



CASE STUDY

JMEC Experience Helps Participant to Set Up Belgian Subsidiary

Background

Gregoire's first experience with Japan was as a high school exchange student, spending one year on an International Rotary Club scholarship in Nagano City. He came back to volunteer for the Nagano Olympics three years later. After graduating from University, he decided to go on a six-month backpacking trip exploring the Middle East. Back in his native Belgium, he then applied for the Prince Albert Fund, receiving a one year grant to help a Belgian company to expand abroad. As a result, he headed back to Tokyo to open a subsidiary for New Tree, importing high quality Belgian chocolate into Japan.

Reasons for Participating in JMEC

Only having experienced Japan as a high school exchange student, Gregoire was looking for a program that taught him about the intricacies of working in Japan. Having the task to open a subsidiary in Tokyo, he found his match in JMEC, where he could not only learn how to work effectively in Japan, but also how to put together a good business plan that went beyond "adding up a few numbers". JMEC also enabled him to greatly expand his professional network.

JMEC Experience

The JMEC experience was an enriching and invaluable one for Gregoire. In addition to his three objectives to learn about working in Japan, writing a business plan and expanding his network, the greatest take away from JMEC was the experience of working in a cross-cultural team. As part of a team of three Japanese, two Americans and one Belgian, he was able to learn the importance of smooth communication and staying on track, both regarding timeline and overall objective of the business plan.

Result

The JMEC experience greatly enriched Gregoire's understanding of the Japanese market situation. He used information gained from the lectures to set expectations with the head office in Belgium regarding the set up of New Tree Japan. It helped to explain the challenges they would be facing such as language, timeline, regulations etc. Today, Gregoire is the Representative Director of New Tree Japan. He still refers to the lecture notes and experience gained during JMEC to help him run the New Tree Japan subsidiary. As an additional bonus, some of his teammates turned out to become his best friends here in Japan.

For more information about JMEC, please visit www.jmec.gr.jp or email info@jmec.gr.jp.