

Invest in Japan Study program (IJSP)

Softronics began operations in 1986 and sells specialised electronics equipment known as in-circuit-emulators (ICEs). ICEs are used in the developmental stage of new electronics products. Softronics has focused on a particular segment of this market which uses digital signal processors (DSPs).

Softronics has spent the last five years building up an overseas export business and now has twenty distributors worldwide; two of these are in Tokyo. In addition, Softronics is currently using free office space provided by the City of Osaka and plans to open an office in Osaka in the next year.



Kazuko Kumagai of JETRO with Anthony Overmars (Director) and Margarita Sotero of Softronics

Softronics' business is 90 percent export and is completely Australian owned with gross annual sales totalling around \$1 million. Softronics believes that, with approximately half of its eight employees born overseas, it has the right cultural mix to be as diverse as its markets. Japan is the company's largest target market and Softronics envisages the Japanese office becoming the base for the company's operations in neighbouring Asian countries.

Softronics was a participant in JETRO's December 2002 IJSP program. Softronics Director Dr Anthony Overmars was one of a number of investors from the UK, India and Canada. The group travelled

to Kyoto and Ishikawa prefectures, met many business people and also viewed a number of impressive Japanese integrated circuit design and fabrication facilities.

As a result of the positive experiences of the IJSP program, Softronics will establish an office in Japan. In the meantime, Luke Hurley has been appointed as the Osaka Softronics representative. He is responsible for maintaining and expanding the distribution channels in Japan. Mr Hurley is an Australian who has non-permanent resident status in Japan. His fluency in Japanese plus his strong marketing background should help increase Softronics' market share in the electronics field.

Inside Story

INSIDE...

- Invest in Japan Study program (IJSP)
- FREE 'Invest in Japan' Advice
- JETRO Techno Business Forum 2003
- Organic Food and Beverage Export Opportunities to Japan seminar
- One-stop information centre for investment in Japan
- Region-to-Region projects for the coming year
- Waste Control & Recycling Technology Exhibition 2003 - Wastec
- Import Business News Bulletin
- JETRO Business Japanese Proficiency Test
- Department of Industry & Resources (WA) launches initiatives to aid local business in entering regional Japan.
- Visit the "INVEST Japan!" website now!
- List of New Publications

The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) is a non-profit semi-government organisation promoting imports into Japan, and supporting industrial cooperation and international exchange.

JETRO's Internet address is www.jetro.go.jp

'Invest in Japan' advice now available at JETRO

FREE



Ken Sakurai, JETRO Melbourne's
Invest in Japan specialist

Even if you are not sure how far your current plan may stretch towards investment, feel free to come and talk to me. I'd be more than happy to discuss your ideas with you" says Ken Sakurai, JETRO Melbourne's Invest in Japan specialist.

In his role as Invest in Japan Specialist, Ken Sakurai is now available through appointment at our office to conduct free consultations with Australian businesses. Mr Sakurai brings with him a wealth of expertise and experience, having spent over 25 years in managerial positions for Mitsui & Co. including postings in Japan, Korea and Australia. He also currently manages his own trade and business consultancy.

As the push for deregulation and competition only intensifies in Japan, more and more foreign companies are seeing this as the prime time to enter and set up businesses. If you have any Japan-related investment queries, be sure to meet and discuss these with Mr Sakurai. To arrange an appointment at our office or your venue, please contact Tania Sacco of JETRO Melbourne on 03 9654 4949 or via email tsacco@jetromel.com

JETRO Techno Business Forum 2003

Designed to help non-Japanese IT and biotechnology firms explore opportunities for business partnerships with Japanese firms, the Techno Business Forum, which took place in January 2003, included programs in Sapporo (IT), Kitakyushu (IT) and Yokohama (IT and biotech). This program provided participants with opportunities to meet directly with potential partners through arranged business meetings, as well as the chance to examine regional business environments and attend lectures on the Japanese market. Results of the 2002 Forum include 11 confirmed contracts and another eight on the way to conclusion.

The opportunity to meet with companies from across Japan was one factor which attracted Floorbotics of Northcote, Victoria to this year's Forum. Floorbotics was in search of developmental partners for future projects. Using their navigation, sensor and design systems as a base, Floorbotics promoted their potential



Luke Hurley, (left) Japan representative for Floorbotics & Softronics at JETRO's Business Support Center in Osaka

for developing a variety of robotic products, ranging from toys to security robots able to be manipulated via both mobile phone and the Internet.

Luke Hurley, introduced in the previous article and also acting as Japan Manger for Floorbotics, found the Forum to be well run and the staff very friendly and helpful. He was able to meet with local businesses, JETRO staff and prefectural representatives from Kitakyushu, Yokohama, Tokyo, Chiba and Okinawa.

Floorbotics met two Japanese companies through the Forum which indicated interest in possible future

collaborations. Floorbotics also encountered some interesting hardware. Another company Floorbotics is currently in discussions with was able to bring along their technical staff to analyse Floorbotics' flagship robotic floor cleaner product.

Mr Hurley anticipates a close future relationship with Japan, commenting, "there is an amazing buzz surrounding robotics at the moment here which is exciting to be part of." Floorbotics plans to open a representative office in Osaka next year and in the meantime is receiving support from JETRO, Osaka city and the local prefectural government. Mr Hurley commented that the program itself is an excellent way for companies to consider working in different areas of Japan and not get stuck in the "Tokyo equals Japan" mindset. He concludes that knowledge of local market needs and wants, money, patience and a smile are all important factors in doing business in Japan.

Organic Food & Beverage Export Opportunities to Japan seminar



M.Hayase (JETRO), I. Kono (Stork Global), L. Ferguson (DIIRD), P. Turley (Dalhousie) & M. Nagasawa (Hakubaku) (Copyright Southern Sky News)

The audience listens to Mr. Kono's presentation

Japan is the second largest market for organic food following the USA, and is predicted to become the world's largest per capita consumer of organic foods with total sales reaching \$50-70 billion in the next ten years (Department of Primary Industries, Victoria).

To explain the intricacies of entering the Japanese organic market, the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development in conjunction with JETRO held a seminar on "Organic Food and

Beverage Opportunities in the Japanese Market" on Tuesday 25 March in Melbourne. JETRO would like to mention its gratitude to supporters Austrade, VECCI and AIG.

The main message to come out of the seminar was that the Japanese consumer values the flavour and quality of organic food and is prepared to pay for that. The keynote speaker Ichiro Kono, Managing Director of Stork Global, spoke about the organic market in Japan including JAS (Japan Agriculture Standards) certification,

Japanese distribution and tax issues, and Australia's strengths in organic production. Other speakers were Masaaki Nagasawa, Factory Manager of Hakubaku Australia and Peter Turley, President of Dalhousie Foods.

We have had a number of follow-ups from attendees following the seminar and we urge any interested company to contact Tania Sacco for further discussions on exporting to Japan. Tania can also provide you with a copy of the Power Point presentation if required.

One-stop information centre

JETRO is working to dispel the myth that investment in Japan is a costly and difficult undertaking - in fact Mr Miyahara, Project Manager of JETRO's Investment Promotion Division says "establishing a company in Japan is similar to establishing a company in any other global centre in terms of costs and procedures". Foreign companies considering investing in Japan now have access to an important new facility, the JETRO One-Stop Center, operating from the Business Support Center in Tokyo. The Center offers consulting and support for businesses and a streamlined

approach to providing essential information.

The One-Stop Center will provide a free weekly consulting service in which English-speaking consultants will be on hand to answer tax-related and other legal questions. Assistance with completing documentation, arranging business introductions and basic research will be provided as a matter of course. Seminars will also be organised to address issues which are identified as essential to foreign businesses, such as tax returns and personnel transfers. These services will ensure that crucial information is

delivered to investors in a timely and co-ordinated fashion.

Visitors to the One-Stop Center will also be able to use the free services at the Business Support Center (requires an application process), including free office space and the extensive business library.

The new facility promises to provide visitors with a new level of support for investment and it commenced operations at the beginning of April. Mr Miyahara emphasises, "If you think investing in Japan is an arduous process, we'll prove you wrong."

Region-to-Region projects for the coming year

JETRO's Region-to-Region program offers support for two-way development between Japanese regional economies and overseas regions and businesses. Supported industrial exchange includes collaborative research related to technology, capital investment and design. Since the Region-to-Region Initiatives Program was launched in 1996, JETRO has supported 197 projects. Of these, 47 projects resulted in investment in Japan, investment abroad, completion of agent or trade contracts, or technical partnership agreements.

This financial year (April 2003 - March 2004) JETRO plans to

conduct eight new long-term projects, ten continuing projects and 22 new short-term projects, one of which includes Australia. This project involves Kagoshima Prefecture and the State of Western Australia and targets food safety and quality. Kagoshima Prefecture's key industries are the primary industries of agriculture, forestry and fisheries and it occupies an important position as the food supply base in Japan.

In a similar fashion to Kagoshima, Australia's key industries include agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and the country is highly conscious of food safety and quality. Against the backdrop of food quality standards

rising worldwide, AGWEST (the Western Australian Ministry of Agriculture) developed the SQF 1000/2000 food safety and quality system. The SQF system aims to assure quality in food businesses and primary producers to an international standard.

In this financial year, Kagoshima Prefecture will aim to improve the quality of food materials and groceries produced there, as well as foster competitive industries. The prefecture will try to raise the industry level as a whole by exchanging information with Australia and introducing technology to Kagoshima.

NEW! Waste Control and Recycling Technology Exhibition 2003 - Wastec

Foreign companies engaged in the supply, development and manufacturing of systems and equipment for waste treatment and recycling are invited to participate in JETRO's 'Environment Japan 2003' display as part of the November Wastec exhibition in Japan.

Last year's Wastec exhibition resulted in 2,626 business talks. Currently 271 deals with a potential

value of US\$37,980,163 are under negotiation. At this stage 35 deals have been concluded, totalling US \$ 1,320,000. During the four-day exhibition period, over 107,000 people visited the exhibition.

The participation fee of US \$2,500 covers part of the total cost for exhibition; the remainder is subsidised by JETRO as part of its import promotion activities. Exhibitors' benefits include a 9m² booth, a shared interpreter, business counselling by an expert, entry in the exhibition's official catalogue and the opportunity to make a presentation to visitors.

The application deadline is 31 July 2003. JETRO Melbourne will hold an information session regarding this exciting opportunity at the beginning of June. For more details please contact Tania Sacco of our office.

Import Business News Bulletin

What better way to gain publicity for your company than to advertise for free in JETRO's Import Business News (IBN) bulletin, which is distributed to over 10,000 Japanese companies nationwide. As profiled in our December 2002 eNews, our appointed Senior Trade Adviser, Yasushi Kowata, travels around Australia locating innovative and unique products to showcase in the monthly bulletin.

If you are interested in meeting with Mr Kowata, please contact Tania Sacco of our office for a preliminary interview in Melbourne.

JETRO Business Japanese Proficiency Test (JETRO Test)

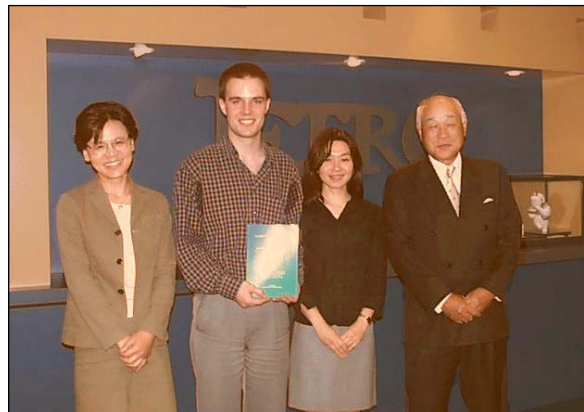
Last year, Dougal Phillips of DSP Consulting, was one of six Australian candidates to obtain a pass in Level One, the highest level of the JETRO Test. Following is an account of his motivations for sitting the JETRO Test.

“My parents insisted I take up Japanese in year seven because they thought it would be more relevant to my career than French. How right they were! Currently I teach interpreting skills, English for interpreters, Japanese culture and advanced Japanese at RMIT University and introductory Japanese at Melbourne University. I also work as a freelance Japanese interpreter and translator.

I first went to Japan in 1995 on an eight-month working holiday and then in 1998, I was on a year-long exchange to Keio University where, in addition to my Japanese study, I took philosophy, psychology and psychopathology

(conducted in Japanese) with other Japanese students.

My main reason for registering for the JETRO test was to give myself a reason to sit down and study Japanese. In preparation, I bought the JETRO Test guide which I found



Dougal Phillips, second from left, with JETRO and The University of Melbourne staff

exceptionally comprehensive and practical. The test was a little harder than I had expected, but I think a harder test is a more accurate representation of your ability than an easier test which you can just fluke. Unfortunately, work commitments precluded my travelling

to Tokyo for the oral component of the test in January.

My first hint to learning Japanese would be to find a *sempai* (mentor) from a similar background to yourself and who speaks excellent Japanese and then pick their brains. My second hint is to get serious about learning kanji. This stems from the logic that interesting things are easy to learn. Being able to read Japanese makes the language infinitely more interesting. To read Japanese, you need to master kanji. (I recommend James W Heisig's 'Remembering the Kanji'). Lastly, I recommend you make Japanese a part of your daily life. Read manga, listen

to J-pop, use a Japanese computer, learn karate, make sushi, talk to yourself in Japanese or play tennis with your Japanese friends. It doesn't matter what you do as long you make Japanese matter to you. Put your soul into it.”

Department of Industry & Resources (WA)

launches initiatives to aid local businesses in entering regional Japan

The Minister for State Development; Tourism; Small Business, The Honourable Clive Brown, launched the 'Hyogo and Kansai Trade and Investment Initiatives' on March 27 in Perth to assist local business in gaining access to the Japanese market by leveraging the Sister State relationship between Western Australia and Hyogo Prefecture. Hyogo, part of the Kansai

region, is on the western side of Japan. JETRO was proud to be one of the five sponsors for this event.

As a follow up to the launch, the Department of Industry and Resources and sponsoring organisations will deliver two Kansai market breakfast seminars in Bunbury and Perth on 20 and 22 May respectively. Prior to these events, Mr. Kowata, JETRO's Senior

Trade Adviser, will hold an export clinic program (free one-on-one consultations) at the Perth Technology Park on 14 and 15 May.

For more details regarding business opportunities, please contact Louise Osborne at the Department of Industry and Resources on 08 9222 5859 or via email louise.osborne@doir.wa.gov.au



Visit Invest in Japan Website Now

<http://www.jetro.go.jp/investjapan/index.html>

"INVEST Japan!" is a one-stop information resource containing a range of indispensable information for potential investors. In addition to constantly updated general investment information, the website also includes many other useful features, including cost simulation for opening an office in Tokyo, regional information and a searchable database on procedures for setting up a business in Japan.

If you are considering investing in Japan, this website provides a comprehensive online resource that allows you to search for, gain access to and assess all the information you need.



n e w p u b l i c a t i o n s

J a n u a r y t o A p r i l 2 0 0 3

JETRO regularly adds to its extensive library with topical and up-to-date publications relating to trade, investment and Japan. Since the last JETRO News, the following titles have been added .

JETRO PUBLICATIONS

1. Specifications & Standards for Foods, Food Additives, etc. Under The Food Sanitation Law (Abstracts) Jan. 2003 *
2. Overview of Measurement Law Jan. 2003*
3. Prospects for Free Trade Agreements in East Asia
4. Handbook for Consumer Products Import Regulations*
5. Handbook for Food Importers
6. Food Sanitation Law in Japan*
7. Trade & Labeling 2003

8. Social Protests and Nation-Building in the Middle East and Central Asia
9. Software Products - Business Packages*
10. Food Service Industry*
11. Assistive Technology Devices*
12. The Staffing and Placement Business*

NON-JETRO PUBLICATIONS

1. nano tech 2003 + Future
2. Japan Chemical Directory 2003

* These can be downloaded from www.jetro.go.jp

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