

THE CANADIAN

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN

QUÉBEC CONNECTOR

The new delegate general for the province
in the western US looks back at his time in Tokyo

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The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan

La Chambre de commerce du Canada au Japon

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan is a private sector, not-for-profit business organization founded in 1975 to promote the development of commerce between Canada and Japan.

CIC Tokyo

Toranomon Hills Business Tower 15F
1-17-1 Toranomon, Minato-ku,
Tokyo 105-6415

Tel: +81 (0)3 6807-3967

Representing some 35 business industries, the CCCJ is a member-driven, member-focused organization and is the longest-serving Canadian chamber of commerce in Asia. With more than 400 members, the CCCJ represents a broad cross-section of businesspeople, including entrepreneurs, from Canada, Japan and other countries. The membership comprises Canadian companies and individuals with ties to Japan, and Japanese companies and individuals with ties to Canada.

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NORIKO ISHIDA | noriko.ishida@cccj.or.jp



PASSING THE TORCH

By Alec Jordan
Editor-in-Chief
The Canadian



We hope that this issue finds you well and looking forward to discovering more about what has been happening in the Canada–Japan community.

With the effects of climate change being felt around the globe, more and more businesses — across a variety of industries — have been taking action to make their operations more sustainable.

This drive can be seen among a group of Québec-based companies that are putting sustainability front and center (page 10), whether it be through creating hybrid-electric aircraft engines and pioneering plastic recycling methods or by putting financial backing behind the development of clean technology innovation projects.

WINS FOR ALL

For the article mentioned above, David Brulotte, who until just recently has been the delegate general for Québec in Tokyo, was instrumental in arranging contacts and introducing businesses. He is now the delegate

general for Québec in the western United States, and we had the opportunity to speak with him about his experiences, both representing Québec and being a governor of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) during his time in Tokyo (page 20).

A sentiment that Brulotte expressed — that a win for one province in Canada is a win for the whole nation — is a driving force behind the extensive webinar series, Gateway to New Horizons, which was held last year (page 22). The six-part series, co-hosted by the Japan Society, Invest in Canada and JETRO Toronto, focused on the significant investment opportunities for Japan in Canada. Highlighted were the specific strengths of each province, as well as the pioneering work being done at each of Canada's Superclusters.

FOND FAREWELL

And in bringing this note to a close, I'd like to say a farewell to the CCCJ community, as this is the final issue of *The Canadian* that Custom

Media is publishing for the chamber. Working on the magazine has been a distinct pleasure for the past four years.

I hail from California, but have had a fond feeling for Canada since I attended a jazz festival in Montréal many years ago. With each issue of the magazine, I've deepened my understanding of Canada and Canada–Japan relations, while discovering what the Canadian community is involved with in Japan. Through it all, I've come away with an even greater appreciation for my northern neighbours.

I'd also like to extend my gratitude to the CCCJ — from its leaders to the members whom I've met over the years at various events. Your warmth, professionalism and good wishes have been greatly appreciated.

Having been given a window into how the chamber is running, I have no doubt it will continue to thrive in the years to come, and I look forward to following its activities. All the best, and thank you for your readership. 🍁

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Publisher
Simon Farrell
simon@custom-media.com

CEO
Robert Heldt

Editor-in-Chief
Alec Jordan

Staff Writer
Megan Casson

Art Director
Ximena Criales

Design Director
Michael Pfeffer

Graphic Designers
Elena Bertocchi
Vila He

Advertising Sales Director
Garreth Stevens

Account Managers
James Greer
Yuka Sekiwa

Strategic Account Director
Megumi Okazaki
Jody Pang

Business Development
Kotaro Toda

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Toranomon Hills Business Tower 15F
1-17-1 Toranomon, Minato-ku,
Tokyo 105-6415

Tel: 03-4540-7730

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CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN JAPAN
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“The atmosphere of the **CCCJ** makes me feel at home, and members are **warm and friendly**. Attending CCCJ events gave me opportunities to not only meet **business contacts**, but also **lifelong friends**. I’m confident that joining the CCCJ will widen your views.”

—Yuko Sudoh, member since 2011



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POWERFUL PILLARS

By Noriko Ishida
Executive Director
Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan



The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) has been particularly active recently — all in service of our mission as a chamber. Here are just a few of the things that have been happening.

On February 25, the CCCJ was invited to talk to the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (TCCI's) Women's Association (page 26). From the CCCJ, Governor Riyo Whitney spoke about Canada's education systems, and Governor Karl Pires moderated the Q&A session and shared answers with the TCCI. Chair David Anderson introduced the CCCJ and gave an informative presentation on Japan–Canada business ties. Even though the event was designed for TCCI members, through supporting David's presentation preparations as a member of the secretariat, I gained a wealth of information.

At the beginning of his presentation, David explained the three pillars of the CCCJ's activities: events, communication and advocacy. This made me think about what the secretariat should do to realize those objectives.

EVENTS AND COMMUNICATION

First, let me look back on what events have taken place since September 2021 and the publication of the autumn issue of *The Canadian*. Despite the on-and-off announcements of various states of emergency, the CCCJ hosted several in-person events, such as the Bonenkai in December 2021, Hockey Morning in Tokyo in February 2022 and Russell Cumber's talk on March 16 (page 13). I'm also very pleased to have been a part of the resumption of Monthly Mixers. The first Mixer was held on March 24 and included members of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan. We have hosted unique virtual events, such as Career Kick Start in March

2022, hosted by the Education Committee, and the inheritance tax seminar on April 20. I feel like a blessed executive director for being able to work with such active committees.

The second pillar is communication. This is about how the chamber offers information to the world, through our website, social media accounts, and publications—of course, including *The Canadian*. I'm learning the best practices for putting the communication pillar into action, so please contact me if you have any information and news you'd like to share with the Canada–Japan business community!

REPRESENTING THE COMMUNITY

As David explained at the TCCI event regarding advocacy, the CCCJ “represents voices and perspectives of the Canadian business community.” In addition to the External Relations Committee, other committees, such as Global Diversity Management and Sustainability, offer numerous opportunities to express our views to the broader public. In April 2022, a new committee, the Market Access Advisory Committee (MAAC), was approved by the Board of Governors and they are working on best practices for operating the MAAC, and planning events so they can share their knowledge and expertise with members—and those who are not yet members. I have highlighted these committees, but others have been sparing no effort in cooperating to pursue the CCCJ's mandate.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Shaivalini Shukla, the CCCJ intern who

I'm learning the best practices for putting the communication pillar into action, so please contact me if you have any information and news you'd like to share with the Canada–Japan business community!

worked with us until the end of March 2022. She graduated from UBC in spring and, before starting to study at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy at the University of Toronto, she was visiting her family in Tokyo and contacted one of our governors for an internship opportunity back in July 2021, when I started to work at the office.

I should admit that, as a new executive director, I was not confident about being able to offer experiences that would be helpful for her future career, but I needn't have worried. She was an active learner, was willing to help and offered many useful suggestions to keep the chamber current. Thank you, Shaivalini. After having worked with a promising person like you, I'm very confident that the future Canada–Japan relationship will be a strong one. 🍁



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CWAJ scholarship awardee to study at McGill in Montréal

Among the 10 women who have been selected this year by the College Women's Association of Japan (CWAJ) to receive scholarships to study in Japan and overseas is Ai Hirabayashi, who will study at McGill University in Montréal. Hirabayashi, who has a bachelor's degree in policy management from Keio University and a master's degree in psychology from Sophia University, has worked as a psychotherapist. With her ¥3 million scholarship, she will be pursuing a Master of Science in couple and family therapy at McGill and hopes to specialize in providing therapy to LGBTQ+, multicultural and trauma victim couples.



Ex-Québec minister receives high honour

Robert Keating, who served as deputy minister in the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Québec and as delegate general of Québec in Tokyo, has been awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette. The Government of Japan announced the award on April 29. During his time in Tokyo between 2000 and 2005, he contributed to Québec-Japan relations by receiving many delegations from Québec, including economic missions, as well as academic and cultural organizations. He continued his work in building ties between the province and Japan during his time as a high ranking official in Québec.



Randy Bachman to be reunited with long-lost guitar on Canada Day in Tokyo

The orange 1957 Gretsch guitar that was taken from former Guess Who singer and guitarist Randy Bachman more than four decades ago will be returned to the musician at a ceremony at the Embassy of Canada to Japan in Tokyo on Canada Day. According to June 8 story published on CTV News Vancouver Island, the guitar was stolen in Toronto and wound up in Tokyo, where it was bought by a Japanese musician named Takeshi, who wasn't aware of the instrument's back story. Bachman will play on Canada Day for a select audience at the embassy and be reunited with the guitar on stage.

C\$100 million in reparations to be paid to B.C. Japanese Canadians

British Columbia announced a C\$100 million reparation package for Japanese Canadians, according to a May 21 Global News article. The funds will be allocated to various initiatives, including creating and restoring Japanese Canadian heritage sites and establishing wellness programs for internment camp survivors. Reparations will also go towards updating the B.C. school curriculum to include the WWII internment camps as an important part of the province's history.

At a news conference about the reparations, Rachna Singh, parliamentary secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives in B.C., said: "We must acknowledge the part that the provincial government played in what happened to these thousands of men, women and children. We owe it to the survivors and their families to make sure something like this never happens again."

Heartfelt debut album brings together Edmonton and Japan

An *Edmonton Journal* article published on May 13 reveals that the Japan-based folk duo Nature Airliner have released their debut album, *Cardinal*. The band comprises Edmonton-born Laurier Tiernan and his wife, Eiko, who is the duo's lead vocalist. The album, which was recorded at the former Columbia Studio A in Nashville, Tennessee, features 10 songs mainly centered on themes of love and matters of the heart. Tiernan, who paid his dues as a punk rock musician, says Nature Airliner is a project that aims to inspire people to make the most of their lives, no matter what their situations may be.



EARTH FIRST

Diverse Québec firms take leading roles in greening Canada's economy

By Julian Ryall

There has long been a strong awareness at companies of the need to operate in a sustainable way to protect our environment.

The issue has become more acute in recent years. Increasingly, the failure to consider the world around us is having an impact: from the loss of virgin rainforest in the Amazon to worsening desertification in China and rising sea levels affecting coastal communities worldwide.

Many Canadian companies have seized the initiative in their respective sectors to do business in a way that is sustainable, yet ensures they thrive. And many of them are operating in Japan, with local partners that share the commitment to a better future.

Here are three enterprises that have strong connections to Québec, are in different sectors and embody the very best in sustainable business activities.

HYBRIDS TAKE FLIGHT

The global transport sector has in the past come in for criticism that it is not doing all it might to safeguard the well-being of our planet, but investment in next-generation engine and other technologies by Pratt & Whitney Canada flies in the face of that suggestion.

Advances in its sustainable hybrid-electric propulsion technology, for example, have been hailed as a contribution to Canada's green recovery plan. In July 2021, the company unveiled the new equipment and a flight demonstrator program as part of a C\$163 million investment supported by both the federal government of Canada and the provincial government of Québec.

"Hybrid-electric propulsion is one of many exciting new technologies that we are developing

as part of our strategy of making aircraft propulsion more efficient and sustainable," said Jean Thomassin, executive director of new products and services for the company, which is based in the Québec city of Longueuil.

"Alongside greater use of non-fossil-based sustainable aviation fuels, more efficient propulsion systems are key to supporting the aviation industry's goal of reaching net zero CO2 emissions by 2050," Thomassin told *The Canadian*.

The benefit of a hybrid-electric propulsion system is that it allows the crew to optimize engine performance and efficiency, he pointed out. While a thermal engine is optimized for peak efficiency as an aircraft is cruising, electric motors and batteries can be used for additional power during transient phases, such as taxiing, takeoff and climbing. Overall, this leads to reduced fuel consumption and CO2 emissions.

The evidence lies in the figures. For Pratt & Whitney's regional hybrid-electric demonstrator, which is based on a De Havilland Dash 8, the company is targeting fuel efficiency that is 30 per cent better than that of the most advanced existing turboprop aircraft engine.

The initiative is a successor to Project 804, which was launched as a joint program between

Pratt & Whitney and Collins Aerospace in 2019, and has served as the foundation of the new research. Ground testing commences this year and flight tests of the Dash 8-100 demonstrator are scheduled to begin in 2024.

"A key advantage of hybrid-electric is that components and systems that we are today developing at smaller scale may eventually be applied to larger aircraft, such as single-aisle passenger aircraft," Thomassin said. "And as associated battery technology improves — allowing better power-to-weight ratios — this will allow for even greater efficiency benefits from hybrid-electric configurations."

Pratt & Whitney Canada is the top investor in aerospace research and development in the nation. It ploughs in C\$500 million a year, which also serves to drive economic growth and innovation, as well as improve the skills of the workforce — all the while helping the environment.

"Ultimately, if it is successful, our hybrid-electric flight demonstrator could enable a major step forward in fuel efficiency and reduce CO2 emissions for regional air transportation," said Thomassin. "This will help ensure that the economic and social benefits of regional air connectivity can continue to grow sustainably, not just in Canada but around the world."



In parallel, Pratt & Whitney continues to increase the efficiency of gas turbine engines across its portfolio, while also supporting the wider use of sustainable aviation fuels and pursuing alternative fuels. To the aviation industry, all these initiatives will be critical if it is to meet its target of reducing CO₂ emissions to net zero by 2050.

It is also committed to work with stakeholders across the Canadian aerospace ecosystem, ranging from supply chain partners to academia and government organizations. The intent is to make sure that the nation's aerospace sector is in a strong position to play a leading role in the global drive to innovate new, low-carbon technologies.

"Canada has an opportunity to demonstrate environmental leadership in the aviation sector," said Dave Riggs, chief transformation officer for De Havilland Canada.

"De Havilland Canada has a legacy of innovation that has supported aviation in Canada and around the world for more than 90 years and we are immensely proud to be the first manufacturer of regional aircraft supporting the development of hybrid-electric propulsion technology," he said in a statement. "We look forward to collaborating with Pratt & Whitney Canada and governments in Canada to further the development of alternative, climate-friendly technology that holds much potential to contribute to more sustainable aviation."

CIRCULAR ECONOMY PIONEERS

Pyrowave is a pioneer in the electrification of chemical processes based on low-carbon footprint microwaves. Officials from the company recently visited Japan to explore the possibilities for its ground-breaking plastics circular economy and chemical recycling, to turn post-consumer and post-industrial plastics into new plastics.

The company's high-powered microwave catalytic depolymerization technology platform is the most advanced in the world and is pushing new boundaries in the development of next-generation plastics, restoring plastics to their molecular state, identical to virgin materials.

"Our goal is to use microwaves to produce low-carbon products and contribute to keeping our precious resources in the manufacturing loop," said Virginie Bussi res, vice-president of communications, government relations and marketing for the company.

"Our first application is to recycle polystyrene and decompose it into its basic constituents, identical to virgin material," she said. "We can treat traditionally hard-to-recycle plastics such as black sushi trays, fish ice boxes and yogurt cups,



and make new packaging with our product. We are technology providers, so our clients can buy our equipment and use plastic waste to meet their recycled content targets and reduce their environmental footprint."

Pyrowave's technology helps client companies reach their sustainability objectives and comply with circular and low-carbon regulations, while the collaborative approach the company uses with clients also serves to increase innovation, Bussi res said, which can become yet another competitive advantage in the client's home market.

"Customers are more demanding in part because, as a society, we became more demanding in the face of climate urgency," she added. "We believe that innovation and technology are key to accelerate this shift and respond to citizen, government and industry expectations."

Equally, investors are placing greater importance on environmental, social and governance (ESG) indicators in their investment decisions, which has helped to accelerate Pyrowave's growth. A decade ago, Bussi res points out, there was little discussion on plastic waste; today, it is in the news virtually every week. The emergence of Pyrowave's technology, therefore, is timely.

Yet there are obstacles that remain to greater uptake of the technology.

"The biggest challenge is no longer the technology, as that technology is now mature and available," she said. "One of the biggest challenges we face is how to break silos to enable the value chain to shift from linear to circular. It

might sound like a clich , but old habits die hard."

That has been the driver behind the collaborative approach, based on trust, dialogue and mutual understanding, she said.

"We appreciate the commitment and energy our clients invest in finding new ways to serve their consumers with a lower environmental footprint, through pilot projects, bold investments and this collaborative approach," she said. "Governments also play an essential role in shaping the regulatory framework of the new, low-carbon, circular economy and we try our best to contribute to this important discussion."

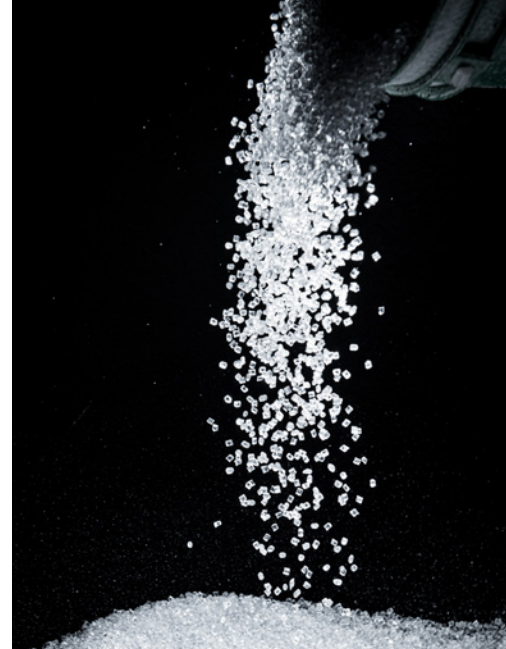
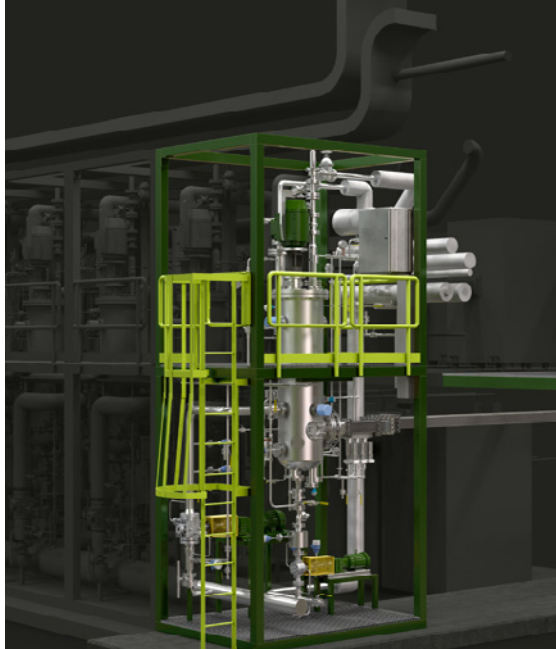
"Finally, [non-governmental organizations] are part of this ecosystem. They might raise very good questions about impact and transparency, and can contribute to avoiding blind spots as well as voice citizens' expectations," she added. "In a nutshell, for Pyrowave, the way to break silos is to engage in a dialogue with all stakeholders."

And those stakeholders, the company anticipates, will increasingly be in Japan.

"We believe we share many common values with Japanese companies, and this is why we were honoured to take part in the Qu bec delegation to Tokyo last April," Bussi res said. "We also notice that when governments are adopting regulatory incentives to achieve their sustainability objectives, it creates momentum."

"In that regard, we were pleased to see that the Tokyo government has a plastic strategy which includes chemical recycling, and we had the honour of meeting with environment-

"Climate change is already having an impact on the environment, people and the economy. It is one of the biggest challenges we face in the years ahead."



related government representatives to discuss the deployment of our technology in Japan during our visit to Tokyo.”

FINANCE GOES GREEN

Canada’s financial sector is also playing its part in meeting the nation’s sustainability goals, with Investissement Québec committed to responsible investment and sustainable finance, according to Sylvie Pinsonnault, senior vice-president of Strategy, Business Solutions and Innovation at the company.

“The organization supports the government’s actions under its 2030 Plan for a Green Economy and, more specifically, its commitment to make significant cuts to its greenhouse gas emissions,” she said, pointing out that after the transportation sector, industry is the second-largest producer of greenhouse gases, accounting for about 30 per cent of emissions.

“As a result, it’s crucial for businesses to take action and help usher in a green, low-carbon economy,” said Pinsonnault. “That’s why Investissement Québec aims to be a catalyst for change by supporting Québec companies and encouraging them to adopt best business practices, including the integration of environmental, social and governance factors.”

The shift should not be considered a burden on companies, she added, as it invariably brings a wide range of new business opportunities that will help Québec enterprises take sustainable productivity to the next level.

In recent years, the organization has adopted several initiatives designed to make the province’s companies more competitive and give them an advantage in foreign markets.

Under Compétivert, the green economy initiative, for example, Investissement Québec encourages firms to adopt clean technologies and eco-responsible practices, to become more competitive while reducing their environmental

“It’s crucial for businesses to take action and help usher in a green, low-carbon economy.”

footprint. The initiative offers innovative financing and coaching solutions, and provides companies with the tools they need to take action.

Québec businesses can pursue opportunities, such as the transition to, and improvement of, energy efficiency, electrification of transportation, carbon capture, new fuels, recycling and recovery of plastics, renewable energy and the circular economy. Another objective is to strengthen collaboration with ecosystem players in the green economy.

Between April 1, 2021, and March 31, 2022, Investissement Québec authorized financing interventions for 103 clean technology innovation projects, Pinsonnault said. Worth more than C\$379.2 million, these financing interventions will support projects valued at C\$1.7 billion according to the forecasts provided by the companies.

The corporation has also introduced the Factorielle toolkit to raise awareness and provide tools to companies on gender diversity. The aim is to enhance the strategic contribution of women in business and thereby increase innovation and productivity, as well as facilitate access to capital for women entrepreneurs. Similarly, support for Québec sourcing addresses the benefits of procurement within the province and provides businesses with the tools to do precisely that, with downloaded information available on local manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers and industrial services companies in Québec.

A great deal of support is available to businesses with a commitment to sustainability and ambitions to export to foreign markets, including Japan. The support includes assessing exporting potential, organizing meetings with clients, preparing and assisting businesses, as

well as identifying business opportunities.

“Integrating ESG factors into business practices is clearly becoming essential,” said Pinsonnault. “Failing to do so could have a considerable impact on a company’s operations and translate into financial risks. It is now a widespread practice in Canada and abroad for investors and lenders to consider sustainability and ESG factors in their decisions.”

Underlining that shift, she pointed out that responsible investing now represents 62 per cent of assets under management in Canada, while 98 per cent of global institutional investors report considering non-financial factors during the investment process, up from only 60 per cent in 2016.

“Climate change is already having an impact on the environment, people and the economy. It is one of the biggest challenges we face in the years ahead,” said Pinsonnault.

“That’s why Investissement Québec hopes to be a force for change in the shift to a responsible and sustainable economy,” she added. “We are committed to ensuring that our investment and financing practices are informed by best practices and that environmental, social and governance factors are given due consideration in all our financing operations, in accordance with a new responsible investment and sustainable financing policy.

“We are also embarking on a multi-year process to implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related and Financial Disclosures and the United Nations’ sustainability objectives with a view to setting carbon reduction targets for our portfolio.” 🍁

GROUND BREAKER

Paidy founder Russell Cummer shares some secrets of the company's success

By Alec Jordan

PHOTOS BY LIFE.14

Even in a society where convenience is around every corner, there are sticking points and inefficiencies that can make dealing with transactions a hassle. But if you do find a solution to them — one that enough people support — you've got the makings of a winning business.

That's exactly what Paidy was able to hit on. The buy now, pay later (BNPL) service allows users to pay for goods as if they were using a credit card, but without the arduous hurdles that can come with applying for credit in Japan. Moreover, users can settle their accounts with cash.

Russell Cummer set up the platform in 2014 and found his first success in addressing the pain points of a longstanding payment system. From its humble beginnings, the platform went from strength to strength, not only launching the BNPL trend in Japan, but becoming one of Japan's rare unicorns in the process. The system was acquired by PayPal Holdings, Inc. for approximately C\$3.4 billion in September 2021. Paidy can now be used at Apple Stores in Japan, on Amazon and on thousands of e-commerce sites.

Cummer has a strong background in finance. With a master's degree in financial mathematics from Stanford University, he has worked in Tokyo at Goldman Sachs and in Hong Kong at Merrill Lynch. Although born in Singapore, he has strong Canadian roots. His father's family is from Saskatchewan and Cummer lived in the province from age five to 13. Meanwhile, his mother's family is from British Columbia, where Cummer owns a home.

This made him an ideal fit to address the Canada-Japan business community, which he did on March 16, at a hybrid, in-person/online event and webinar organized by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan. During the event, Cummer spoke about pivotal moments in Paidy's development, revealed



key demographics that helped the business during one of its growth stages, and shared his advice for would-be entrepreneurs among the CCCJ community.

Following the event, *The Canadian* was able to catch up with Cumber at Paidy's stylishly designed office in Tokyo Midtown and follow up on some of the more intriguing aspects of his talk.

PAIN POINT

It may be a truism, Cumber explained, but when it comes to starting a business, "it's all playing pretend until you have people that are paying you for what you're offering and are taking advantage of the service that you're offering." For Paidy, this first happened when solving a problem for a specific merchant, which was selling particularly to younger women who were shopping for items such as cosmetics and apparel.

Many of these consumers didn't use credit cards and would pay for their items via *daibiki*—cash on delivery. The method presents inherent challenges. It requires the customer to be at home to pay for the product when it is delivered. It also means that, if the customer isn't there to make the payment, all the costs involved in the delivery attempt are borne by the merchant. But for people who choose not to use credit cards — or who haven't been approved for them — it was one of the only options available at the time.

Paidy's advantage is that it allows users to make their purchases in a manner similar to using a credit card, but which allows them to pay the company back in cash the following month.

Cumber explained that it seemed promising to lend to this market segment of young women, while the method of payment would allow their online shopping to be frictionless.

"That's how change gets made: one person's career at a time, one customer at a time, one excited consumer at a time."

In the company's early days, it was merchants catering to this market segment to whom Cumber reached out: "We went to merchants who we knew were serving these populations. The value proposition of something like Paidy was that it could transition people from cash on delivery. When we first started, the key insight was that, for the people who were using *daibiki*, we could create an experience that was as easy as *daibiki* at the checkout, but made them look like a credit card consumer to the merchants.

"And what does that mean? It didn't fail; Paidy guaranteed the purchase. It had refunds. *Daibiki* doesn't have refunds. You could use Paidy as a kind of payment method on file, so it could work for recurring billing or subscription ecommerce."

The merchants didn't immediately respond, but the first one that did was their breakthrough, and made a case for the success of the platform. And the growth for the company began to take increasingly large steps, building on this first stride, Cumber explained: "The first merchant was key for us. And we will be forever grateful to them. And we encountered that again and again, just at a larger and larger scale.

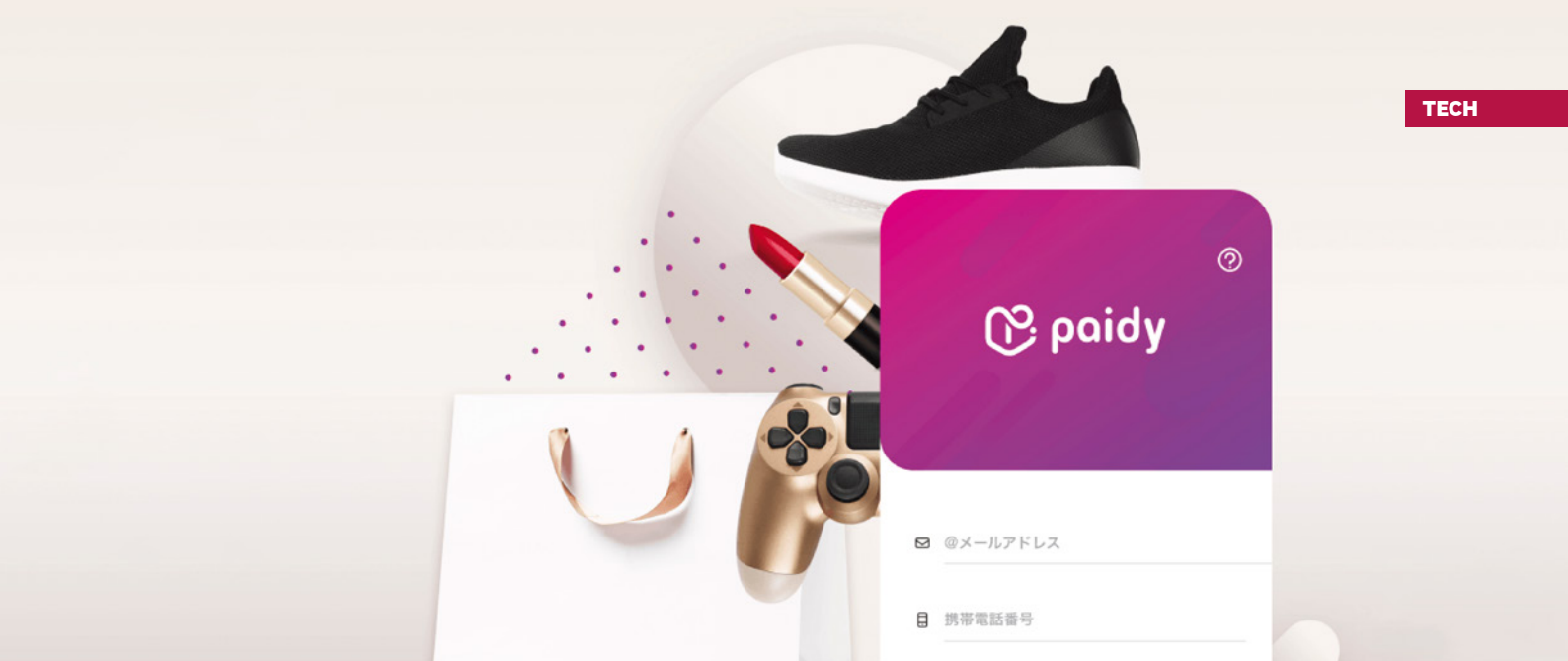
"So, the most important was the first merchant, then the next most important was the first large merchant ... so it's this kind of fractal picture in which they're getting bigger and bigger. But the relative importance is the same in some sense. Going from zero to one is as important as going from one to 10 is as important as going from 10 to 100."

GREY GOLD

As Paidy began to grow along with the ever larger merchants that began using the platform, it found a source of strength that wouldn't normally be expected by start-ups: older Japanese people with connections and knowhow. This proved to be invaluable, Cumber explained — even from the beginning. "When we first started the business, and hadn't raised any outside capital, we basically needed to have the advice and guidance of experienced people," he said. "Through one of the early investors in our company, who had various connections and who had worked in Japan for a very long time, we were able to link up with people who could help us in terms of figuring out how to launch and get regulated as a credit business. So that was very helpful."

As the company continued to grow, they found this talent pool to be engaging for several reasons, Cumber pointed out. "We really liked hiring experienced people who were willing, and excited about trying, to do something new at the end of their careers. It was fairly cost effective, because people weren't necessarily looking to pay for kids and all these other things; they were in a lower cost phase of their life.

"It was this sweet spot for us when the company was between five to 20 people, and it worked for us very well. I think this is something that other people may not think about, but it does exist as a resource. It depends on the individual, and certainly we had some hits and misses. But there are experienced and senior people who are looking



for interesting challenges and might be a good resource to add to any new team.”

He admitted that this might run counter to the idea that start-ups always need to field young employees: “I think it’s more a question of mindset than biological age. There are young people who are very conservative and who wouldn’t want to join a start-up because it would feel very risky at the beginning of their career. I think if somebody’s at the end of their career, they might be longing for an experience and type of stimulation that’s different from what they may have had. And I think they really like working with people who are trying to challenge the system and deliver new experiences, and they probably find it very satisfying, over and above the monetary compensation.”

Cummer added that some of the older employees have stayed until their mandatory retirement age, while others have chosen to move on to even smaller start-ups, having seen Paidy grow into a larger company over the years.

One of these key experienced figures is none other than Riku Sugie, the president and CEO of Paidy, who has proved to be instrumental in helping the company continue to grow and creates a Canada–Japan leadership duo at the company. Cummer explained that he was able to bring Sugie on at just the right time. “After about four years,” he said, “Paidy had gotten to the point where I understood that I needed to have much more of a closer partner to help me run the business. I was very lucky to have Riku come and join me. He was at the time the CEO of Lake, the third-largest consumer credit company in Japan.

“We had met through a mutual friend, and I was truly gratified to be able to have him come and be the *shacho* of Paidy so that I could graduate to be *kaicho*. We’ve basically run the business together ever since.”

FIND THE FIRST

Japanese business is known for being set in its ways, but Paidy’s success is proof that it is possible to bring about significant change in the way that consumers can handle their finances. But Cummer’s advice for those looking to start their own businesses that may have the potential to disrupt systems is to start small, just as his company did. “Find the first customer that you can really serve and learn from and be validated by — and then find the next one and the next one.

“Really validate what you’re doing, learn how to do it and improve on it,” he said. “I think that trying to change the whole ecosystem is a lot to ask, even for people who are at a massive scale. You can see huge companies who themselves would like to make changes in business practice in Japan, and even though it’s going to take a long time, eventually it will happen.

“And over time, if enough of us are out building new things, servicing the market in a different way and building our own corporate cultures

that are different than traditional corporate culture — slowly but surely over time, we will aggregate change.”

Cummer sees this in the people who have been a part of what he calls the Paidy extended family, the roughly 1,000 people who have either worked at the company over the years, or still work there: “They all have their own little experience that it is possible to build new things in Japan. They can also dream and aspire to go and build their own [businesses], or they can take a little bit of that spirit of challenging the status quo and getting excited about servicing customers and consumers in new ways to whatever they do next, be it a bigger company or a smaller company.

“I think that we are nothing special in that regard — there are hundreds of companies that have done the same thing. That’s how change gets made: one person’s career at a time, one customer at a time, one excited consumer at a time. That’s all that we can hope to do. And over time, things will evolve in directions that show progress.” 🍁



Cummer with Paidy President and CEO Riku Sugie

FORWARD THINKING

Malvern College Tokyo to offer students a diverse and engaging curriculum

An established leader in high-quality education, Malvern College has taken the winning combination of academic rigor and pastoral care around the world — from its home campus in Malvern, England, which was founded in 1865, to locations in Egypt, Switzerland and China (Qingdao, Chengdu and Hong Kong).

Students in Japan will soon be able to experience a Malvern education for themselves, as Malvern College Tokyo (MCT), the school's newest campus, will open in September 2023. The founding headmaster will be Mike Spencer, who brings to the job more than 20 years of experience leading schools in Hong Kong and Shanghai, China; New Delhi, India; and Maputo, Mozambique. Along with his sterling professional background, he is also an accomplished rhythm guitarist who takes inspiration from legends such as Leo Kottke, Mark Knopfler and Stevie Ray Vaughn — and from his daughter, Katie.



RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING

Spencer has helped schools in a variety of environments flourish, and this background gives him a thoughtful and respectful approach to developing learning communities: "I have learned that principles travel better than practices. Each and every school context is different, and it is very rare that one way of doing things works equally well in all environments. It is essential, therefore, to be clear about what one wants to achieve but not make assumptions about the best way to get things done. The cultural norms of any community need to be respected

and understood as an important guide to help decision making and action."

Education at MCT will be guided by five key pillars:

- Full integration of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum
- A strong focus on technology-related subjects for all students
- Entrepreneurial education
- Sustainability
- Bringing together Malvern's British heritage and Japanese culture

We spoke further with Spencer about technology, entrepreneurship and sustainability at MCT.

BUILDING FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Addressing the importance of technology at the school, Spencer said that the MCT will prepare students for jobs that cannot yet even be imagined: "At Malvern we have an obligation to ensure that all students are prepared for the workplace of the future. Our commitment is to ensure that, within the resources available to us, we are able to introduce students to areas such as artificial intelligence, control technology, virtual reality and robotics."

But he pointed out that, along with recognizing the strong potential of technology, students will be educated about how to use it in a mature way: "We will ensure that all students are good digital citizens who have the skills and attributes necessary to protect themselves and others from unacceptable use of these powerful tools. It is essential that students understand what it means to use technology responsibly, and understand the need for cyber security, data protection and academic integrity."

When it comes to entrepreneurship, Spencer pointed out that, at other schools, this area of

study is sometimes viewed as simply an extension of business courses. However, at the MCT, it will be a part of developing an overall mindset, and this starts with the earliest learners: "It is well known that the very youngest students have a huge capacity for thinking creatively and at Malvern College we like to encourage this. Entrepreneurship begins with having good ideas and finding ways to put these into practice. It would not be unusual to find our youngest students engaged in play-based activities or visits beyond the school to see how a business works, or to imaginatively design their own artefacts to provide solutions to real or imaginary problems."

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Spencer pointed out that it is crucial for children to develop a sense of stewardship when it comes to the global environment. One of the ways that the MCT will instill this sense is through its Forest School program, which allows children aged three to six to spend significant amounts of time outdoors, engaged in a variety of activities. Further, with the school's campus being in the Kodaira area, students of all ages will be able to experience the changing of the seasons and other natural phenomena.

Spencer added that this early focus will carry forward throughout students' time at the school, encouraging them to deepen their sense of responsibility to the planet even after they have graduated. "Malvern College Tokyo will certainly be ensuring that conservation, environmental protection and sustainability form part of our curriculum and our extra-curricular programs, so that young people who have a passion for stewardship will have opportunities to develop sustainable practices within and beyond their college years." 🍁

www.malverncollegetokyo.jp

TEAMING UP

Rio Tinto joins a consortium dedicated to sustainable mining

By Alec Jordan

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Since the resources on which the mining industry depends are precious and limited, concerns about sustainability are central to its operations. To address these needs, a variety of endeavours that can help bolster responsible mining efforts have been established around the world.

One such effort is the Sustainable Resources Engineering Education Consortium, which was set up by the Graduate School of Engineering at both Hokkaido University and Kyushu University. The aim is to strengthen and enhance mineral resource development education in Japan.

The consortium is based on the Joint Program for Sustainable Resources Engineering that was started in 2015 by the two graduate schools. In 2017, the schools also set up the Cooperative Program for Resources Engineering, a master's degree program that is Japan's first joint resource engineering course. Seeking to develop graduates with international perspectives and a high level of expertise, the program has given Japanese students the opportunity to participate in overseas internships, and has featured lectures from international academics.

To provide further support for graduates on the program, the consortium has begun to welcome to its membership private companies and public institutions. One of those enterprises is Rio Tinto, which joined the Sustainable

Resources Engineering Education Consortium on April 1.

SHARING AND LEARNING

The Canadian spoke about the consortium with Bill Horie, Rio Tinto Japan representative director and president. He pointed out that joining made perfect sense, given the company's global view and responsible approach: "We produce materials essential for human progress and our materials are essential for the low-carbon transition. These resources are finite, and we recognize our responsibility to extract full value from minerals and materials we produce, while avoiding harm and mitigating impacts to people and the planet."

He added that Rio Tinto stands to play an important role in the organization: "As the only non-Japanese company participating in the consortium, we believe there is a unique role we can play for the consortium and the students of the program this consortium will support. As one of the global leading companies in the resources industry, development of future leaders has been central to our company objectives, and we are very keen to be part of it through the consortium. We have experts both in Japan and globally who are in various fields that are relevant to the resources industry. We look forward to having opportunities to share our experiences — for example, in how a mining company faces challenges everyday and what we do to find solutions — through lectures and interactions with students. Sharing our work with other universities may also be of interest to students, faculties and other consortium members, and we are keen to learn from both universities and other consortium members."

Rio Tinto has many operations in Canada, and many products — including iron ore, titanium dioxide and diamonds — from these operations make their way to Japan. Furthermore, the company is involved in

sustainable activities in Canada that may be of interest to the consortium.

Horie pointed out that one of them is ELYSIS, Rio Tinto's joint effort with Alcoa, which is supported by Apple Inc. and the governments of Canada and Québec. The endeavour aims to help further develop breakthrough aluminum smelting technology that produces no greenhouse gas emissions.

And recently, Rio Tinto has become the first producer in North America of scandium oxide, one of several oxides of rare earth elements with a high melting point. Scandium is seen as a future critical material for the world, and Rio Tinto produces it from the waste streams of titanium dioxide production in Canada, without additional mining activity.

SUPPORTING THE FUTURE

The initiator of the consortium, Professor Naoki Hiroyoshi of the Faculty of Engineering at Hokkaido University, was enthusiastic about Rio Tinto's joining, as he explained in a press release: "We sincerely welcome Rio Tinto, a world leader in the mining and metal industries, to the consortium. With Rio Tinto's participation, we will be able to better pursue the consortium's goal of developing sustainable resource-related human resources in Japan. Including Rio Tinto, 17 companies and five public organizations have already decided to join or support the consortium. We continue to call for more supporters to enhance this consortium further."

Rio Tinto Japan's Horie bolstered these remarks, saying: "Japan will continue to need raw materials as a manufacturing superpower, and that means it will also need future leaders who understand the resources industry. This is a great forum where we can work together with various stakeholders, both private and public, as well as top national universities' faculty members, for a great cause, supporting future talents of the resource industry in Japan and beyond." 🍁



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SOURCE: NATIONMASTER.COM



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 JAPAN
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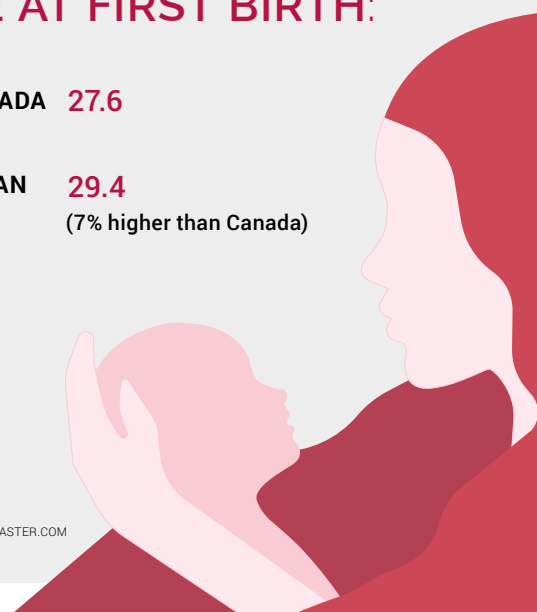
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MOTHER'S AVERAGE AGE AT FIRST BIRTH:

CANADA 27.6

JAPAN 29.4
(7% higher than Canada)

SOURCE: NATIONMASTER.COM



UTILITIES FOR ONE MONTH FOR ONE PERSON IN A 45 M² STUDIO APARTMENT

 Canada C\$122

 Japan ¥12,539

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QUÉBEC CONNECTOR

The new delegate general for the province in the western US looks back at his time in Tokyo

By Alec Jordan

Diplomacy is a field to which David Brulotte has dedicated his career, and it has taken him around the world. The native of Québec City has studied and worked in Montréal, Paris, London, Singapore and Tokyo.

He initially came to Tokyo as the Asia-Pacific director for Invest Québec (IQ) four years ago, and for the past three years, he was the delegate general of Québec in Tokyo, while serving on the Board of Governors for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ). This April, he became the delegate general of Québec for the western United States.

But perhaps one of his earliest overseas experiences was in Nikko, Tochigi Prefecture, where he lived for a year between 2000 and 2001 as a Rotary exchange student. Being immersed in an environment where few spoke English — let alone any French — triggered his love for Japan and Asia in general. It was also a pivotal moment in his decision to pursue international relations, which has taken him from helping to spread the word about Québec tech companies to global audiences, to developing strategies to connect the province with key markets in the US and throughout Asia.

While Brulotte was recently here in Tokyo, *The Canadian* was able to speak with him to find out what special memories he has of his stint in Japan, the message he has for his successor, and his reflections on his time as a CCCJ governor.

What have been some of your most memorable moments in Tokyo?

There have been many. Although the pandemic will stand out, of course, out of my four years here, half were before the pandemic, including my first year here with IQ, and my first year as delegate general. I was lucky that we had a lot going on for those two years. One of the highlights was probably the mission by Minister of Tourism Caroline Proulx in June 2019, and Minister [Pierre] Fitzgibbon in December 2019. And we hosted the first Effet Québec event,

We're lucky and dedicated enough that the Canadian and Québec presence in Japan is very well perceived.

a large-scale endeavour at Shibuya Hikarie that was attended by more than 100 people from Québec. That was great, because it was the last big event that Québec held abroad, and it was in Tokyo.

And after this, our mandate changed substantially because of the new reality. Because Japan is far away and different from Québec, our role was very pivotal for many companies. Many artists doing business here, and people who were used to coming to Japan often — all of a sudden, they couldn't travel at all. And as you know, personal contact in Japan is extremely important and at some point, Zoom calls aren't enough. So, we had the opportunity with the team here to represent different companies and artists, and meet local partners in person when it was possible. And I think that changed the dynamic of how we work.

Our team remained very solid, and that's definitely one of the highlights of my posting here. Just how experienced and well-versed the team is here, and how they've been able to glide through the pandemic and adapt to this new reality, is not something ordinary in Japan — switching to full remote work.

What does the new role hold for you?

It's the same role, but the market is extremely different, and the geography is vast. We have the general delegation in LA, and also have an office for Silicon Valley in San Francisco that I will oversee. We cover all the way up to Washington, as well as Alaska and Hawaii. It's 13 states. There's a lot of moving around, and a lot of proximity to Québec in terms of values, such as priorities regarding the environment, economy, innovation and trade. And one thing we did develop over the last year is a new approach by the government, especially between Asia and the West Coast, which we call the Trans-Pacific Approach. Essentially, it's to work with Asian

corporations to have a strong presence on the West Coast of the US.

Along with colleagues, I helped design the framework for this. We've hired someone in San Francisco, who will be focusing only on Asian corporations based there, and to essentially help create better, stronger and faster connections between Québec and Asia, but with this spring-board in the western US. That's something we were able to build pre-pandemic, but it fast-tracked during the pandemic. So, having this proximity and connection in the US with Asian corporations has been great. And of course, I'll take this to LA.

What advice have you shared with your successor, Chénier La Salle, who began on June 6?

Chénier knows Japan very well — he has spent many years here, he's very fond of the country and speaks Japanese. I think he'll be a great fit. What I've told him is that, of course, you'll want to bring in new ideas, but it's important to learn from the team here and I think that's one of the very important takeaways for me as well. It's been like this for me in my previous posts, and I'm just discovering this once again in LA as well — the teams are so professional, they've been here for a long time. They're passionate about what they do. And they do it because they believe in our mandate, and that we can change things and make things better for Québec.

How has your experience been as a CCCJ governor?

It's been fantastic. When I arrived in Tokyo, we joined the CCCJ through IQ. Wherever I've been in my other postings, such as in London and Paris, we always joined the Canadian and Québec business councils and chambers of commerce. I joined here as the regular thing that you would do as a diplomat, but I got a lot

more involved. Just seeing everyone that was on the board, the companies that were members and the type of activities the chamber was doing, I understood how beneficial that would be to our presence here. Then I was elected to the board, and I'm just coming to the end of the third year of my term, which coincides with my departure. It's been terrific that this really good group of very dedicated people are doing what they do voluntarily.

I really see the good value of being together and networking, and pushing forward Canadian and Québec values, as well. We've had a variety of seminars — a lot of which were online over the past two years. They covered the First Nations and women in leadership featuring a minister from Québec, and were held just before the Olympics. We also developed connections with the Canadian embassy and the Japanese embassy in Canada.

The chamber has really bolstered our presence here and helped Canada shine in Japan. The Japanese are very fond of Canada in general, but this brings a business perspective to bonds and relationships that are already very strong.

Would you like to share a farewell message with the CCCJ community?

I think we're lucky. We're lucky and dedicated enough that the Canadian and Québec presence in Japan is very well perceived. I think we have this amazing sense of community. I represent one province, but throughout the last four years, we worked very closely with other provinces and the embassy. And it's just been incredible to really feel this sense of community and purpose.

It's about how we can help each other and make sure that we all gain, and we all win. Because a win for one of us is a win for Canada, and vice versa.

This is something that I really focused on in my previous postings as well, but it's gone to another level here, with the closeness of the Canadian community in general and, of course, through the CCCJ. Québec has been extremely involved in the CCCJ on the board. And through these activities, I think we've benefitted a lot, and as a province we're extremely grateful to the CCCJ. 🍁

Brulotte with Mohan Patel, former director for Invest Québec in Japan

With Québec's Minister of Economy and Innovation Pierre Fitzgibbon and Mayor of Shibuya Ken Hasebe



GATEWAY TO NEW HORIZONS

Webinar series discusses innovation and investment opportunities in Canada

By Megan Casson

The Canadian government recently introduced its Innovation Supercluster Initiative. The clusters are based in areas thriving with business activity centred on companies large and small, academic institutions and their researchers, as well as not-for-profit organizations that encourage innovation and growth in specific industries.

Throughout 2021 the Japan Society, Invest in Canada and JETRO Toronto co-hosted a series of virtual events to showcase for Japanese investors Canada's investment opportunities. The program comprised six events, each of which focused on regions of Canada as well as the five Superclusters.

SASKATCHEWAN AND MANITOBA

The first event of the series took place on May 26, with key leaders and local specialists in the Saskatchewan and Manitoba regions discussing business trends in the Protein Industries Supercluster. Focusing on technology, the session covered topics such as agri-food enabling technologies, genomics and information technology (IT).

Speakers at the event were:

- Don Bell, partner at Torys LLP
- Jordan Gaw, regional director for Invest in Canada
- Bill Greuel, chief executive officer at Protein Industries Canada
- Paul Pryce, managing director at the Japan Trade and Investment Office for the Government of Saskatchewan
- Marko Tiivun, senior associate, Torys LL

Kicking off the event, Bell discussed opportunities within the plant-based protein market, noting that the demand is "explosive." He mentioned that, by 2050, demand in this market will have increased by more than 70 per cent, and that the Prairie Provinces, which include 40 per cent of Canada's farmland, are ideally positioned to meet this growing demand.

As a way for Saskatchewan to better meet this demand, the government has established a network of overseas trade offices in locations including Tokyo, Shanghai, Singapore and New Delhi, while last year four additional offices were set up in Ho Chi Minh City, London, Dubai and Mexico City.

Greuel then discussed current operations at the Protein Industries Supercluster and global plant protein opportunities. "Not many people know what an innovation Supercluster is. Our vision as

an organization is that Canada is a global leader in plant protein. To support that, we are investing in large-scale science and innovation projects to drive and grow Canada's plant-based food, feed and ingredient sector. To date we have 20 large-scale science and innovation projects supporting the development of Canada's plant-based food market. But our total research and development portfolio is more than C\$350 million. I think that speaks a lot to the optimism that our industry members have around the growth of the global plant-based food market."

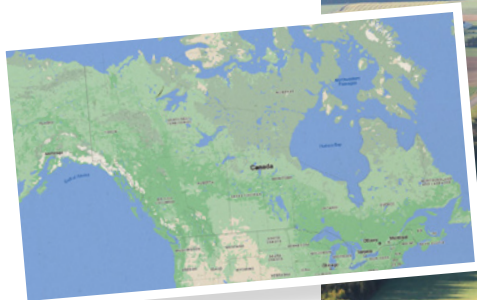
ATLANTIC CANADA

The second instalment of the series, held on June 24, 2021, delved into operations in Atlantic Canada — home to the Ocean Supercluster. The session discussed trends in ocean technologies and their impact on adjacent industries.

"It is through this collaboration that we can unlock real opportunities that turn into innovations."



WATERLOO, ONTARIO





CALGARY, ALBERTA

The speakers at this event were:

- Robert Acorn, associate director of research and development, Sekisui Diagnostics Canada
- Michael Beatie, president, Gas Infusion Systems/Ship Nature's Way
- Don Bell, partner, Torsys LLP
- Joel Halse, chief executive officer, East Coast Innovation
- Kendra MacDonald, CEO, Ocean Supercluster
- Sheamus MacDonald, co-founder and chief executive officer, Sedna Technologies
- Marko Trivun, senior associate, Torsys LLP

MacDonald explained that the Ocean Supercluster is multisectoral, saying that “we have members in fisheries, aquaculture, offshore resources, bio resources, ocean technology, shipping, defence and marine renewables, and we have projects and partners that range across more than one sector to develop solutions focused on reducing the cost and risk of doing business in the ocean — building capacity, connectivity and global reach.”

According to MacDonald, Canada is trying to change the way it does business in relation to the ocean. “Canada has a lot of small and medium enterprises. So, getting those companies to come together to build solutions, point solutions, or end-to-end solutions, helps them be more globally relevant. We're really trying to create an ocean economy that is more digital, that is more sustainable.”

He then said that, while the webinar was focused on Atlantic Canada, the Ocean Supercluster is coast to coast in terms of membership. “We have over 50 projects approved with a project value that exceeds C\$250 million. The bulk of those projects are running between now and March 2023, so you will see a lot of activity in the next couple of years.”

ALBERTA

The third webinar, held on September 22, presented the area of Alberta, focused on the region's advancements in artificial intelligence (AI).

The speakers for this event were:

- Don Bell, partner, Torsys
- Bill Baver, SMART World executive leader, NTT
- Nella Brodett, director, Investment and Partnerships, Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute
- Michael Couch, senior investment advisor (Japan), Invest Alberta Corporation
- Emily Kneteman, regional director, Invest in Canada
- Howard Shearer, chief executive Canada, Hitachi Canada
- Marko Trivun, senior associate, Torsys LLP

The Q&A session was moderated by Emily Kneteman, regional director for Invest in Canada.

Kneteman kicked off the event by discussing the AI industry in the province, employment rates and how the province's major cities rank globally within the AI sector. “Alberta has two major cities — the city of Calgary and the city of Edmonton. This is really where we see companies investing in artificial intelligence. In Calgary specifically, we currently have more than 2,000 tech jobs open, which is comparatively quite high across the country. Those jobs are mainly in safe and secure food, clean energy, renewable energy and better health solutions.”

She also noted that Calgary has the highest concentration of high-tech workers in Canada, and the most patents per capita of any Canadian city. Kneteman revealed that Edmonton is home to the first and only North American headquarters of DeepMind, a British AI company.

“In 2017, when that lab was established,” she noted, “the founder of the company was quoted

as saying that Edmonton was the spiritual home and birthplace of artificial intelligence.” Edmonton also ranks among the top three cities globally for innovation and artificial intelligence and is home to more than 1,200 start-ups within the sector.

Calgary is also a city that has a notably great deal of private-sector involvement. It was forecast that Alberta will spend more than C\$18 billion on digital transformation in 2022.

QUÉBEC

The fourth session was held on October 15, and looked at Québec and its corresponding Supercluster, the Scale AI Supercluster, which brings the retail, manufacturing, transportation, infrastructure, as well as information and communications technology sectors together to build intelligent supply chains by accelerating the integration of AI across businesses.

Speakers for this session included:

- Julien Billot, CEO of SCALE AI
- Julien Bouvrais, head of studio and R&D at Eidos-Sherbrooke x SQUARE ENIX,
- Vito Italia, director, International Business Development at Finance Montréal
- Daniel Silverman, vice president, Foreign Direct Investment at Investissement Québec International
- Tamaika Jumelle, regional director at Invest in Canada
- Don Bell, partner, Torsys LLP
- Guillaume Lavoieand, partner, Torsys LLP
- Marko Trivun, senior associate, Torsys LLP

Silverman spoke about how Japanese companies can expand their reach through Québec, as well as how Investissement Québec International can assist with foreign direct investment, international talent attraction and exports.

Discussing the opportunities for Japanese companies in Quebec, Silverman explained that there are some key sectors that appeal greatly to the Japanese market. “Artificial intelligence and machine learning, the electrification of the automotive and the transportation industry ...

“We're really trying to create an ocean economy that is more digital, that is more sustainable.”

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We also have a battery strategy and we're very aggressively pursuing cathode active materials, anode materials, cell manufacturers and base metal refineries to help create an ecosystem, as well as a supply chain that services North American, European and Asian markets.

"We also have a life sciences and health technology sector strategy that's soon to be announced. That really focuses on the existing pipeline that we have here in the province of Québec, being one of the top employment sectors, both in terms of value-added jobs and manufacturing jobs," he added.

Addressing the finance industry, Italia explained that Japanese financial companies with a presence in New York can create a shared service centre in Montréal to save on costs, thanks to low setup outlays and a short payback period.

BRITISH COLUMBIA AND NORTHERN CANADA

The topic of discussion turned to the Digital Technology Supercluster on November 4. Speakers discussed case studies in which the development and adoption of digital technologies is being accelerated by both Canadian and Japanese companies in British Columbia and Northern Canada.

Speakers for this event were:

- Leslie Teramoto, executive director, International Trade and Investment Operations, Government of British Columbia
- Bill Tam, co-founder and COO, Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster
- Handol Kim, co-founder and CEO, Variational AI
- Ayako Yachie, CEO, SBX Corporation
- Paul Twigg, CTO, NTT Data/Sierra Systems
- Don Bel, partner, Torsys LLP
- Marko Trivun, senior associate, Torsys LLP

Tam opened the event by introducing the Digital Technology Supercluster. He explained that the pandemic has reshaped the business world and increased the importance of digital technology. "In a recent survey by the World Economic Forum that polled CEOs across the world, 70 per cent indicated they believe that the business value of the next decade will be through digitally enabled platforms. And 87 per cent of companies said that they're experiencing skills gaps now, or expect to do so within a few years. The pace at which change is occurring is

"Businesses that once mapped digital strategies in one-to-three-year phases now must scale their initiatives to a matter of days or weeks."

unprecedented. Businesses that once mapped digital strategies in one-to-three-year phases now must scale their initiatives to a matter of days or weeks."

So, how does the Digital Technology Supercluster plan to adapt to this market? Tam explained that the innovation model includes involvement from industry partners with customers — ultimately the adopters of the tech — combined with technology, lead partners and code development partners that build the product platforms. "We bring in post-secondary research partners to ensure that we have visibility on the latest developments, so we can commercialize and bring them into the roadmap for that product, and technology service providers that ultimately try to fit this equation into the framework for that customer. It is through this collaboration that we can unlock real opportunities that turn into innovations."

ONTARIO

For the final webinar of the series on November 18, The Japan Society invited speakers to discuss the operations in the Ontario region, focusing on the Advanced Manufacturing Supercluster, and Next Generation Manufacturing Canada, an industry-led community driving the most transformative advanced manufacturing projects in Canada.

Speakers were:

- Jayson Myers, CEO of Next Generation Manufacturing Canada
- Mitch Debora, co-founder and CEO of Mosaic
- Tony Chahine, CEO of Myant Inc.
- Larry Harrison, president of Conrex Steel Ltd.
- Feisal Hurzook, CTO of ArcX Inc.
- Greg Da Re, regional director of Invest in Canada
- Warren Ali, innovation senior vice president, Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association
- Ron Harper, president of JFE Shoji Power Canada Inc.
- Don Bell, partner, Torsys LLP
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TORONTO, ONTARIO

Myers discussed how the Supercluster works to build on world leading manufacturing capabilities. "Here in Ontario and across Canada, we have some of the world's leading researchers, not only in digital technologies, but in materials and manufacturing sciences. We have some of the greatest tech companies in the world — not just global technology companies that are located here, but also many small enterprises. We want to bring attention to that.

"We also want to connect them with the fabulous manufacturing companies that we have in the life sciences area in automotive and aerospace — Honda Motor Company, Ltd., Toyota Motor Corporation, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. — all our members and all very active within our Supercluster.

Myers discussed the Supercluster's strategy, saying that the main aim is to make connections to develop and strengthen collaboration by building partnerships across the advanced manufacturing sector: "Some of what we do is access investment and fun, collaborative projects. These projects are intended to be world-leading, unique projects that deliver unique solutions for companies operating in Canada for manufacturers here in the country, but that can be commercialized around the world. And we also invest in building workforce capabilities and strengthening management capacity." 🍁

STRONG START

Joint webinar marks the beginning of inter-chamber ties

By Alec Jordan



David Anderson



Yuko Ichise



Kuniko Asano

The Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) is a venerable institution in Japan. In fact, it is the country's oldest economic organization. The TCCI's more than 75,000 members include large companies, small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and individuals.

A key group within this organization that is championing the causes of women in society is the TCCI's Women's Association. On February 25, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan (CCCJ) held a joint webinar with the Women's Association, marking the two chambers' first event together.

Those who spoke at the webinar on behalf of the CCCJ were Chair David Anderson and Governor Riyo Whitney. Representing the TCCI were Women's Association Chair Yuko Ichise and Vice Chair of the Keidanren's Board of Councillors Kuniko Asano. Anderson and

"I believe our modest national characters are similar"

Whitney joined the webinar from their offices, while Ichise and Asano participated virtually as well. The webinar was moderated by CCCJ Governor Karl Pires.

ECONOMY AND SENTIMENT

During his remarks, Anderson introduced the CCCJ to the TCCI community as a member-driven, member-focused organization, and the longest-standing Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Asia. He pointed out that CCCJ members are businesspeople and entrepreneurs — from Canada, Japan and other countries — who represent a wide range of industries. He added that the CCCJ contributes to the development of companies and individuals doing business in Japan, and to furthering the development of the Canada-Japan business community.

Anderson then went on to provide an overview of the Canadian economy and touched on the bilateral relationship between Japan and Canada at the government level. One of the key points he raised was Canada's desire to deepen its trade relations with Japan. He brought up the well-known saying in Canada — "When America sneezes, Canada catches a cold" — which is a colourful way of explaining how dependent Canada's economy is on trade

with the US. Anderson added: "To alleviate that dependence, we hope to further promote investment and trade from Japan to build a better relationship. While investment from China and India is growing, Canadians welcome investment from Japan."

Anderson pointed to the specific ways in which Canada, as a major exporter of both energy and food, is primed to continue developing a flourishing and mutually beneficial trade relationship with Japan: "Canada's energy self-sufficiency ratio [which measures the relationship between a country's primary energy output and its consumption] was 173.9 per cent in 2018 — making it a net exporter — while Japan's was 9.6 per cent. In the same year, Canada's food self-sufficiency ratio was 264 per cent while Japan's was 37 per cent. This makes Canada an ideal provider of energy and food to Japan."

However, while Anderson was keen to point out the strong economic ties between the two countries, he was equally enthusiastic about the shared elements of national personality that can help deepen these bonds: "Canadians are characterized among the world's people as being respectful of others and the mood of the moment, as well as being quick to apologize, and it seems that the Japanese have a similar habit of



Riyo Whitney



Karl Pires



Also representing the TCCI Women's Association were, from left: Governor Ritsuko Shiga, Vice-Chair Miyako Kuramitsu and Maki Kezuka, a member

apologizing as well. I believe our modest national characters are similar, and this can be part of the basis of an excellent partnership.”

EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Following Anderson was Whitney, who has a long background in education in Canada, California and Japan. She spoke about the qualities of the Canadian educational system, which makes it outstanding not only for Canadian nationals, but for students around the world.

Whitney pointed out that the Canadian secondary school system puts a strong focus on competency development, particularly in the areas of critical thinking, creative thinking and communication skills. She added that the Canadian curriculum is particularly responsive to the various needs and learning styles of students, boasts relatively small class sizes and a wide array of course options. “This leads to an environment that fosters the cultivation of qualities such as self-awareness and self-discipline, empathy and emotional control, responsible decision-making as well as an abiding concern for others and interpersonal relationships,” Whitney said.

She explained that this excellence continues at the university level, where classes are taught by rigorously and innovatively trained professors and the overall system is geared towards developing professionals. Whitney added that the Canadian university system is known for its flexibility. For example, if a university student in Canada decides to pursue a different course of study midway through their education, they can easily transfer to another program or even another university for the last two years of their degree and have their credits carried over.

Whitney also highlighted several reasons that Canada is a top location for students from around the world. These include the general social and political stability of Canada, its overall low crime

rate, the diverse and multicultural population of its major cities, as well as its stunning natural surroundings and clean environment.

In concluding her remarks, she pointed to some inspiring examples of Canada–Japan educational partnerships, such as the BC offshore school in Tokyo, where she served as the principal for several years. Graduates of the school receive both a Japanese and a Canadian diploma. Whitney has recently launched a system — the GLICC-OVS (Ontario Virtual School) Program — that allows Japanese students to earn a Canadian (Ontario) diploma in conjunction with a Japanese diploma, while attending any school in Japan.

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Following the remarks from Anderson and Whitney, Asano addressed the webinar attendees. She thanked Anderson and Whitney for their remarks and addressed a topic of particular importance to the TCCI Women's Association.

“Today, I would like to talk about the social advancement of women in Japan. Japan has equality of results, but not enough equality of opportunity. Unfortunately, Japanese women's advancement in society lags behind that of the rest of the world. We rank 120th out of 156 countries in the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. This is particularly low for a developed country,” Asano said.

“For many years, I have been advocating for equal opportunities for women to the Keidanren [Japan Business Federation]. One of my efforts has been to encourage the establishment of a Ministry of Women's Affairs in the Cabinet Office, the introduction of a quota system in the Diet and other measures to promote the advancement of women.

“A survey on the level of happiness in Japan shows that Japanese women are more satisfied than men, but we must not be complacent about

the status quo; instead, we should broaden our perspective. We should be highly conscious of our status while standing shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the world. If women are not energetic and active in society, neither children's education nor society will grow.”

Asano pointed out that one of her key ideas had its basis in Canada: “We have much to learn from Canada when it comes to the economy, education and improving the status of women. In fact, the model on which I have based the Ministry of Women's Affairs that I am proposing to the Japanese government is in Canada. It is called Women and Gender Equality Canada.

“I thank Chair Anderson and Governor Whitney for their remarks,” she concluded, “and I see this meeting as an excellent opportunity to deepen the relationship between the CCCJ and the TCCI Women's Association.”

GREAT BEGINNING

Ichise brought the meeting to a close by looking back at the first contacts between the TCCI and the CCCJ: “In the fall of 2020, I met with Anderson and members of the CCCJ Board of Governors for the first time to deepen our exchange. We had planned to hold a seminar to promote mutual understanding and business exchange among CCCJ members, but due to restrictions imposed in response to the Covid-19 outbreak, we were unable to do so. I am happy that we have been able to share our views now.

“This has been a wonderful talk about the proposed trade complementarity between Canada and Japan in energy and food, and world-class education. It was also interesting to hear about the similarities in habits between the Japanese and Canadian people.”

Ichise said that she looked forward to being able to hold in-person joint events once the pandemic has ended. 🍁



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REMEMBERING T. MARK HALPERN

Neil Moody
CCCJ Executive Director, 1995–2010

The Canadian and foreign community in Japan recently lost a wonderful and kind individual who served as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Japan's (CCCJ's) corporate secretary and a member of the Trade Policy Committee.

Mark Halpern was a consummate professional and a trusted advisor to me over the years, beginning when he joined the CCCJ in 2000 and I was the executive director.

Mark moved from the US to Toronto at age eight and spent the next 25 years there. He studied at the University of Toronto, at their law school and took their MBA program. His early law career began at Blake, Cassels & Graydon in corporate-commercial practice, including stints at the federal Department of Justice (tax litigation) and the Ontario Ministry of Financial Institutions (insurance company regulation).

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

In 1993, Mark went to Japan, but never intended to stay as long as he did. With his law and tax background, on landing in Japan he first practiced at a major Japanese law firm, Nishimura and Partners. He left with two other colleagues to form Aiba & Partners.

Mark later took a nine-month break to obtain a master's degree in commercial law from the University of Cambridge and qualify as a UK solicitor. It was while he was with Aiba & Partners that he joined the CCCJ. From that time, I would

Mark Halpern was a consummate professional and a trusted advisor to me over the years

get to know Mark personally, and our friendship began. He served as the corporate secretary of the CCCJ from 2006 to 2008 before handing over the duties to Eric DeGroot, who was later to become president.

When engaged in conversation, Mark was always animated, yet thoughtful. We would often get together at a small izakaya beside the Canadian embassy after CCCJ events. Our discussions would usually involve the Canada-Japan relationship and the chamber's work, gradually encompassing various topics. His intellectual capacity, combined with his interest in Japanese culture, was compelling and inspiring.

He loved old movies and was very knowledgeable about them. Mark would often describe in detail the skill of a movie director or recite critical lines. One night, while talking about films and his affinity for Alfred Hitchcock, Mark listed all the movies the legendary director had made and rated them. His passion for Hitchcock influenced me greatly. That conversation resulted in my wife and I spending the next Golden Week holiday renting and watching as many Hitchcock movies as were available from the local Tsutaya video store.

Mark was also a musician and on weekends often played the flute in a jazz trio at a club

in Yotsuya. The messages he'd send out about these shows — like the one he sent out that read, "Friends, I'm organizing another night out at Abbey Road" — demonstrated his love of music and commitment to friendship.

LEGAL MIND

Mark had a daughter, Aska, and a son, Randy. We spent numerous weekends at Arisugawa Park when our two boys bonded as friends, since they were the same age. However, one of the more memorable moments was when Mark invited my son and me to the American embassy for Fourth of July celebrations. After the festivities, we sat on the grassy knoll, entertained by our two four-year-old boys dancing on the stage between the performances as we took in the precious moment together.

In 2001, Mark founded the Law Office of T. Mark Halpern, carrying on a general corporate-commercial practice as a registered foreign lawyer advising clients on Ontario and English law. He also had a formal registered association with the Japanese law firm, Nakashima & Company, sharing an office in Higashi Ginza and was able to advise on Japanese business law.

In 2019, Mark and I were excited to reconnect at the joint chamber summer networking event in Tokyo during my business trip to Japan. After the event, we talked about movies, novels and the short stories he had just published. We filled each other in on our kids' activities, while enjoying the ambiance of a local eatery. Unfortunately, that would be the last time I met Mark. Still, we had visited our favourite restaurant in Azabu like we did every time we got together.

Mark and his wife, Tomoko, raised two beautiful children to become adults and he will be dearly missed by all. I will treasure the many memories of my good friend, Mark Halpern. 🍀



From left: Hazen Moore, John Munroe, Mark Halpern and Neil Moody



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CHOICE OF CHAMPIONS

Maple wood baseball bats have proved to be a force in the game

By Terukazu Ikeda

An American pastime was not only imported — but embraced and transformed — in Japan. Much like how Japan added value to the auto sector, it adopted an American game and put its own spin on it.



Japanese-style baseball imposed much of the rigidity and discipline associated with its culture onto a slow, American game. This craftsman-like devotion to the sport has been credited with being the reason so many Japanese players make it across the Pacific into the big leagues. Most notably, former professional baseball outfielder Ichiro Suzuki embodied the spirit of a baseball samurai.

To build on the metaphor, the baseball bat is the sword used in the field of dreams. Bats have been made from white ash, yellow birch and even *aodamo* (Japanese ash) trees, but the most prized bats are derived from the same hard maple tree that yields the syrup that sweetens waffles and pancakes.

STRONG UNDER IMPACT

The best known of these bats hail from a 930-square-metre structure located in Carleton Place, near Canada's capital. The manufacturer, Sam Bat — officially, The Original Maple Bat Corporation — first gained notoriety when it perfected a bat for Barry Bonds, now known as the 2K1, with which he hit a league-record 73 home runs. According to the maker's official website, "maple is a very dense wood with a close grain which means it holds together well under impact." This natural structural integrity, combined with the company's production process, creates bats that players trust inside the box.

According to Shigeru Nishigami, president and CEO of Kashimaya, a Japanese sporting goods distributor whose clients include Franklin and Sam Bats, two-time Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) Pacific League batting champion Katsuya Kakunaka (Chiba Lotte Marines) and nine-time

NPB All-Star Yoshio Itoi (Hanshin Tigers) both use the famous maple bat.

In a promotional video created by Canadian company Shopify, the founder of Sam Bat, Sam Holman, talks about three elements that go into a "perfect maple bat": straightness of grain, density of wood and the craftsman.

OVERSEAS REACH

And like the maple bats themselves, which stand up under impact, Sam Bat's business has not cracked even under the weight of the pandemic. Since Covid, Sam Bat has increased its international reach. Their US-bound exports have kicked into high gear since the pandemic started, increasing from 70 per cent pre-pandemic to 85 per cent now, according to *The Globe and Mail*.

Sam Bat's dedication to perfection, customizing each bat to their pros' needs, has led to more than 75,000 bats being made for Major League Baseball (MLB). Twelve MLB MVPs have chosen to use them. While Sam Bat has become the best-known bat in the big leagues — providing 4,000 bats a year — they do not monopolize the maple bat market.

UP AND COMER

For example, there is Koji Yamane, an international admissions assistant at Centennial College, who has a side business through which he exports maple and birch bats to a Japanese original equipment supplier and distributes his Hakusoh Bats to countries such as Mexico, Australia and the Dominican Republic, and to regions including Europe. Due to the saturation of Japan's base-

The baseball bat is the sword used in the field of dreams

ball bat market with big players such as Asics and Mizuno, Yamane — who once played in the celebrated Koshien high school baseball tournament — not only supplies his bats to Japanese independent and semi-pro leagues, but also focuses on emerging foreign markets.

"I started running my business seriously in 2018," Yamane said in Japanese. "Recently, we established Hakusoh Bat's headquarters in San Diego." He has been pushing his newest model, the Spark Slugger, everywhere. Yamane's gradual success is no small feat when considering the baseball bat business's razor-thin profit margins, which Holman described in a *Chicago Tribune* article.

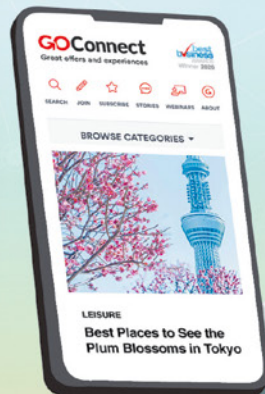
Currently, one Japanese player is on Canada's lone MLB team: pitcher Yusei Kikuchi. Few other Japanese have donned a Blue Jays uniform, but countless others, including Ichiro, have set foot on the Rogers Centre field. Toronto legend Joe Carter, who hit a three-run walk-off home run to win back-to-back World Series titles, also once used a Sam Bat.

The American game will continue to inspire baseball-crazed Japan, a country that has solidified its reputation in the baseball universe. As countless Japanese kids dream of one day going to the big leagues, the tool they hold in their hands while dreaming may just come from a maple tree, felled in the Great White North. 🍁



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CORPORATES



Intralox L.L.C. (Japan) Marc Bolduc

Intralox is the leading conveyance solutions provider that helps to move the world's most critical products. Intralox L.L.C. (Japan) has been active in the Japanese market for the past 25 years and is looking to further its commercial reach, not only in Japan, but also in the APAC region. With the adoption of the Comprehensive and Progressive

Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, Intralox would like to work very closely within this framework and, thus, sees being a member of the CCCJ as an excellent platform for these endeavours. Marc Bolduc, a long-time member and present CCCJ governor, is the representative director of Intralox Japan.



Randstad K.K. Paul Dupuis

Originally from Windsor, Ontario, my first trip to Japan was in 1990, when I arrived in Osaka. My six-month backpacking adventure has led to a lifetime connection with Japan. In fact, I was an active member of the CCCJ in

the past. I returned to Japan (again) in 2021 from India to lead Randstad Japan. The CCCJ is about building bridges and communities, in business and beyond. I'm looking forward to getting involved in the chamber and supporting it in the spirit of "doing well and doing good."



Western Forest Products George Omori

Western Forest Products safely produces high-margin, targeted specialty building materials for our selected global customers in a value-for-service relationship. Our company has operations on Vancouver Island, and in Washington in the US, with headquarters located in Vancouver,

British Columbia. We are committed to personal safety, sustainable management, environmental stewardship and seeking mutually beneficial relationships, while also ensuring dedication to a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

SMALL BUSINESSES



Wayfarer Winston Chu

After eight years of managing investments in global technology companies, I wanted to be on the other side — to build. This brought me to Japan, where I co-founded Wayfarer, a hospitality proptech startup. Being new

to Japan, it was important for me to get to know people from similar roots. Building a community is hard but also rewarding; I hope to be able to help the CCCJ grow, so more Canadians can thrive in Japan.



YUZEN Translation Geoffrey England

We are a specialist translation company based in the center of Tokyo. We have completed several successful projects, mainly for the energy, environment and shipping industries. As co-founder of YUZEN Translation, I am responsible

mainly for marketing and business development. I am also very much involved with translation and proofreading. Already we have translated vaccination-related and official documents for our Canadian clients, and wish to build strong relations with the CCCJ.

INDIVIDUALS



Sujit Bedi

I am a Vancouverite who has lived in southern Yokohama for close to 30 years. I am a graduate of UBC and McGill MBA Japan's inaugural class of 2000. Recently, I left the medical device industry and am now the APAC marketing

manager for Epiq, a global legal services firm. I am also very active in the McGill Alumni Association in Japan and, feeling I was long overdue in becoming an active member in the broader Canadian community in Japan, I have decided to join the CCCJ.



Daniel Kwentner

Originally from Belgium, I have more than 20 years' international experience as a design consultant and creative director. From 1999 to 2006, I was based in Montréal, where I developed my own business and counted among

my clients such prestigious companies as Adidas, L'Oréal, Merrell and Bell Canada. I moved to Osaka in 2006 and began working for IDA, later moving to Singapore with the company. I returned to Japan in 2017 and am now based in Tokyo as an independent consultant and producer.

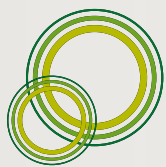


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