering from the United States Naval Academy.



Listen to this story.

journal.accj.or.jp/audio

EVENT

By C Bryan Jones

Japanese Textiles and Fashion

Investing in the continuity of history, culture, and art

While we have all admired the beauty and creativity of kimono, investing in Japanese textiles is an exacting business. On January 27, the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan Alternative Investment and Women in Business Committees jointly welcomed one of the world's leading experts on the subject, Sharon Sadako Takeda, who is senior curator and the head of the Costume and Textiles Department at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). In her presentation entitled *Japanese Textiles and Fashion: Investing in the Continuity of History, Culture, and Art*, she delivered a detailed and fascinating look at the techniques, artisans, and works that capture the rich history of Japan.

Art and Heritage

A third-generation Japanese American, Takeda was born and raised in the rural town of Hanford, in California's San Joaquin Valley halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. She recalls Japanese traditions, such as Hinamatsuri (Girls' Day), that were part of her childhood, and dressing in kimono to represent Japan in the annual Christmas Around the World event at her grammar school. "Besides being very uncomfortable, I remember that my *obi* would always come undone as I ran around with schoolmates after the program."

Such memories—and the stories told by her parents—would ultimately influence her career path as she studied at the University of California, Los Angeles. A love of art, sprung from elective art history courses,

led to an early decision to change her pre-pharmacy major to art and design.

"In searching for what I wanted to say with my paintings, I had an identity crisis. Who was I? What did I want to express with my art? Why was I an Asian born in a primarily Caucasian society," Takeda said.

She would go on to graduate with a master of arts and was the recipient of a 1983–84 Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) scholarship (then called Monbusho), which brought her to Japan to study traditional Japanese dyeing and weaving techniques at the Kanazawa University of Arts and Crafts. She also conducted field research in Niigata Prefecture on a traditional snow-bleached textile designated an Intangible Cultural Property by Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Ultimately, this led her to LACMA, where she has curated many important exhibitions and helps the museum build its permanent collection.

Takeda's love for Japanese textiles is shared by many in the United States and around the world. One of her exhibitions—*When Art Became Fashion: Kosode in Edo-Period Japan*—attracted many Japanese artisans, scholars, and kimono-clad women to glimpse treasures typically unseen in their home country.

Collectors' Commitment

Acquiring works of art is more challenging for LACMA than for some museums. "Unlike our counterparts on the East Coast, who have more than a century of building their collections based on wealthy philanthropic families, and have acquisition endowments worth millions of dollars, LACMA has no major acquisition endowment, so we have to work hard to raise funds for acquisitions," she explained.

One way the museum does this is through its annual Collectors Committee, a distinguished group of donors who help decide acquisitions for LACMA's



Installation photo, *Kimono for a Modern Age*, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), July 5, 2014–October 19, 2014. Photo © Museum Associates / LACMA.



Young Woman's Samurai-Class Outer Kimono (Furisode/Uchikake) with Cherry Blossoms, Chrysanthemums, Hollyhock Leaves, Peonies, Wisteria, and Stylized Cloud Pattern, Late Edo Period (1615–1868), early 19th century, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Costume Council Fund. Photo © Museum Associates/ LACMA.



permanent collection. Membership is available at three levels: \$15,000, \$30,000, and \$60,000. Dues are pooled and used to build the collection through a special annual weekend event.

"Each year, until the pandemic, LACMA has held a Collectors Committee weekend," she said. The spring gathering, first held in 1986, features art, food, and wine, and culminates in the Collectors Committee Gala, at which members vote for curator-selected artworks they would like to acquire for LACMA's permanent collection.

"Through this process, we are able to bring forth major pieces of high value that normally would be difficult for us to obtain," she continued. "The bar has been raised after many years, and we currently propose artworks that can range from \$100,000 all the way up to \$1 million."

Takeda explained that members of the Collectors Committee gather on the Friday evening for one of several intimate dinners hosted by LACMA trustees or major collectors. At each venue, often a major art collector's home, gourmet dinners are prepared by a celebrity chef and paired with wines from a boutique California vintner. She shared photos from past events attended by singer-songwriter Nick Jonas, radio and television host Ryan Seacrest, actress Diane Keaton, and record, film, and theater producer John Legend, who performed at one of the events while attendees dined.

The following morning, a booklet of proposed acquisitions is distributed as members attend a buffet breakfast at LACMA. Typically, nine or 10 major works are on display in a special one-day exhibition. Members of the Collectors Committee get to leisurely look at the artworks and attend a morning session where each curator gives a 10-minute illustrated presentation explaining the importance of their chosen piece and why it should be in LACMA's permanent collection.

"Soon after they hear your presentation, they can go and examine the artwork with renewed eyes—so it's really about educating them as to what to look for," Takeda said.

This is followed by an alfresco luncheon at LACMA and another opportunity to visit the exhibition before returning home to study their booklet of proposed acquisitions. The evening begins with cocktails before attendees are seated for dinner and a live auction to raise additional funds that go into the acquisition-fund pot with Collectors Committee membership dues.

"Each member receives an electronic voting device," she explained. "Throughout the dinner, rounds of voting occur. You vote each round for a piece that you want the Collectors Committee to purchase. It typically takes multiple rounds until one piece gets the majority of votes. The first artwork to get a majority is bought, the purchase amount is subtracted from the pot, and they keep going until there are no longer funds to purchase another piece."

This isn't the only way works can be acquired on the special night. Often, Takeda says, a trustee or collector will decide to purchase an artwork outright for the museum before the auction.

"It's a very exciting evening. In the old days, one or two pieces might get purchased. But in the past few years, all or nearly all of the presented artworks are acquired through Collectors Committee funds, a consortium of Collectors Committee members, or a single donor. This means that millions of dollars' worth of art is acquired in one evening."

LACMA's collection comprises more than 142,000 objects that illuminate 6,000 years of artistic expression across the globe, with 6,850 items listed in the Japanese art and textile curatorial area.

Curator's Eye

One of Takeda's tasks as senior curator is to conceive exhibitions that draw from this vast collection. Her passion and expertise showed through as she took attendees of this ACCJ event through a virtual tour of her best-known LACMA exhibitions.

Talking about how curators select artworks for the museum and exhibitions, she said they build upon the strengths of the permanent



ROBERT WALTERS JAPAN

PERMANENT & TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT



Companies staffing for the constantly changing marketplace demand adaptable business partners like Robert Walters. Since 1985, the group has offered permanent and temporary recruitment options across all industries and levels of seniority. For a recruitment firm that caters to your company's unique bilingual hiring needs, speak to one of our consultants specialising in your industry sector or visit our webpage at www.robertwalters.co.jp



Installation photo, *Reigning Men: Fashion in Menswear, 1715–2015*, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), April 10–August 21, 2016. Photo © Museum Associates / LACMA.



collection and exhibit many examples of exquisite and rare pieces. She also shared how some examples from Japan's Edo Period (1603–1868) became available.

“When the Meiji Restoration eliminated the feudal domains and established a centralized prefectural system, feudal lords living in the capital permanently returned to their fiefdoms. The simultaneous dismantling of warlords’ households resulted in their possessions—too numerous and expensive to be transferred back to the respective fiefdoms—becoming available on the art market.”

Items such as samurai-class women's *kosode* (literally small sleeves), the predecessor of the modern kimono, moved into the hands of Japanese art dealers and, ultimately, on to European dealers. They, in turn, sold them to collectors and artists such as French painter and illustrator James Tissot (1836–1902), who painted a Western woman in a very similar samurai-class kimono in his 1864 painting *Japonaise au Bain at the Beaux*, which is now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon.

National Treasures

“One of the most significant Japanese pieces that was bought with the Collectors Committee fund is *Kun-en*, or *Fragrant Garden*, a kimono created in 1968 by

Moriguchi Kako,” Takeda said. “It depicts a single chrysanthemum blossom that radiates to the outer limits of the kimono form.”

In 1967, Moriguchi was designated a Living National Treasure of Japan. Established in 1950, with the passing of the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, the designation acknowledges individuals who embody technical artistry. He received the honor for mastering and revitalizing the traditional paste and dyeing technique known as *yuzen*.

His son, Kunihiro, now aged 80, was himself designated a Living National Treasure in 2007. In 2000, LACMA acquired his kimono, *Kikkei Kahen Zensomon* (*Gradation of Triangular Petals*), which he made in 1990. Takeda said he has become a personal friend and they have shared numerous conversations about why preservation of these art forms and traditions matters.

“He says that it's not only *yuzen* that is being challenged. He's conscious of the fact that the number of craftsmen making traditional handmade tools, such as brushes or even the dried leaves that he uses as part of his art-making process, are diminishing,” she said. “He's concerned that, if the traditional tools change or disappear, it will influence the hand or the quality of the traditional textiles. So, it's really a critical time right now, I think.” ■

Learn more about
the LACMA collection:
www.lacma.org

Selected Exhibitions curated by Sharon Sadako Takeda

When Art Became Fashion: Kosode in Edo-Period Japan (1992–93)
The Fabric of Life: Japanese Folk Textiles (1995)
Japonism in Fashion: The Influence of Japan on Western Dress (1998)
Miracles and Mischief: Noh and Kyogen Theater in Japan (2002)
Breaking the Mode: Contemporary Fashion from the Permanent Collection (2006)
Fashioning Fashion: European Dress in Detail 1700–1915 (2010–11)
Kimono for a Modern Age (2014)
Reigning Men: Fashion in Menswear 1715–2015 (2016)



Listen to this story.

journal.accj.or.jp/audio

Fine Dining, On Demand

Seth Sulkin's new venture, Food-e, delivers Tokyo's culinary best

While working from home a few weeks into the pandemic last spring, real estate developer Seth Sulkin noticed that his favorite premier Tokyo restaurants were largely empty. When he asked about delivery, most said they didn't offer it, because commissions were too high. More importantly, they said the delivery itself is often poor and unreliable, leaving customers with late, shaken, cold, discolored, and disappointing food.

Such an outcome is annoying even for fast food, which dominates delivery, but totally unacceptable when paying for gourmet meals. "Most of the time, it's a terrible experience," said Sulkin, who was often frustrated by slow, inconsistent service. "Once I find a restaurant that works, I tend to order from it regularly, because ordering from a new restaurant is so terrifying."

Sulkin saw a business opportunity, as well as a way to help his favorite establishments survive. He would create a speedy, quality delivery service for top restaurants that would provide a satisfying dining experience at home, the office, or even the park. It was also a way to offset the negative impact of the pandemic at his other businesses: shopping centers and hotels. Food-e was born.

"I was able to create a business that would benefit from the pandemic and save my favorite restaurants. Those were my two primary motivations," Sulkin said. "We're trying to offer people the best restaurants' food, delivered to wherever they want to eat, within an hour. That's a brand-new concept."

Pro Drivers

Incorporated in May, Food-e GK began service on October 1 and currently provides meals from 35 top-end restaurants in central Tokyo. These include:

- Nobu Tokyo
- The Oak Door
- Elio Locanda Italiana

More are being added each month.

It generally takes about an hour for food to be delivered after the order has been placed online at www.food-e.jp. Once the food is prepared, actual delivery time averages 10 minutes.

To provide fast, reliable service, Sulkin hired a Japanese delivery company with trained, uniformed drivers who are familiar with Tokyo streets and get around on motorcycles. Many well-known food delivery companies rely on part-time workers who may not know the streets well and, generally, don't have an incentive to deliver food properly, Sulkin said.

"We use only professional drivers. They're full-time and they're careful with the food, so we don't get complaints about the delivery," he explained. "It's just a completely different experience."

Service is limited to a five-kilometer radius from the restaurants. Most are in Azabu and Roppongi. This means Food-e will deliver to Ginza to the east, Shibuya and Ebisu to the west, and Shinagawa to the south. "We've chosen this area because it has the highest concentration of customers who want to order this kind of food, as well as the highest concentration of high-quality restaurants," he said.

New Approach

As part of his goal to help restaurants survive, Sulkin reimaged the usual business model. Typically, delivery services charge restaurants a high commission of 30–40 percent. This forces them to raise prices by the same amount or give up their profits. Customers pay a 10-percent service charge and, sometimes, a delivery fee of about ¥100, he explained.

Food-e flips this around and charges restaurants a much lower, undisclosed commission while customers pay a higher, flat delivery fee of ¥1,000 per order, which covers much of the delivery costs, Sulkin said. This allows menu prices to remain largely unchanged.

■ Presented in partnership with Food-e.



Penne alla Norma from Andaz Tokyo's The Tavern - Grill & Lounge



US Strip Loin from The Oak Door at Grand Hyatt Tokyo



Food-e is also the exclusive delivery service for these restaurants. The minimum order is ¥3,000 for lunch and ¥5,000 for dinner. The average order is about ¥16,000, so all those factors are appealing to restaurants, he said.

In fact, upon hearing Sulkin's pitch, restaurant owners have agreed to join Food-e with remarkable speed, usually deciding to do so at the first in-person or online meeting. He says it's the fastest decision-making he's seen during his 35 years working in Japan. "The terms we offer work for them in a way that none of the other delivery services do."

To address hygiene and health concerns during the pandemic, Food-e requires drivers to wear masks, covers the food, and minimizes contact between drivers and customers. "We've been careful, and we haven't had any problems."

Delicious Pics

The Food-e website is fully bilingual and the company aims to have an app for Apple and Android devices in the near future.

To ensure that the site has excellent images, Sulkin has hired professional photographers to shoot appealing photos of the food. "Our goal is that, when you look at our photos, they will make you so hungry you want to order."

Getting food to a customer within an hour means that chefs and restaurant kitchen staff must have ingredients at the ready and prepare meals very quickly. "Chefs are craftsmen and, for some, it's terrifying to get a sudden order when they are used to only handling customers with advance reservations," Sulkin said. "Some of my job is to convince chefs that there are ways to deal with these sudden orders."

On the website, each restaurant will post the estimated combined preparation and delivery time—typically 40–80 minutes. Once an order is placed, the customer receives an estimated time of arrival. They

can also check on the meal's status to see whether it is being prepared or is out for delivery.

While other companies will deliver from high-end restaurants, Sulkin says many require orders two or more days in advance and their websites can be complex to use. Food-e, in contrast, is easy and the only one that will provide high-quality meals on demand.

In its first four months of business, Food-e has seen demand for delivery to corporate events or executive meetings, not just to homes. "If you want a high-quality lunch at an executive meeting, we're the

only place that can deliver it on demand," he said. The company also had a growing number of advance orders, so is expanding that part of its website.

"We're trying to offer people the best restaurants' food, delivered to wherever they want to eat, within an hour. That's a brand-new concept."



a broader area, including Shinjuku and Nihonbashi. Eyes are set on linking up with local top restaurants in Yokohama next year, and then the Kansai region.

But he doesn't plan to significantly expand the delivery radius from the restaurant

much beyond five kilometers—perhaps to six or seven kilometers at the most—because food quality deteriorates as distances and delivery times grow.

An example of the adage "necessity is the mother of invention," Food-e is a positive outcome of the Covid-19 crisis. "If it were not for the pandemic, I would not have thought about starting this business," Sulkin said.

But will demand fade after the coronavirus subsides? Sulkin believes it will not, because the pandemic has brought what he sees as lasting changes to people's behavior, including their eating habits.

"Japanese have been ordering delivery for hundreds of years. The business didn't start with the pandemic, and it's not going to go away when it's over. Even when the threat disappears, people will probably not eat out as often as they used to. So, I think demand for delivery will be higher than before." ■



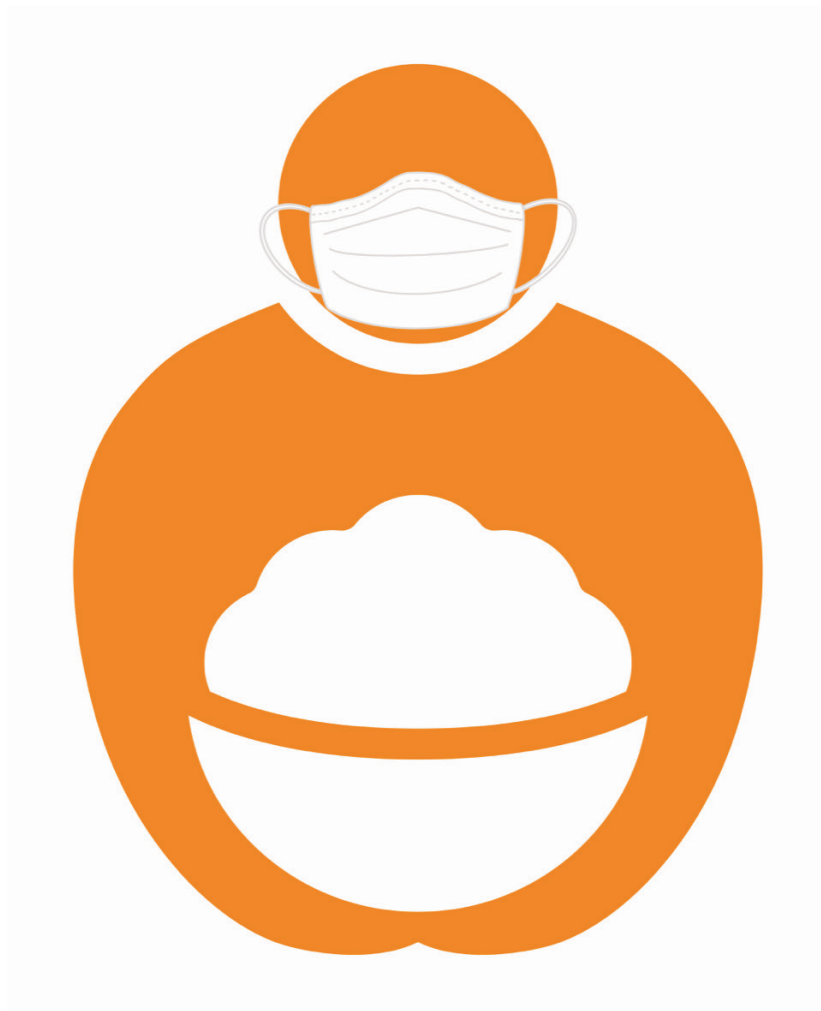
Place your order:
www.food-e.jp



Listen to this story.

journal.accj.or.jp/audio

Still out there making sure
people have enough food.



Thank you.

SECOND HARVEST JAPAN

www.2hj.org

One ACCJ and Future Vision

Chubu leaders look to digital for a stronger chamber

In 2017, the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) introduced its One ACCJ initiative. The goal of the initiative, which continues to this day, is to encourage greater integration among the Tokyo, Kansai, and Chubu chapters and nurture a sense of community across the chamber as a whole.

Last year alone, the Chubu chapter saw a substantial increase in those outside the region participating in chapter events—an indication that this initiative is taking root. We believe that, by capitalizing on the unique strengths and characteristics of the Chubu chapter and leveraging technology, we can encourage this trend for the benefit of all chapters and further contribute to the success of the ACCJ.

Given its size and flexibility, the Chubu chapter is uniquely positioned to act as a test bed for new ACCJ policies and technology.

Tight-knit and Agile

As the chamber's smallest chapter, the ACCJ-Chubu is a tight-knit and agile community that is able to quickly make necessary adjustments to achieve its aims.

The Chubu chapter is probably best known for its annual Walkathon, a fundraising event that we have organized and hosted for the past 30 years in collaboration with local charities that do not have the resources for self-promotion.

In 2020, despite the many challenges, we were able to successfully transform the traditionally in-person Walkathon into a fully virtual event. More than ¥6 million in donations was generated, providing much needed support for charities in a year when many saw a drop in donations and a rise in costs as they worked to create safe environments in the face of Covid-19.

On November 20, we were also able to navigate ACCJ coronavirus protocols to safely host a socially distanced hybrid event: a breakfast with Nicholas M. Hill, deputy chief of mission at the Embassy of the United States, Tokyo. Attended by 15 members in person and streamed live for members viewing remotely, the session was

a clear illustration of how the One ACCJ concept can bring all members from all regions together. This year, we will continue to look for new and innovative ways to accommodate changing circumstances and meet our members' needs.

Platform and Voice

The Chubu chapter is specially positioned to provide a platform and voice for entrepreneurs as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). We have traditionally attracted business-minded professionals in both categories, and many have gone on to create successful businesses with the help and support of ACCJ activities and members. We intend to double down on these efforts over the next two years as we kick off a mentorship series aimed at helping members get their businesses off the ground and running.

With the One ACCJ initiative in full force—and a new environment in which events are delivered online and, when possible, in a hybrid format—we will aim to reach out to entrepreneurs and SMEs in all three chapters to provide value not only to those in the Chubu region but to all chamber members.

Ideal Test Bed

Given its size and flexibility, the Chubu chapter is uniquely positioned to act as a test bed for new ACCJ policies and technology.

One such area that we are pursuing is the digitization and storage of committee notes and resources in a digital document repository. This will promote more effective communication and provide new members with a more complete picture of committee activities, allowing them to become more fully engaged in committees early on. It will also assist with succession planning by ensuring that valuable information is still available when leaders leave committees or new leadership is installed.

Although small, the Chubu chapter is blessed with many dedicated leaders and members committed to advancing the goals and efforts of both the chapter and the chamber. We look forward to working with all ACCJ leaders and members to identify more ways in which the Chubu chapter can contribute to the richness and diversity of the chamber and the community in general. ■



Mark Hosang
ACCJ-Chubu
Governor



Jeff Jackson
ACCJ-Chubu
Treasurer



Listen to this story.

journal.accj.or.jp/audio

REMOTE EXPO

Keep your remote teams engaged and motivated with our **online team building** events



Try our **FREE** weekly demo!

**Customize Style, Branding, and Content to
Create the *Perfect Experience***

Challenges include: GIF Battles, Pictionary, Employee Fact Match, Lip Sync Battles, and Much More!

Featuring Live Professional Hosts with No Software Download Required



Contact us for more information
www.thesuperfantasticcompany.com



Telemedicine and the NHI System

How to solve Japan's innovation bottleneck in healthcare

The medical industry is one of the hardest to disrupt. In some ways, that's a good thing. Lives are literally at stake, so there's a good argument to be made for being conservative and taking things slowly. But looking at the National Health Insurance (NHI) system in Japan—and the health systems of all developed nations—it becomes obvious that not only can improvements be made, but that they must be made.

[The model] highlights how inefficient some parts of Japan's healthcare industry are and how badly innovation is needed.

A while back, I had a chance to talk to Kenichi Ishii, the founder of Next Innovation, an Osaka-based telemedicine startup. Their long-term strategy involves increasing the use and acceptance of telemedicine in Japan and selling prescription drugs over the internet. The need for such a service has been particularly highlighted over the past year as we have grappled with the logistics of a rather analog system during the pandemic.

Cultural Challenge

Among Japan's aging population there is a real shortage of doctors and nurses. Given this, one might expect telemedicine to be much more common in Japan, but it's not. Why is that? One reason that Ishii cited is the difficulty in persuading older people to change their behavior. So, shifting to methods of care that involve online communications—especially video sessions—requires overcoming a level of resistance.

We've started seeing some progress, especially as the pandemic has made in-person clinic visits more difficult and less appealing, due to the risk of exposure to the coronavirus. It's one silver lining of the current crisis. But the cultural aspects that must be overcome for telemedicine to take hold—and for startups in the field to succeed—go beyond discomfort with technology.

Ishii confirmed something that I had long heard, that many older Japanese people actually enjoy visiting the hospital, since it is seen as a place to meet and chat with friends. He said this is true for more than half of

hospital outpatients. A possible solution, he suggests, is a combination of hospital visits and telemedicine. You go to the hospital to talk to a doctor and get a diagnosis. Once the doctor has outlined a treatment plan, subsequent consultations are conducted via telemedicine and prescriptions are filled remotely. This continues as long as you take the same medications each month.

Formula for Success

A key reason Next Innovation has been able to succeed is that they can cut the price of medications for the patient by 70 percent. It makes the cost roughly equal to the NHI system's 30-percent copay. That's very important for the startup because their consultations are not covered by the NHI system.

Given that they are able to do this using some basic technology and a streamlined workflow, I wondered why we don't see more medical startups in Japan? Ishii explained that, because of how the NHI system is structured, it is essentially as if the government were the sole customer. Seventy percent is a high barrier, and those who must work within the system find great difficulty in navigating the rules and regulations to create profitable and sustainable business models.

I asked Ishii what he felt the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare could do to promote medical innovation and startups in Japan. The starting point, he said, is to always think of the patient first rather than the doctor. But what I learned from Ishii's view is that, from the Japanese business side, some see the first step as thinking how to get money from the doctors or hospitals, because Japan has a very good insurance system. Next, they think how to provide care or treatment to the patient.

Nurturing Innovation

One of the most important aspects of Ishii's story is how very difficult it is for a startup to build a viable business model in medicine. Next Innovation has had to operate completely outside the NHI system, and that has meant they have had to provide their services for 70 percent less than the going rate. And they have. While this says a lot about the ingenuity of Ishii and his team, it also highlights how inefficient some parts of Japan's healthcare industry are and how badly innovation is needed. ■



Tim Romero
Head of Google
Startups Japan

Host of the podcast
Disrupting Japan
www.disruptingjapan.com



Listen to this story.

journal.accj.or.jp/audio

Health and Retirement

Realizing a social security system for all generations

The novel coronavirus pandemic has illuminated several challenges facing the sustainability of Japan's social security system. With the aging of the population continuing to accelerate, our human and material resources for healthcare and retirement have been insufficient. In addition, during this crisis, significant financial stimulus needs to be mobilized on the back of Japan's stagnating economy. But as most of this money derives from the issuance of government bonds, it is impossible for the government to spend as much as it desires. Much of Japan's social security system was established in a post-war period where priorities were predominantly infectious diseases and acute illnesses. Over time, the system has evolved to address the treatment of chronic illnesses and Japan's aging demographics, but discussions on securing the necessary resources for this fundamental evolution have been insufficient.

On a positive note, as we continue to evolve as a data-based society, we have begun to grasp the impact of Covid-19 in real time with the active cooperation of civil society. While this is an encouraging sign that bodes well for the future of Japanese society, the state of Japan's infrastructure has been inadequate when compared to other countries. For example, in evaluating the Government's uniform provision of ¥100,000 per person, clearly there is an unrealized opportunity to take a needs-based approach predicated on the integration and application of data.

Amid this pandemic, there have been two fundamental ways of thinking about social distancing policies. One is for society to confer the government with vast authority to monitor the social and economic activities of each individual. The other is for the government to proactively disclose and share information, so that civil society can understand the situation and how it may evolve in an accurate and thorough manner, before proceeding with the active cooperation of civil society. Although some temporary measures may be unavoidable in emergency situations, Japan must pursue the latter option in the medium to long term. Only by doing so can we remain the society that our predecessors have created, where our people can freely and actively determine our own future.

This is not merely a matter of theoretical reflection but a very real choice that is facing us. The novel

coronavirus is a major crisis for mankind, but, even more importantly, the real danger lies in making the wrong choice for our future. In order to ensure that we make the right choice, we must take this opportunity to reform outmoded systems and ways of thinking that have been overly tailored for a society in the past and are no longer relevant for our future.

The white paper *Post Covid-19: Recommendations to Realize a Social Security System for All Generations*, jointly published in December 2020 by the Institute for New Era Strategy and the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan, presents a set of recommendations to realize a social security system for all generations by focusing on three specific areas of extreme importance:

- Active utilization of data technology
- Shifting financial resources towards healthcare and retirement needs
- Raising the health and financial literacy of society

With Japan's fiscal strains exacerbated by the novel coronavirus, now is the time for Japan to tackle these challenges. Strong political will and leadership are required to share a vision for the future with the public, face reality, and make the right choices for a better future. ■



新時代戦略研究所
INES

POST COVID-19
RECOMMENDATIONS TO REALIZE A SOCIAL
SECURITY SYSTEM FOR ALL GENERATIONS

REPORT FROM THE INSTITUTE FOR NEW ERA STRATEGY | DECEMBER 2020

Download the
full white paper:
accj.or.jp/hrwp

Learn more about
the Institute for
New Era Strategy:
inesjapan.com

Two Years of Firsts

Challenges and changes bring a stronger voice for advocacy

Looking back, 2020 was a year unlike any other. For the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) Healthcare Committee, despite starting the year with a clear seat of priorities, the coronavirus pandemic forced us to shift our focus early on. Our advocacy agenda quickly took on the important challenge of ensuring the stable supply of medicines and medical equipment, and what used to be in-person events went fully virtual—a first for the Healthcare Committee.

In another first, the chamber presented the ACCJ Outstanding Achievement Award to Dr. Tatsuya Kondo, who served as chief executive of Japan's Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency from 2008 to 2019. We honored him for his significant contributions to improving the Japanese healthcare system and furthering the US–Japan partnership.

The Healthcare Committee also worked with leaders from the financial services and technology sectors to commission a research report focused on the future of health and retirement. It was our first time collaborating across these industries.

All these firsts came at a time when healthcare professionals, government, and industry were coming together to fight Covid-19. For all of us, 2020 was a year that marked a lot of change—changes in the way we work, communicate, and engage with one another. Similarly, the Healthcare Committee underwent a lot of change in 2020 that has left us stronger and more engaged as a pillar of Japan's business community.

Stronger Leadership

As the day-to-day activities of the Healthcare Committee and its subcommittees evolved over the past few years, our leadership structure had become ineffective in serving the needs of our member companies. So, at the end of the year, we made the decision to dissolve our five subcommittees and welcome active leaders from those groups into the Healthcare Committee leadership. And in an effort to diversify our leadership and support the development of new leaders, Mark Kawai was appointed co-chair. Several other leaders also joined.

This new Healthcare Committee leadership is one of our most diverse yet, with voices from US- and Europe-based pharmaceutical and medical device

companies as well as Japanese academia. We are also very proud to have achieved the chamber's goal of having more than 30 percent of our leadership positions filled by women.

The Healthcare Committee underwent a lot of change in 2020 that has left us stronger and more engaged as a pillar of Japan's business community.

In 2021, we expect this new structure and our new leaders to support us in engaging an even broader base of committee members and member companies.

Looking Forward

The agenda for 2021 will bring us another year of firsts. At the end of 2020, we took the opportunity to solicit the feedback of committee members to help guide our priorities for the coming year. Overwhelmingly, our members said they look to the Healthcare Committee to drive effective advocacy on such issues as:

- Digital health
- Japan's aging society
- Chronic diseases

To do this, we are committed to driving four key strategic priorities:

1. Maintaining a robust speaker pipeline.
2. Releasing our new health policy white paper.
3. Building on successful efforts to support digital transformation.
4. Continuing to expand our work under the ACCJ's Health and Retirement pillar.

A committee's success is entirely dependent on the engagement of its members, so we are striving this year to broaden our reach inside and outside the chamber. We look forward to working together with member companies to drive an agenda that meets their strategic business needs. ■



John Carlson



Mark Kawai



Listen to this story.

journal.accj.or.jp/audio

BRING THE LAB HOME

HEALTHCARE x DIGITAL WINNERS BISU
SHARE THEIR VISION FOR HEALTH STARTUPS

Technology that allows us to monitor our bodies is changing how we manage our health.

Data that was once only obtainable by visiting a doctor is now at our fingertips. A tap on the wrist informing you of how many steps you've taken or calories you've burned is one thing, but a readout of what's happening inside your body is another. Bisu is making such data easy to obtain with their home health lab, an elegant and easy-to-use system that supports a range of tests that you can perform yourself.

The Japan-based startup, which has offices in Tokyo and Atlanta won the Best Innovation Award and the audience-selected Moonshot Prize at the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan's inaugural Healthcare x Digital competition on December 1. *The ACCJ Journal* sat down with co-founders Daniel Maggs and Wojciech Bula—chief executive officer and chief technology officer—to learn more about how the company was formed, the challenges they have faced, and how they aim to help people live healthier, happier lives.



How did the idea for the home health lab come about?

Maggs: I was working in a Japanese company as a product manager and was looking at Internet of Things services. I had known for a while that I wanted to start a business and to make something new. I was really interested in hardware devices because of the challenge and the ability to learn more about our bodies. There was a whole wave of new devices starting to appear, and I saw this as being something where you could build a meaningful business—not just in Japan but all over the world.

We all need to be healthy and productive in old age far longer than our grandparents did. So, I feel that it's not just a challenging and interesting market but it's very meaningful work, because we're satisfying a very basic human need to be healthy and happy, and to live as long as possible with the ones you love.

And during that exploration period, I met Wojciech, who was, at the time, at the University of Tokyo.

Bula: I've been a scientist for more than 15 years, working for various universities on projects related to electronics, microfluidics, biology, and some IT. I was getting a bit tired of the number of publications in which you have to appear by the end of the year, so when Daniel approached me, I was really interested. I wanted to build something impactful and I felt this home health lab concept was a very good niche. It's not a diagnostic that you will use once per quarter or maybe twice a year. This is something you can put into someone's hands and they might use the information they obtain to change their life.

How did the company come together?

Maggs: In the early days, when we were still doing market research, trying different kinds of technology, and creating very early prototypes, we incorporated a US company in Delaware. That was in 2015. We did that from Japan because it meant that we could do it cheaply, could avoid having to change our visas for some time, and, because we weren't running a Japanese company, it would be easier to get money from more globally minded investors. We now also have a Japanese company as a subsidiary.

What challenges did you face?

Maggs: In the early stages, you start with a bunch of assumptions about what you think the problem is that you are trying to solve and what your product is likely to be. We had two:

- The device would be installed in the toilet
- We would be checking for signs of disease

On the second point, we spent some time talking with doctors to learn about patients and chronic conditions. We came to understand how these conditions develop slowly over a very long period of time. So, the key is not discovering whether someone has a condition or is on track for one, it's to try and get them to change their behaviors. Intervention and prevention are key.

That made us think about what things we could detect. And we also asked why a person who is on the track to chronic disease would be motivated to check for a problem when they're not already motivated to take care of their health. You want people who actually care about their health, who want to invest in it.

On the toilet side, people have been talking about health-sensing toilets for a long time. We've seen prototypes, but they are extremely expensive and complicated. No one's really made

a successful one yet. We took a step back and thought about a different approach. We decided to go portable so that the product could be used anywhere, not just in one location, and actually could be used by multiple people in a hygienic and easy way. This is one of the best decisions we ever made, because it meant that the product became a lot more scalable. A reader could be in a company toilet, at home, or in a gym.

We could also do new kinds of testing that have never been done, so we've made tests for pet health and a saliva test for oral health. We have one for baby health that is a diaper with an embedded removable test stick. There's a whole pipeline now that would not be possible if you were stuck in one location with a toilet.

Were there design challenges?

Maggs: With a hardware company, it's really important not to fall in love with the technology. You must always try to be focused on the best means to an end.

We're trying to provide a really great experience. The challenge is that we are bringing medical-grade technology to the consumer market, and it's a new technology—at least for the field in which we operate. That's challenging for a couple of reasons. One is that you need to have a very clear and simple way to explain the concept. The other is that investors—because many are not that technically minded—are more interested in building a big business quickly rather than in something being genuinely innovative.

One thing that is satisfying about this business is that we really feel we're doing something that's going to move humanity forward.

The challenge for us is that we have this technical foundation that is needed to realize the product, but we must translate it in a way that's very simple and human and relatable. For example, our website looks quite nice now, but we had to go through many iterations trying to make it less technical, with less jargon, to the point where the visitor is like, "Ah! I get it!" That was a learning experience.

Bula: The technology you're developing should solve a problem. That's actually a first trap that a hardware startup can fall into. Take a smart toilet. It sounds like a great product, because it's derived from great technology. But is it a good product? Especially in terms of detecting the biomarkers of early disease, it sounds great. But as a user, would you pay for a product that scans for five or 10 biomarkers out of the huge spectrum of all the diseases you might have? Probably not. You want to have the whole overview; but there's no technology that does that yet, no technology that is giving the user peace of mind.

If you go this route, you are giving the user a bad experience. We avoided the trap by not loving our technology too much. We changed the prototype a few times, started from scratch, started to focus on the user and what they want. It's a standard textbook way of doing business, but it's more difficult to actually apply than to talk about.

How important are aesthetics to consumer adoption?

Maggs: I think it's essential. People's perception of urine testing is that it's something you would normally do in a clinical setting. You are kind of in the position of patient and you're almost performing an experiment on yourself. We wanted to get to the point where testing your urine is simple, elegant, and pleasant, where you would have a very positive association with using the product and it can be part of an aspirational, positive lifestyle.

IT'S REALLY IMPORTANT NOT TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THE TECHNOLOGY. YOU MUST ALWAYS TRY TO BE FOCUSED ON THE BEST MEANS TO AN END.



Bula: It should be a device that people would truly like to use—not just a pleasure to look at but also engaging. If you are looking to design, it is definitely a language with which you talk to the user. If the design is functional but less sophisticated, then it shows a lack of respect for the user, because the language you're using is not personalized, not the best language you could use. So, it was definitely worth the effort to create the design we have.

That is also at the core of how we want to establish the interaction with and relation to the user. It's about respect. It's not about marketing or selling them things they don't want; it's about really addressing their needs. Design is part of that.

How the device loads and how it works also matters, as does being environmentally friendly. We spent a lot of time trying to make it as energy efficient and modular as possible. If something breaks, the user potentially can replace the part, or we can fix the device. That's part of being environmentally friendly. We deeply believe that the device should last, can be repaired, and have a low environmental impact. That is also part of respecting the customer, because we know that they also care about these things.

How did your market research guide you?

Maggs: The key is to make things easy for people, to deliver a pleasurable experience, with minimum effort and zero pain, at a reasonable cost. Our thesis is that if you can get to that experience, you can get a lot of people to use the product.

Initially, I was very much in this sort of "biohacker" world of health optimization and health tracking. After a while, I realized this is a small market. It's an important market, but for some people on the outside it's harder for them to approach your product if they see you as being in this category. They might say, "Well, I'm not a biohacker, I don't identify with this. It's kind of interesting, but I guess it's not really for me." So, you want to position yourself in a way where your messaging is wide enough to welcome those potential users but not so soft that the enthusiasts won't come at the start and be the active adopters.

Probably the most important thing I've done in my role in the company has happened during the past five months. I've been working through a process with our marketing team—they're actually

an external agency, but they're very good at this—to really go into depth about who we're trying to speak to and what their needs are. What are their external problems? What internal emotional problems are they experiencing? How do you speak to each person?

I've walked through this thing called StoryBrand, which I highly recommend. It's based on how, in a movie script, you have a hero who has a problem, and there's a villain stopping them from getting to where they need to be. It can be an embodied villain or it can be a situation. Then along comes a guide, someone there to advise them, who gives the hero a plan and calls them to action. And by taking this action, they achieve their success and avoid the failure that they were afraid of. StoryBrand basically takes that framework and lets you describe that for a consumer in relation to your product. At Bisu, we have three basic target segments:

- Those interested in weight loss, and looking and feeling good
- People in their thirties, forties, and fifties who want to take care of themselves as they age
- Fitness enthusiasts trying to get the extra five percent

Each segment has their own fears. People who are struggling to lose weight may feel guilty that they don't know what to do and lack control. Those who are more on the wellness side may feel that they've lost something they had before, and they want to regain that sense of vitality, excitement, and joy. And the last group may be insecure about not being at their best or being mediocre, not being number one.

That framework has helped us clarify things and apply some discipline to how we talk about the product and issues surrounding it. Words are like emotional real estate. When you choose words, you're occupying some emotional territory that people either do or don't care about. It's a really delicate art.



Daniel Maggs

How does your podcast help your business?

Maggs: Podcasts are useful for several reasons.

One is because people are looking for personal, intimate conversations. Podcast content has very high engagement. It's a really good way to literally have someone's ear, to get into the details of something without necessarily jumping quickly to the

next YouTube video, and it's a good way to build your brand and authority. I think it's a very important format. It's one of the highest-growth formats and is less saturated than video.

You're typically working with two kinds of people in your podcast:

- Experts who are going to reinforce a statement you want to make
- Influencers who are going to help drive traffic

Before starting the podcast, I was thinking in terms of the things that we track and are relevant to us. We've done six episodes on these topics. Now, I'm thinking more in terms of the things that we need to educate people on by a certain date to help set up that understanding before launch. One speaker I'm quite excited about is a former astronaut who wrote a book on learnings about health that have come from activity in space. We have interest from NASA, because urine testing in space is very difficult, and he is one of the researchers with whom we've submitted a joint application to the agency. So, my aim is to do a podcast interview with him.

How can home devices help sustain the healthcare system?

Maggs: I think user experience—an emotional connection—will always be key, because people need to be in a sweet spot between the cost—in terms of time, effort, money—of using something. The lower those barriers are, the more often the device can be used. But it has to have some kind of corresponding value. We see some devices from companies that are very good at sales and marketing, and, at the beginning, they sell lots of product and raise a lot of money. But, in the end, the reviews catch up with them, because what they're advertising is not really what they can do.

We need to balance the desire to make money and build a business with a desire to actually feel that what we've made is legit and robust. My impression on the science and technology side is that the next five years are going to be very good for us and a few other companies we see in the health and wellness space. But probably it will be another five to 10 years before we finally have legit health tracking at home as a standard thing.

Even the early wearable devices are pretty shaky on the quality of data such as step and calorie estimation. For the latest Apple Watch, they basically filled a whole warehouse full of exercise



Wojciech Bula

equipment and got the executives to wear calorie estimation devices to gather the reference data set for the watch. They went to a huge amount of detail, but a lot of products don't do that. And then the ones that are on the medical side are almost all about treating patients. So there's a gap in the middle. I think the main focus is going to be not on the technology but the problem you're trying to solve and how you make using the product a joyful experience.

If you can do those two things, I think you've solved 90 percent of the picture.

Bula: There are some very sophisticated tests in the research stage that, potentially, can be dropped into a product such as ours. But the question is actually, why would you do that? For the sake of just putting it on the market so that people can use it twice a year? This is not really a good thing. So, I think we should be careful.

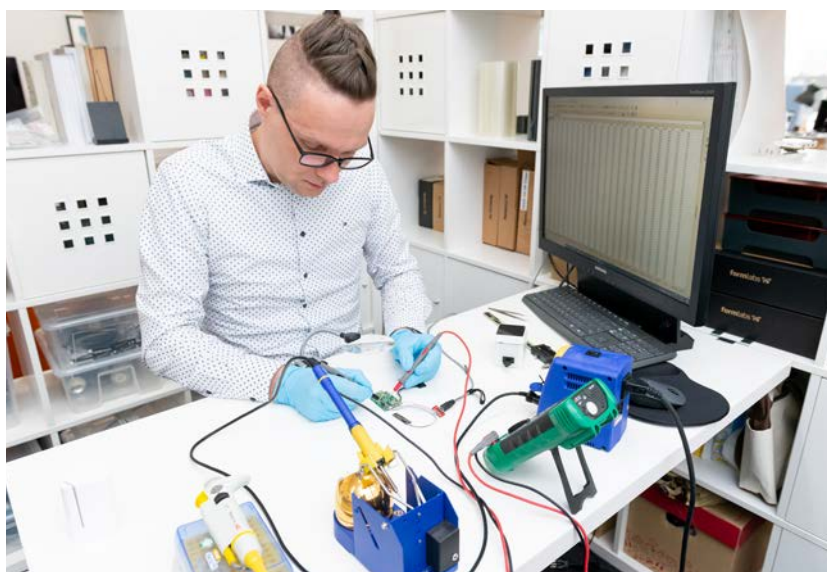
We simplified our technology to broaden the number of bio-markers that we can measure to give you direct information on what's happening to your body. That can give you better insight into what you can do to change your behavior and achieve your goals. I think this is the most important thing for a product like that to go to the mass market. The technology is secondary.

How will your Healthcare x Digital wins help you?

Maggs: We are somewhere between the traditional medical biotech world and the consumer world, so it matters for us to have validation and recognition from the medical industry, because we care very deeply about quality. I think there are more consumers now who are more cynical about hardware devices, because many didn't live up to expectations or weren't accurate.

It's also important to us because we would like this product, one day, to be used by patients as well. We have a roadmap that this will eventually be in the hands of people with diabetes, chronic kidney disease, hypertension, and so on.

These things are not essential for launching our first products in the consumer market, but they put us on the radar and also help doctors understand that we are legit, and they can take us seriously, even though, initially, we're actually not going into their space. So, we very much appreciate this. And also, we are a US company, we're European founders, and we're in Japan. I think it's smart for us to try and build connections that touch these different points.



Any advice for those entering this year's Healthcare x Digital competition?

Maggs: It's important to look at who's sponsoring and what their goals are. In our case, we had three very well-known pharma sponsors: AstraZeneca, Bayer, and Eli Lilly. When considering your pitch, sponsors are looking for some kind of credible basis, some proof of progress or form of validation. It doesn't have to be fully peer reviewed.

They also want to see something that ties into their business interests, so reading up on press releases, seeing what they're doing on things such as digital healthcare, and how they're working with startups can provide helpful clues about how to

**Event coverage specialists
Photographers and videographers**

Transforming valuable moments into an asset for the future.



We believe that visual documentations are assets in one's brand. Our team at LIFE.14 works closely with foreign embassies, international organizations, and global conferences.

We are not just camerapersons, we are your professional partner to provide high-quality photographs and footages to broaden your possibilities for the future.

www.life14.com • contact@life14.com • 03-6709-9442



LIFE.14
Global Visual Production

Have a great idea?

Want to have it reviewed by top executives from leading international healthcare and technology companies?

Sign-ups for the 2021 Healthcare x Digital pitch event will open this summer, with submissions by those selected due in fall.

Don't miss your chance to win prizes and make key industry connections: accj.or.jp/hxd

WORDS ARE LIKE EMOTIONAL REAL ESTATE. WHEN YOU CHOOSE WORDS, YOU'RE OCCUPYING SOME EMOTIONAL TERRITORY THAT PEOPLE EITHER DO OR DON'T CARE ABOUT.



present your pitch. It can also be helpful to get some soft feedback before you apply—not asking someone if the tech is good or not, but if they have any suggestions about what angle is good for this presentation and so on.

Any last words for startups?

Maggs: We want to encourage more people to try and run global startups from Japan. Not necessarily to be like us, but I think this hybrid model we have of a US company with a Japanese subsidiary works really, really well.

We also have a relationship with the Japan External Trade Organization. They're fantastic. We consider ourselves to be a Japanese startup, but we're also a global startup. And we're Europeans. And an American company. We all have these different faces, and we can use those faces in the right way, depending on what we're trying to achieve.

Bula: It's nice to come back to the roots of the startup. You should start your own way and not care about what other people are saying. Do your stuff and do it the way you feel you should, because the disruption won't come from textbook startups doing things how a venture capitalist asks them to, because that is how they've done it a couple of times before. That's not future proof. I would say to find your own way and just do it. ■



Listen to this story.
journal.accj.or.jp/audio

About Healthcare x Digital

A program of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ), Healthcare x Digital is designed to give innovators the opportunity to pitch ideas to top executives from some of the world's leading healthcare and pharmaceutical companies. It is led by the ACCJ-Kansai chapter and four committees:

- Healthcare
- Information, Communications and Technology
- Alternative Investment
- Secure Digital Infrastructure.

To solve Japan's most critical community healthcare and individual patient challenges, we believe the private and public sector should join forces. We seek to foster partnerships that lead to the creation of eco-systems, by bringing together private innovators, private sponsors, and public sponsors.

Join us to discover Japan's most innovative healthcare ideas and develop partnerships to make them a reality.



Participation and sponsorship details: accj.or.jp/hxd

FITNESS

By C Bryan Jones

VIRTUAL WORLDS REAL GAIN



EVOLVING TECH ALLOWS MORE
EXERCISE WHILE STAYING HOME

For many people, one of the hardest parts of the coronavirus pandemic has been staying home. With fewer opportunities for outdoor exercise and trips to the gym, keeping in shape has become more difficult. One option often overlooked is virtual

reality (VR). Sometimes seen as a niche technology that appeals mainly to hardcore enthusiasts, VR has evolved rapidly in recent years and offers easy, immersive ways to exercise—or just reduce stress—when working from home.

Fiction Becomes Reality

Simulated environments have long been a staple of entertainment, particularly in movies and films that imagine what our world will be like in the distant future. Perhaps the best-known example comes from *Star Trek*, in which starship crews frequent the holodeck, a room where projections can simulate everything from recreational activities to fitness and combat training.

The yellow grid that defines that room is a familiar bit of fiction to people all over the world—but it isn't fiction anymore. Those same lines appear when you get too close to your room's wall when using the Oculus Quest 2, the latest version of the groundbreaking VR headset from Facebook Technologies, LLC. And they may also appear while you are boxing, playing racquetball, or practicing tai chi.

The advancements in the Quest hardware, as well as the Vive from HTC Corporation, are key to VR for fitness. These headsets contain all the processing power required to generate virtual worlds, eliminating the need to tether to a gaming PC. The change opens the door to freer movement, and the feeling is liberating.

Initiate Program

"I cannot remember the absolute first time I tried VR, but my earliest experiences were at demonstrations in shopping centers or in game arcades," said Elizabeth Tasker, an associate professor at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) Institute of Space and Astronautical Sciences. "I find virtual reality incredibly immersive, and my brain seems completely ready to accept that I've just been swept away from a street outside a McDonald's and deposited in a war against humongous titans or similar!"

While Tasker conjures up images of epic battles, she also loves using VR for fitness, and her accounts of rowing the streets of Babylon and peddling around a black hole show how the technology can help us cope with the current situation.

Her earliest VR experiences were short ones designed to show off the thrill factor with activities such as riding a roller coaster or falling off a cliff. She tried a fitness platform for the first time in 2018: the Icaros Pro system from Icaros GmbH, whose products blend training, gaming, and social competition to create exciting and effective exercise experiences. Initially installed in premium fitness clubs and hotels, Icaros professional systems can now be found in leading orthopedic and neurological therapy facilities.

"The Icaros exercise machine allows you to be suspended as you fly or swim through three-dimensional scenes," Tasker explained. "I quite enjoyed that one, but I had a similar problem as being thrown off a cliff. The studio assistant actually understood this issue and suggested I try the Holofit software on one of their Concept2 rowers."

Concept2 Inc. has been making rowing machines for competitive athlete training since 1981, and their RowErg is designed for a full-body, low-impact workout. It's great for pairing with Holofit, a platform from Holodia that is available in commercial and home versions.

"I rowed canals that cut through a mythological Babylonian town and watched the markets, fight practice, and the odd elephant," she recalls. "It was more like tourism than exercise! At the time, Holofit was mainly marketed at professional gyms, I think partly because the entry cost was very high."

This was before standalone VR headsets, such as the Oculus Quest, so a home setup would have required a fast gaming PC, a tethered headset, and an exercise machine that was compatible with the Holofit software. "It would have been a serious investment, and I even considered it," she said. "That's how much I liked it."

A year later, everything changed. The standalone Oculus and Vive headsets drastically reduced the cost of entry for home users. Today, you can step into another world any time you want, in your own home, for as little as ¥40,000. And, in most cases, no exercise equipment is required. But if you want to combine VR with familiar tools such as a stationary bike, you can. That's what Tasker does. She keeps an exercise bike behind her desk so she can hop on anytime.

Motivation

So VR is cool. But is it a magical switch that you flip to turn off all your fitness procrastination? Not exactly.

"I have to be honest and admit that, while I do love the Holofit program and the different worlds you can explore, there is still an energy barrier needed to get my lazy backside onto a bike—even one that is right behind my desk," Tasker said. "So, I tend to go through periods where I'm on Holofit every day, and then the bike gets used as a coat rack for several weeks. But there's no doubt that the bike would have morphed into a full-on clothes hanger without Holofit and VR."

She offered some tips for overcoming those moments of weakened motivation.

"To try and coach myself off the sofa, I do flip between a variety of apps. There is *VZfit*, which also works with an exercise bike and actually lets you cycle through Google Maps, so you can explore the entire world from your living room," she said. "It's the only way I've been able to visit the UK over the past year. As Google Maps is not designed for VR, the 360-degree imaging isn't perfect like it is in all of the Holofit worlds. But the two complement each other quite nicely. If I want to go traveling, I pick *VZfit*. If I want to feel I've stepped into a storybook or science fiction movie, I choose cycling through Dwarven mines or the colony around Saturn on Holofit."

Business Potential

These VR systems have given rise to some business initiatives. One is Fun and Body, a showroom for VR exercise that was located near Harajuku, in Tokyo's Shibuya Ward, when Tasker visited to experience Holofit in 2018. The small, sunlit studio had space for just four people and allowed visitors to try equipment for one hour for ¥3,000. Coronavirus precautions and the extended state of emergency declaration last May led the company to suspend general VR training experiences and services to companies considering VR solutions. Fun and Body has since moved to a new location in Chiyoda Ward and is waiting for the crisis to subside before taking next steps.

Another is Bodience, a body and science personal studio. With two locations in Yokohama, the company offers 30 minutes of VR core training on Icaros equipment for ¥7,000. To keep guests safe from Covid-19, Bodience carries out daily trainer health checks, thorough disinfection of equipment after each use, and ensures regular ventilation.

Visiting such studios is a great way to find out if VR is for you before purchasing a headset and exercise equipment.

App Escape

The benefits of VR fitness apps go beyond simple health maintenance. Tasker says that, while exercise is obviously a big factor, the Holofit worlds also provide escapism.

"If I'm frustrated, I often finding cycling through one of the virtual worlds is a way of feeling that I've left my desk and gone on a short vacation. Especially over this past year, with Covid-19 restricting our ability to get out of the house, it has been great to feel that multiple locations can be accessed from my own room."

While there are a variety of apps to choose from, there are some standouts that can turn your workday into a productive outing on two fronts: work and health.

Breaking the fourth wall, as the author I will share with you my own VR-inclusive approach to time management. Using an iOS app called Focused Work, by Australian developer Michael Tigas, I create workflows that inject five- or 10-minute workouts into 15- or 30-minute work sprints. To stop myself from sitting for hours without moving around, I keep a visible timer running that forces me to take periodic breaks. And to make those breaks count, I pop



Image: FitXR



Image: Holodia

"I FIND VIRTUAL REALITY INCREDIBLY IMMERSIVE, AND MY BRAIN SEEMS COMPLETELY READY TO ACCEPT THAT I'VE JUST BEEN SWEEPED AWAY."



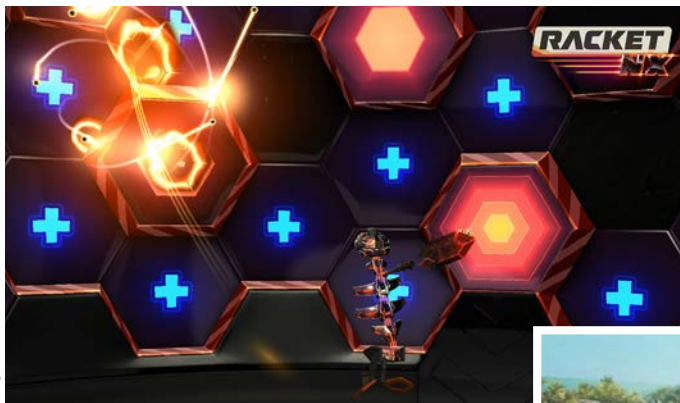


Image: One Hamsa

▲ *Racket: Nx*'s futuristic take on racquetball.
 Guided Tai Chi immerses you in nature. ►

◀ Opposite page: *FitXR* delivers fast-paced boxing while Holofit transports you to places such as the canals of Babylon.



Image: Cubicle Ninjas

on my Oculus Quest 2 for a quick round of boxing or a few minutes on the racquetball court. It's just enough to keep my energy level up, and the calorie burn is also welcome.

A standout for creating workflows that combine focused work with VR exercise is *FitXR*, a virtual fitness studio that delivers short boxing and dance sessions that offer a real workout.

FitXR offers in-app metrics so that you can track your progress, including estimated calories burned. There is a huge number of classes to choose from, and add-on sets are also available. The workouts, which are led by top trainers, are designed to increase energy levels, burn calories, and improve strength, according to the company. Each is timed and the options range from quick three-minute bursts to one-hour marathons. The ability to compete against other *FitXR* users adds another level of motivation.

If you prefer racket sports and fancy a futuristic escape, *Racket: Nx* is a fast-paced experience that developer One Hamsa describes as "racquetball meets *Breakout* inside a giant pinball arena." Once inside the dome, which serves as the walls and ceiling of a traditional racquetball court, the controllers you hold in each hand become rackets, the hexagonal cells that line the walls light up with glowing targets, and a ball of energy descends. With a swing you send the ball flying and your workout begins. The level of immersion is incredible.

Holodia's Holofit, which Tasker described, is designed primarily to augment your rowing machine, stationary bicycle, or elliptical and is compatible with major fitness brands. The company also offers premium virtual content, virtual coaching, and online competitions through the Holofit community. A com-

panion smartphone app provides advanced tracking, comparison, competition, and connectivity features. And, similar to Apple Fitness, you can earn trophies to keep yourself motivated.

For a more relaxing break from work stress, there is *Guided Tai Chi*, from full-service digital agency Cubicle Ninjas. The app offers more than 200 tai chi-inspired workouts, including 100 meditation sessions, in 20 breathtaking natural environments. Options range from three to 60 minutes, and the headset cameras can actually track your hands, so there's no need to hold controllers.

Tomorrow's Tech Today

While VR is finding new users during the pandemic, as people look for ways to leave their home without actually doing so, wider use is likely to be more than just a flash in the pan. Once vaccination fully takes hold and the real world reopens, there will still be a place for such escapes to virtual worlds. And as the processing power and image resolution of these standalone headsets increases, so will the possible applications of the tech.

If you're curious about the benefits of VR, trying it today is easy. The technology has finally reached the mainstream.

"A few years ago, the cost of setting up VR in your home was sufficiently high that you had to be pretty sure ahead of time that you would really like it," Tasker said. "However, the new wireless headsets are now the cost of a gaming console. That is not super cheap, but given the amount you can do with that headset for games, fitness, and meetings, I would say it is worth giving it a go!" ■



Elizabeth Tasker
 Associate Professor
 Japan Aerospace
 Exploration Agency
 Institute of Space and
 Astronautical Sciences

Learn about the apps:

holodia.com

fitxr.com

racketnx.com

guidedtaichi.com

virzoom.com



Listen to this story.

journal.accj.or.jp/audio

Green Tree Growth

MnK builds sustainable business and community in Niseko

After skiing in Niseko for five winters, Eddie and Chi Guillemette found that Hokkaido's beauty and wide-open spaces were an antidote to their hectic, city-based lifestyle. Knowing that other families could also benefit, they bought land in 2007 and built nine spacious houses. The aim was to create a family-friendly resort that could offer guests an escape, a chance to get back to nature, rest, and explore, or even a place from which to work year-round.

Today, their company MnK, short for *midori no ki* or green tree in Japanese, has grown to offer more than 100 modern and beautifully furnished properties in three communities at the foot of the Niseko ski resorts, whose powder attracts skiers and snowboarders from Australia, Southeast Asia, and even the United States.

Getting Started

When the first development, Country Resort, opened in 2008, a community of rental houses was rare in Niseko. Most people stayed in hotels or *ryokans* (traditional Japanese inns). The development is an eight-minute drive from the village of Hirafu, a bustling

ski slope hub. Some local residents felt the distance was too great to draw visitors, but the Guillemettes wanted space and a break from crowded cities. Over time, Country Resort has proved popular with vacationers, many of whom come from Hong Kong, where Eddie and Chi were originally based.

To better serve the owners and guests, they set up MnK Management Company and added a permanent reception building with a restaurant. They began spending nearly half their time in Niseko to grow and improve their new venture. "We started putting in services that we would want ourselves," Eddie said. They changed or added things based on feedback received from owners and guests.

Their second development, Akazora, a serviced apartment building in the middle of Hirafu, was completed in 2012 as an option for guests who wanted to be in the village. As the business grew, they started another community of standalone homes from scratch. Called The Orchards Niseko, in 2015 the development was named Asia's Best Resort Residencies for Japan by online property portal group Property Report, a regional luxury property and lifestyle magazine and website that publishes news and insights on investment destinations.

■ Presented in partnership with MnK.



Family Friendly

At all three communities, MnK's service goal is to be family friendly—a mission guided by the Guillemettes's experiences raising their own children.

Soon after they began their Niseko business, the couple started a summer camp for their children and those of other families staying at Country Resort. Theirs were city kids used to living in apartments in Hong Kong, and the Guillemettes wanted them to explore nature. The project also provided an additional rationale to visit Niseko in the summer, when camp counselors would look after the kids. This has grown into a full-blown summer program called EdVenture—combining education and adventure—that draws more than 300 children each year.

A key part of the summer program is visiting local farms, where the children milk cows, get eggs from the henhouse, and harvest vegetables to help them understand where food comes from. “The kids love the hands-on experience,” Guillemette said. “Then we take the produce back to the clubhouse and fry up a nice breakfast with the kids and the parents, which is always a lot of fun.”

A few years later, they branched into winter day camps after receiving feedback from guests that their children didn't want to ski all day long. Camp staff pick up the kids at the rental homes and go sledding, make snow caves, or enjoy snowshoeing. This is mixed with some indoor playtime. After lunch, they have an afternoon group ski lesson.

In recent years, MnK has added more programs, including a camp experience in English for Japanese students that is popular for birthday parties. “All our expansion has come from solving a problem or challenge. Each new business has been a building block on top of an existing one,” Guillemette said. “As Covid-19 hit our international business, our team found a new customer base of Japanese families and groups wanting to explore Niseko and Hokkaido through an English immersion experience.”

Year-round Work

Niseko's local economy is very much driven by the seasons. There are plenty of winter jobs, but many disappear during the warmer months as hotels and restaurants shut down.

The Guillemettes want to employ their staff year-round to benefit both the workers and the resorts. “We don't want to rely on our winter seasonal staff to be



our main source of customer service. We want to provide year-round, viable career options at MnK. I think that's very important. The level of service you receive from someone who lives here, who has a connection to the community, is so different from what you get from seasonal staff,” Guillemette said.

“A lot of operators in Niseko are understandably winter-only, and they are foreigner-focused businesses. We have always stayed open for summer and we were ready to pivot to the domestic market because our Japanese staff are fully plugged into how travel works in Japan.”

This summer, with the pandemic likely to continue restricting international travel, Niseko offers city dwellers from the Kanto and Kansai regions an accessible, easygoing escape that feels a world away.

“Hokkaido has always been a popular destination with a small group of domestic travelers,” said MnK general manager Patrick Ohtani. “With everyone looking at options in Japan for their summer holidays, perhaps this year, more than ever, we have found a new audience for accommodations and services.”

MnK welcomes visitors for weekend, weekly, or even monthly stays during summer, and excellent, stable internet service makes remote work easy.

“Niseko is a great place for a long stay, because there is something for everyone. Just from a climate perspective, it's pleasant in the summer—much cooler than Honshu. And there is fresh produce from the farms and Hokkaido's famous seafood to enjoy, as well as plenty of outdoor activities to keep you busy,” said Guillemette.

Green Trees

Looking to the future, MnK is committed to being ecologically responsible, and has started measuring its environmental impact and adopted some best practices in environmental, social, and corporate governance policy to improve the business for stakeholders. The company is trialing one measuring system, EaSyGo, with local partner Goyoh, an exclusive concierge service.

“Given our company name, being environmentally conscious has always been there,” Guillemette explained. “Now, there are tools to measure this and help change behavior.”

Preserving Hokkaido's abundant nature is vitally important, he says. And whatever time of year visitors come, he hopes people will feel at home. “We want you to stay as a guest and return as a friend.” ■



Learn more:

mnkniseko.com/accj



MnK
RESORTS & HOSPITALITY



MnK
REAL ESTATE



EdVenture
by MnK



Listen to this story.

journal.accj.or.jp/audio

SHARE SUPPORT ENGAGE

EXPERTS OFFER TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL
ONBOARDING IN A VIRTUAL AGE



Bringing a new team member into a business—and then making them feel a valued part of the operation—can be a challenge at the best of times. During a pandemic, with people working remotely and no water cooler around which to gather for introductions and valuable insider tips, it can be significantly more difficult.

Yet businesses cannot sleep, even in a time of crisis, and new hires must be introduced and blended into the work environment. As a result, companies have had to rapidly devise ways to welcome new faces and get them up to speed while safely managing the coronavirus. American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) members in the human resources field shared with *The ACCJ Journal* successful approaches to bridging the virtual gap.

Interim Tactics

“Integrating a new hire into a company under the current situation presents some specific challenges,” admits Eric Cole, president of Tokyo-based executive search firm Cole and Company. “Most of the companies we work with who have brought on new employees have invested more time in onboarding than in the past. They have allocated more time for video calls and added a more formal structure to communication by holding regularly scheduled video meetings.

“Overall, the feedback so far is that these interim tactics are working—but not to the extent of being in an office with people,” he said. “No surprise there.”

For many jobs, the induction into a new company is a crucial period during which the newcomer does a deep dive into the firm. It is far more difficult to replicate this process with video calls and takes longer, Cole added.

Ryan Yasunari, president and chief executive officer of recruitment process outsourcing company Envision Co., Ltd., said his firm would typically carry out onboarding and training sessions at its headquarters, but new hires are now being provided with digital materials and the sessions are being conducted virtually.

And while the training aspect of the process has been largely successful, Yasunari said, “the most difficult aspect of virtual onboarding is creating a sense of belonging and connection to the organization.”

This was a common refrain in interviews with a dozen or more human resources experts for this story.

Adapt on the Fly

Kevin Naylor, vice president of business development at en world Japan, said many companies “have had to adapt on the fly,” acquiring new or additional hardware

to facilitate effective remote work or implementing additional software or processes while, at the same time, increasing communication and engagement across their organizations. And some have struggled with onboarding due to unanticipated constraints.

“Even with the reduction in hiring over the past year, almost all firms have had to onboard someone,” Naylor said. “Unfortunately, few firms have had the wherewithal or initiative to fully overhaul their training and onboarding programs to suit the new, remote-dominant paradigm.

“Many have just expected this to be over sooner rather than later and have not thought it worthwhile to dedicate the resources to making a fundamental change in processes or practices,” he said. “This frequently means one trip to the office to fill out key documents and receive necessary hardware, then banishment to their home to start their new, quarantined working life.” And that approach is creating new problems, he believes.

“Almost all firms and all employees onboarded during the Covid-19 crisis are experiencing issues with disconnection and disengagement,” he said. “New employees have not had a chance to create an internal network, often leaving them lost when it comes to who they need to contact to solve problems or get advice. On top of that, they have not built a sense of trust or belonging, which makes it more difficult for them to come together with their team members to overcome challenges when there are disagreements or problems.”

Naylor believes that, arguably, the biggest issues concern the training of new hires, which he feels has been “at a significantly inferior level in comparison with years past.”

For Jeremy Sampson, managing director of Robert Walters Japan K.K., not being able to conduct training in person was the “biggest challenge” for new hires and the companies employing them.

“For organizations that have implemented remote work arrangements for the first time, the transition to remote processes has not been an easy task,” he said. “This is also one of the reasons companies have wanted to hire someone who could hit the ground running. There would be less training required. But with the right technologies and systems in place, training and onboarding new staff is possible.



Nancy Ngou
Associate Partner
EY Strategy &
Consulting Co., Ltd.



Eric Cole
President
Cole and Company



While video is a must for meetings, it can also be used to help new hires get to know each other and build rapport.



Ryan Yasunari
President & CEO
Envision Co., Ltd.



Kevin Naylor
Vice President of
Business Development
en world Japan

“The first step that companies had to take was investing in tech hardware and software, such as communication tools and cloud platforms, to support remote work,” he pointed out.

“For companies that were already equipped with the technology, the challenge was more around adapting the training program to be facilitated online which, in many roles, is far more difficult than hands-on training in person.”

Cole agrees that “structured video calls cannot replace serendipitous meetings with co-workers, line managers, and so on. Learning the ins and outs of a new job comes from interacting with others, including direct and indirect stakeholders.”

Yet, in his experience, some of his clients have responded impressively under these tough circumstances, “by being authentic, friendly, and caring in their approach to training new staff.”

“They make the most of the tools that they have and do the best they can in the current situation, sometimes with surprisingly encouraging results,” he said. “Many have found that the increased reliance on the structure of regularly scheduled video calls helps with the technical knowledge aspects of induction.

“Setting clear goals and then scheduling follow-up meetings to review performance helps bring newcomers up to speed faster than a completely informal approach,” he added.

Longer Process

Nancy Ngou, an associate partner with EY Strategy & Consulting Co., Ltd. and an ACCJ governor, said that an orientation process that previously took place in person over a week or so is now spread out over a more extended time frame, with obvious drawbacks. Besides the difficulties of training, the next hurdle is to make newcomers feel part of the organization and that they have the support of their colleagues.

“The biggest challenge is finding ways to convey the company’s culture, which is often displayed through the collective energy generated in the time new staff

spend with the facilitators and other colleagues,” she said. “It’s about meeting fellow newcomers face-to-face and creating that bond. It’s far more difficult to have those impromptu, one-on-one conversations to get to know new colleagues individually when

you are on a virtual group call.”

Employers have been finding creative ways to connect new hires with existing staff to give them a flavor of their new working environment, she added.

Ngou, who is a co-chair of the ACCJ Human Resource Management Committee, believes “it’s important to make them feel special and let colleagues get to know them so they feel a part of the team. In my team, we invite new hires to our virtual social events even before they start working. We assign ‘buddies’ so they can stay in touch and can get to know their future colleagues.”

**ALMOST ALL FIRMS AND ALL
EMPLOYEES ONBOARDED
DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS
ARE EXPERIENCING ISSUES
WITH DISCONNECTION AND
DISENGAGEMENT.**

Encourage Interaction

This was also an issue that became apparent with clients of Robert Walters Japan, said Sampson.

“Social isolation and lack of interaction with peers are common frustrations that professionals face when working remotely,” he agreed. “During the early stages of work from home, we did see the rise of online *nomikai* [drinking parties] and online team gatherings to address these shortcomings.

“While they were a bit of fun and a novelty at first, I think many people have since moved on from them,” he added. “More team engagement during the course of the day, more video calls rather than only audio, and finding ways for greater collaboration in the day-to-day business can often be far more productive and beneficial than an online drinking session or catch-up.”

Envision’s Yasunari said new employees were encouraged to reach out to their colleagues immediately after joining, and regularly planned social events went ahead virtually. The company even surprised staff with gifts sent to their homes to enjoy during the get-togethers.

“We are also running a program that provides a stipend to employees who wish to gather for a virtual happy hour after work, as we believe having strong relationships within our team are crucial to our success as an organization,” he said.

Naylor agrees that such initiatives are important and beneficial, but he feels they may fall short as relationships and trust are built over time.

“We have seen the most impact with firms that have created special ‘clubs’ for new joiners to share ideas and challenges over time, and to support one another,” he said. “Another thing that has worked is assigning a ‘buddy’ from another team or division to check in on new hires from time to time and also facilitate introductions to others in the organization. This has been especially effective where senior members of management have been able to get actively involved.”

Critical Care

Experts emphasize that the onboarding experience has a big impact on employee retention, and it is therefore critical for organizations to ensure that their processes enable new joiners to feel engaged and part of the team. For some, that might mean permitting them to spend some time in the office. Checking in regularly will also help. Be clear about goals and expectations. Personalize the experience. Be flexible and patient.

Cole sums it up neatly: “Care about your people and show it through your actions. We strongly believe that the culture of a company—and the character of its leaders—is defined by their actions when times are challenging.” ■



Jeremy Sampson
Managing Director
Robert Walters Japan K.K.



Employers have been finding creative ways to connect new hires with existing staff.



Listen to this story.

journal.accj.or.jp/audio



WELCOME TO OUR NEW COMMERCIAL MEMBERS

American Express International, Inc.

Berkeley Research Group Limited

DSV Solutions Co., Ltd.

Envision Co., Ltd.

EQIQ K.K.

Food-e

Global Produce Co., Ltd.

Hanesbrands Japan Inc.

Kroll International Inc., Japan Branch

Lustre Housekeeping G.K.

Microsoft Japan Co., Ltd.

Nulogy

Planet Design & Consulting Co., Ltd.

SignTime K.K.

SIPA Partners

Slalom K.K.

Splunk Services Japan G.K.

Turtle Beach LTD

Abhor or Adore, Online Will Linger

Prepare yourself and your team to master the new normal

There is light at the end of the vaccine tunnel. Perhaps by this time next year, our upturned lives will turn back to something closer to what we knew. Not everything, though, is going to revert to the original model.

Online meetings are a plague. Well, face-to-face meetings were a plague, too. We used to shuffle zombie-like from one meeting room to another, cradling our oyster-shell laptops on our forearms, partially open, like some hungry chick in a nest looking for its next meal. The shift to virtual has cut down on the shuffling, but has it contributed anything to improved outputs? Poor communicators in person are still poor communicators—only now they are in a tiny box onscreen. The major difference is that we can ignore them and multitask in the background, escaping to a place more interesting.

Master the Medium

So, how do we get more oomph out of online? Business is an incremental game. We have been working online for close to a year now, yet how many people have been properly trained in mastering the medium?

The great sin of most online meetings is the lack of drive focused on outcomes. The majority of people are passive observers, sitting there in multitask-distraction mode. We talk about how engaged people are at work, but engagement rates for online meetings must be close to zero for a lot of staff. Give yourself a score. How would you rate the quality of your meeting interaction on a scale of one to 10?

Many leaders are lost, too. They try to approximate their standard routines to the online world. The real potential of online delivery never occurs to them, because they don't know what that could look like. Ask yourself:

- Why is there no great concept of driving the technology hard to boost productivity, communication, and coordination?
- How many leaders have had any training on how to facilitate a highly interactive online meeting?
- How many actually understand the engine under the digital hood and what it is capable of?

Most platforms have standardized their functionality over the past year, so platform agnosticism is now possible. But we still need to know the entry points, pathways, and possibilities. How many leaders have mastered even one of the many mediums?

Online isn't going away. We may return to the office, but the migration back may not be complete and there will likely be a mix of arrangements. Flex-time has been around forever, although not many companies in Japan allow it. They prefer conformity, predictability, and line-of-sight management. But having been given a taste of freedom, many staff will want to continue this regime. Are we concerned with micromanagement or production? Do we need everyone to be in the office every day?

Train for Success

Salespeople spend a lot of time doing useless stuff, such as traveling to see clients. If the trust has been built, could we skip the face-to-face ritual and still have a meaningful business discussion online? Of course, new clients will need that face-to-face element, but do all need it, all the time, every time? How many new clients could each salesperson search for and talk to if two-thirds of their existing clients were being engaged online rather than visited every month?

How many members of your sales team have been given professional training on selling virtually? Do they know how to master the online environment to make the most of the medium? Are they effectively engaging the buyers when online together? Are bad habits still dominating, just in a different format?

We have long learned how to conduct face-to-face meetings, but not everyone does a professional job of it. In the same way, if our competitors are doing a much better job online—and if they can arrange their workflows to spend less time traveling and meeting existing clients and more on prospecting and contacting new ones—they will get more business than we will.

If leaders are doing a better job driving the full potential of online, then their outcomes will be superior. The biggest differentiator will be mastery of the new environment. Winners won't be waiting for osmosis to kick in, they will be proactive about making that mastery real. What are you doing about making online really work for you in 2021? ■



Presented in partnership with Dale Carnegie Training Japan.



Dr. Greg Story
President
Dale Carnegie
Training Japan



Watch Greg's training and leadership videos.



Listen to this story.

journal.accj.or.jp/audio

Get Connected, Get Involved

How to get the most out of your ACCJ membership

Making connections is the cornerstone of membership in the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ). It's through interaction with the people who drive the business community that ideas are born and advocacy takes shape.

Your gateway to event registration, members-only information, and the directory of individual members is the ACCJ Membership Portal. Contact the ACCJ membership team if you need to get or update your login details.

But that's just the start of making the most of your chamber membership. Whether you're a new member looking to get more involved or a veteran wanting to leverage the array of promotional offers, here is a rundown of some ways in which you can tap into the energy and reach of the ACCJ.

Get Familiar

Are you new to the chamber? A great way to get more involved is to attend a new member orientation. The ACCJ Membership Relations Committee hosts these sessions monthly to welcome new members and to provide the information you need to make the most of your membership.

Get Informed

The ACCJ is a great source of information for the global business community. Our twice-weekly newsletter, *The Insider*, is filled with useful information about what's happening at the chamber and what's coming up, as well as opportunities to network and advance your business. Be sure to add comms@accj.or.jp

to your email contact list to ensure that you receive these mailings.

Get Involved: Join Committees

Are you ready to share your expertise and help the ACCJ strengthen its voice and create an optimal environment for global business in Japan? The chamber has more than 60 special-interest committees covering everything from tech and legal issues to human resources, health, and investments. They're a great source of information and peer connection. You can join as many committees as you like and can pursue leadership opportunities in the areas of your choice. Virtual access to committee meetings is free to all members.

Get Seen: Speak at Events

One of the greatest benefits of ACCJ membership is the opportunity to share your expertise to build your personal and business brands. The chamber hosts more than 500 meetings and events each year, and we are always looking for speakers who can deliver valuable content to members on a range of topics. Speaking at an ACCJ event is a great way to raise your profile and make new connections. If you'd like to participate as a speaker, or have an idea for an event, contact the relevant committee leaders.

Get Listed: Join the Directory

The ACCJ Business & Services Directory provides a publicly accessible, searchable index of member companies along with keywords related to their business, expertise, and services.

View the directory:
www.accj-business-services.com

Learn more about
sharing expertise:
accj.or.jp/committees



Get Heard: ACCJ Advocacy

The ACCJ's mission is to further develop commerce between the United States and Japan, promote the interests of US companies and members, and improve the international business environment in Japan through its core principles.

Through its committees, the ACCJ operates a very active and influential advocacy program across many areas of trade, regulation, and policy. Most recently, the chamber has played a lead role in presenting the international community's concerns about travel restrictions on foreign residents in Japan.

Our regular formal and informal interaction with the Japanese and US governments ensures that our positions and messages are heard. To add your voice and help influence the ACCJ's advocacy positions, join the relevant ACCJ committees.



Get Known: Share Your News

A new feature the ACCJ is launching this year is the Member Company News Feed, which celebrates and publicizes the achievements and activities of our members. Content from the news feed will be featured once a month in an all-member email, and the news feed will be promoted through our social media channels, including to almost 5,000 followers on LinkedIn. Submit your news using the online form. Note that the news feed is for company news, not promotional offers.

Get Press: Provide Quotes

You can also raise your profile as a topic or industry expert through the ACCJ's media connections. The chamber enjoys excellent relationships with journalists and is often approached for comment on topical issues. Our monthly magazine, *The ACCJ Journal*, is also constantly looking for member voices to add to our features. If you have a particular expertise and are willing (and authorized) to speak to journalists, contact the ACCJ communications team and we'll add you to our list of resources. When a story in your field is planned, we'll reach out to you for comment.

Get Published: Write for *The ACCJ Journal*

Our monthly magazine is circulated to more than 3,000 ACCJ members, business community influencers, and government leaders each month. If you have a story idea or would like to write a column or article, contact the ACCJ communications team to discuss your ideas. Note that topics must be of value and interest to the membership and not overtly self-promotional.

Participate in Events

The ACCJ provides virtual access to all its events at a nominal cost or for free, depending on your membership level. By participating and engaging during the event via comments or questions, you can raise your profile among the membership while gaining valuable insights and information during the session. Look to our LinkedIn page to connect with other members who are attending the same events. Watch for hybrid events coming soon, based on the prevailing state of the Covid-19 crisis.

Share an Exclusive Offer

Another new feature we have launched this year lets you promote your brand, service, or product with an exclusive offer to ACCJ members. It's a great way to publicize your business while offering real value to the ACCJ community. Exclusive offers will be communicated via email to all members, or a selected segment, and be featured in the ACCJ Member Offers area of our website. Packages start at ¥50,000.

Advertise in *The ACCJ Journal*

Another inexpensive way to promote your business is through a new section coming to our monthly magazine. The ACCJ Marketplace is available exclusively to company and individual members, and you can advertise for as little as ¥50,000 for a quarter-page. The package includes a 12-month digital ad placement in the ACCJ Marketplace on the ACCJ website.

Learn more about
ACCJ activities:
accj.or.jp/accj-events

Sponsor an ACCJ Event

The Diversity and Inclusion Summit Series and Healthcare x Digital (page 26), as well as the ACCJ Charity Ball (right) and other signature events and white papers offer great sponsorship packages that go far beyond putting your logo on a banner.



LOW-COST PROMOTION & MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS

Extend the Benefits

Adding more members to your company membership is a great way to reward and develop staff. Depending on your membership level, you can extend the benefits of ACCJ membership to colleagues at a very affordable price, or even at no cost.

Native Advertising and Sponsored Content

Anyone, member or not, can promote their business with half-, full-, or double-page partnered content in *The ACCJ Journal*. This content will also be promoted through social media and featured alongside other stories from *The ACCJ Journal* on the chamber's website.

THE JOURNAL · JANUARY 2021

Featured

Tokyo Women in Venture Capital
New grassroots group to diversify Japan's investment industry
Read More →

Changing Landscape
Sixty offers preview of how pandemic may change cities
Read More →

2020 ACCJ Leaders and Volunteers of the Year
Each year, the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ) honors members who have shown extraordinary dedication
Read More →

Five-part Inspiration
Read More →

Fine Dining, On Demand
Seth Salkin's new venture, Food & Delivery Tokyo's culinary host

Pro Drivers
Investment in May Road will help support service...
• New York
• New York
• New York

Members' Choice
Members' Choice...
• New York
• New York
• New York

Delicious Pick
The food scene is still thriving...
• New York
• New York
• New York

INSIDER
THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN
Major League Baseball leaders discuss gender equality in the business of sports
Welcome New Committee Leaders
One Year of ACCJ vs. COVID-19: Share Your Contributions
Futuristic virtual networking events
Hospitality Management Institute hosted by the U.S. Commercial Service and Japan Tourism Agency (JATA-ACCJ Event)
The Working Partner

Member Feature in The ACCJ Journal

A new addition to our monthly magazine this year is the option to promote your business with full- or double-page partnered content. This Member Focus is exclusively available to ACCJ members and includes a custom PDF of the issue's cover listing your brand's content and the article for promotional purposes. Member Focus content will also be promoted through social media and featured alongside other content from *The ACCJ Journal* on the chamber's website. See examples in this issue on pages 18–19 and 36–37.

Advertise in The ACCJ Journal

A well-respected publication with a very influential readership and a 58-year history, *The ACCJ Journal* is the voice of global business in Japan. Whether you're looking to build your profile, connect with global business leaders in Japan, or find new customers, advertising in *The ACCJ Journal* is a very cost-effective investment.

Looking for other info, policies, or forms? Log in to the ACCJ Members' Portal and navigate to the Files section. ■

Learn more about advertising options: comms@accj.or.jp



Corporate Sustaining Member Companies

The ACCJ thanks these organizations for their extensive participation, which provides a cornerstone in the chamber's efforts to promote a better business climate in Japan. Information as of February 16, 2021.

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE



3M Japan Limited	EY Japan	Morgan, Lewis, & Bockius LLP
Abbott Laboratories/Abbott Japan LLC	Facebook Japan	Morgan Stanley Japan Holdings Co., Ltd.
AbbVie	Federal Express Japan Godo Kaisha	MSD K.K.
Adobe KK	Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer Tokyo	Naigai Industries, Inc.
Aflac	GE Japan Inc.	Nippon Boehringer Ingelheim Co., Ltd.
AIG Companies in Japan	Gensler and Associates/International, Ltd.	Northrop Grumman Japan
Amazon Japan G.K.	Gilead Sciences K.K.	Oak Lawn Marketing, Inc.
Amway Japan G.K.	Goldman Sachs Japan Co., Ltd.	P&G Japan G.K.
AstraZeneca K.K.	GR Japan K.K.	Pattern Energy Group Inc.
Asurion Japan Holdings G.K.	Hard Rock Japan LLC	Pfizer Japan Inc.
Bank of America	Hilton	Prudential Financial, Inc.
Bayer Yakuhin, Ltd.	IBM Japan, Ltd.	PwC Japan
Bloomberg L.P.	IHG ANA Hotels Group Japan	Qualcomm Japan LLC
Boeing Japan K.K.	IQVIA	Randstad K.K.
Bristol-Myers Squibb K.K.	Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies	Robert Walters Japan K.K.
Brookfield Asset Management	KPMG	salesforce.com Co., Ltd.
Caterpillar	Kraft Heinz Japan	Squire Patton Boggs
Chevron International Gas Inc. Japan Branch	Lenovo Japan Ltd.	State Street
Citigroup	Lockheed Martin	Uber Japan Co., Ltd.
Coca-Cola (Japan) Co., Ltd.	Mastercard Japan K.K.	Visa Worldwide (Japan) Co., Ltd.
Cummins Japan Ltd.	McKinsey & Company, Inc. Japan	Walmart Japan/Seiyu
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu LLC	MetLife	The Walt Disney Company (Japan) Ltd.
Delta Air Lines, Inc.	MGA Japan K.K.	Western Digital Japan
Discovery Japan, Inc.	Microsoft Japan Co., Ltd.	White & Case LLP
en world Japan	Mitsuuroko Group Holdings Co., Ltd.	Zimmer Biomet G.K.

Want to join the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan?

We offer membership programs for entrepreneurs, executives, individuals, and companies of all sizes—from small and medium-sized enterprise to multinational companies.

For details, visit accj.or.jp/join-us.



English online banking on the go

Manage your finances in English. Seamless payments inside and outside Japan and multiple currencies all in one card. Access your accounts from your smartphone — anytime, anywhere.



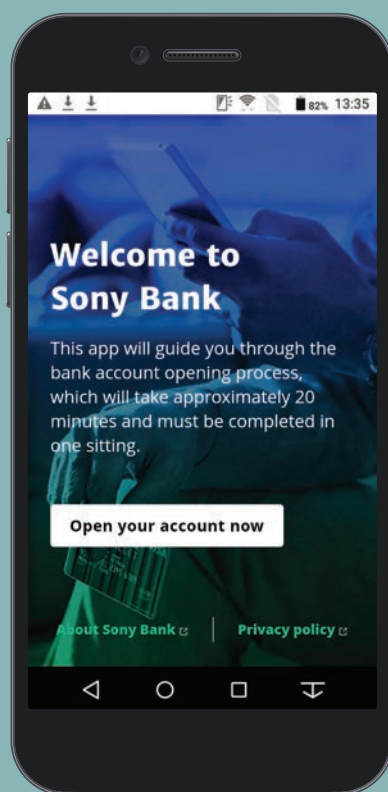
Yen savings account

Your daily life made easy, with simple payments, fund transfers and cash withdrawals.



Foreign currency savings account

Save, spend and receive up to 12 foreign currencies.



Apply online

- Download Open Account app.
- Scan required documents.
- No personal seal and no branch visits required.
- Get started now and receive your Sony Bank WALLET (cash card with Visa Debit functionality) in about 10 days.



Scan to learn more and apply now

Visit moneykit.net/en for details



Sony Bank Inc. Registered Financial Institution Kanto Finance Bureau General Manager (TREASURE) No. 578
Affiliated associations: Japan Securities Dealers Association, The Financial Futures Association of Japan and Type II Financial Instruments Firms Association
Important Matters Concerning Foreign Currency Deposits
Foreign currency deposits entail some risks such as loss of principal. When conducting foreign currency transactions, please be sure to make the investment decision on your own after confirming the "Important Matters Concerning Foreign Currency Deposits" on our English website.