

Building on a long history of cooperation

Japan and the Netherlands mark 400 years of formal trade ties this year, with the two countries expressing a firm commitment to build on what has been a mutually beneficial relationship in all fields.

Since the arrival of the Dutch in Japan in 1609 with two ships from the Dutch East India Co., the Netherlands has enjoyed a special status in Japan. In fact, the Dutch were the only Westerners allowed to stay in the country after the Tokugawa Shogunate expelled foreign traders, missionaries and travelers in 1635.

From the designated foreign enclave on Dejima Island in the Bay of Nagasaki, Dutch traders were the only source of trade, technology, science and knowledge from the West.

Among the first innovations introduced by the Dutch in Japan were windmills. Groundbreaking technology at that time, wind power still represents a strong part of bilateral trade, with the Netherlands leading the rest of the world in the wind-power sector.

For instance, Wind Energy Solutions has developed original technologies in the industry, including its one-of-a-kind wind-diesel hybrid turbine, which is capable of maximizing power-generation efficiency, very valuable in a world that has realized the importance of environmental protection.



Japanese Ambassador to the Netherlands Minoru Shibuya

"Our hybrid turbine is a true hybrid, which means that when the wind is strong enough, no diesel power is being used. This allows for the most energy-efficient power generation possible," says Wind Energy Solutions Managing Director Frank Hoogers.

The basic characteristics of Japanese-Dutch trade have stayed the same. Both countries still view each other as ideal locations to conduct their overseas operations due to their superior infrastructure, favorable fiscal policies and long-running historical ties.

"The relationship between Japan and the Netherlands is excellent and we are very important economic partners. We have very

good economic relations. In addition to that, we are celebrating an important anniversary between our two countries," points out Japanese Ambassador to the Netherlands Minoru Shibuya, referring to the 400th year of bilateral relations in 2009.

The Netherlands is Europe's largest recipient of foreign direct investment from Japan, an impressive feat for a small country with just over 16 million inhabitants. Additionally, there are around 600 Japanese companies in the Netherlands, of which about 10 percent operate as regional or European headquarters.

"Many Japanese companies use the Netherlands as their regional headquarters. There are several reasons for that, among them are the tax incentives and assistance provided by the Dutch government. Also there is the very good infrastructure, which includes Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and the Port of Rotterdam," says Akifumi Ujita, chairman of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the Netherlands.

In addition to Schiphol and Rotterdam, the Netherlands also has excellent road and rail networks that facilitate the efficient transport of goods across Europe.

Dutch and Japanese business people have found ideal working partners in each other.

"Both of our people are very



On the occasion of KLM's 90th anniversary, a Boeing 737 is painted in the livery of the early 1960s. Following its merger with Air France, the Dutch carrier became part of the largest commercial air carrier in the world.

diligent and business-minded. Between the Japanese and the Dutch, it is easy to establish mutual trust. This is the common culture," Shibuya says.

And with the expansion of European business toward Central and Eastern Europe, and Russia, there

is even more room for Dutch-based companies to boost revenue.

At the same time, several Dutch companies have also looked to Japan for further growth opportunities.

"The Japanese consumer is very advanced. If a company can suc-

ceed in the Japanese market, then it can succeed anywhere. For this reason, many Dutch companies use Japan as a starting point for expanding into Asia," says Radboud Molijn, managing director of the Dutch-Japanese Trade Federation (DUJAT). ♦

INSIDE

The Netherlands and Japan commemorate four centuries of trade and diplomatic relations this year, with both countries more committed to strengthen overall ties.

In a recent interview with World Eye Reports, **Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende** assessed his country's ties with Japan and shares his views on their future. **Excerpts on Page B4.**



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

eBOX

Meeting the huge passion of Dutch people for photography and their demand for quality equipment, **Mamiya Studio Partners**, located in Zaandam, distributes high-end cameras, and other related photographic and optical equipment for consumer and professional clients. The company works with Mamiya and other leading brands such as Chimera, Pocketwizard, Hildozine, Profoto, Sekonic, Quantum and ExpoDisc. It is also always on the lookout for new equipment to expand its product line. www.mamiya.nl

Japanese giant **Teijin** began its European operations in the Netherlands in the late 1990s and has grown to become one of the largest investors in the country. Teijin Holdings Netherlands B.V. is the holding company that controls business interests in the Netherlands and Europe. Teijin is a part of two joint ventures with Dutch companies aimed at producing and developing micro-algae and biomethanol. www.teijinaramid.com

Wind Energy Solutions fills a unique niche in a rapidly growing business to generate energy from wind power. Its medium-scale wind turbines are ideal for farms, resorts and isolated locations, allowing customers to reduce energy costs. WES is also a leading company to produce a true wind-diesel hybrid turbine, which is capable of maximizing energy efficiency. www.windenergysolutions.nl

Dutch carrier heads into its 90th year in tune with the world

Over the past eight years, the global airline sector has undergone a massive transformation as increasingly fierce competition and rising costs resulted in needed consolidations, alliances and closures. And only the airlines with the most efficient operations and organizations survived the strict demands of the industry.

Established 90 years ago, KLM emerged a more robust company after its merger with Air France five years ago and is strong enough to weather the current uncertainty gripping the world economy.

"First, Air France had a strong balance sheet and fundamentals coming into the merger, and this helped shore up KLM's. Second, it helped us establish a solid cash base," says President and CEO Peter F. Hartman.

Currently, KLM has close to 5 billion euros in cash reserves.

"This is so important nowadays because as many know, crises also create opportunities. We are not in the middle of the process of survival. We are being very prudent. But we are absolutely convinced that if we see an opportunity and we can position ourselves stronger by taking it, we will do so," Hartman stresses.

According to Hartman, KLM and Air France were very well suited for a merger because the two airlines had very little overlap in terms of routes and customers, allowing them to integrate easier and faster than their competitors could.

"So we were able to add dramatically to our destinations," recalls Hartman.

To date, Air France KLM offers the largest number of connections, or city pairs, out of Europe.

According to the Association of European Airlines (AEA), which Hartman also chairs, of the 181 long-haul destinations that its airlines had last year, 63 percent were covered by Air France KLM. Its nearest competitor covered only 47 percent of those destinations.

Hartman is clearly proud of that achievement.

"We have 42 unique destinations. That is the largest out of all competitors. All of us fly to New York, London and other major cities. But many of our destinations are unique," he says.

Aside from expanding its routes, KLM has improved a wide range of passenger services, starting from the check-in process.

"We don't do paper tickets anymore. You can even check your bag yourself in Amsterdam. We invested a lot in these things a few years ago and we are making tremendous progress," says Hartman.

Those innovations come at the perfect time as KLM marks its 90th anniversary this year by highlighting its pioneering spirit and celebrating the milestone in "typical Dutch style."

"We would like to do it in a stylish manner but also be humble about it. We believe that at this time of economic crisis, it's better to celebrate modestly. That doesn't mean you don't celebrate though," he adds.

Amid anniversary celebrations, KLM has not lost sight of strengthening its business, particularly in Japan and the rest of East Asia, which accounts for 4 percent of the airline's turnover.

"We have a special route with tailored services and meals. We were one of the first to start Japanese in-flight entertainment. You have to customize services and that is especially true for our Japanese customers," Hartman says.

"We have a special magazine. We also have a substantial number of Japanese cabin crew. We think our Japanese passengers appreciate such things," he adds.

Given the current state of the economy and new challenges facing the industry, Hartman assures that KLM remains committed to lead the industry.

"Outside of positioning ourselves to come out of the crisis stronger than ever, CSR is one of our top priorities in 2009. The environment tops our list. This is especially true in our industry, which will probably be the last to use fossil fuels," says Hartman.

So KLM is stepping up efforts to become even more environmentally friendly, such as producing its frequent flier cards out of biodegradable materials. It is also now the only airline listed in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index, an impressive achievement considering the other companies on the list.

"In addition to these small steps, we are working to introduce more fuel-saving tech-



KLM President and CEO Peter F. Hartman

niques and strategies. The 'Single European Sky' initiative, which we hope to implement soon, would save 12 percent of fuel, which will translate into 12 percent less emissions," claims Hartman.

For passengers, the industry and the world, KLM has clearly orchestrated a winning situation all around. ♦

www.klm.com



According to KLM CEO Peter F. Hartman, the airline has the largest network of its competitors, with 42 unique destinations.

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“We started small and currently we are very close to 400 million euros per year in turnover, which is quite considerable. In the last three to five years, our growth has been even faster than usual,” stresses Harry Hauptmeijer, president of Yokogawa Europe.

Established in 1982, Yokogawa Europe first sold industrial products and instruments but steadily built a wide client network, and a strong reputation over the past 27 years. Having since widened its product line, it is Yokogawa’s largest overseas subsidiary and a leader in process control systems in Europe.

“What Yokogawa brought to the market over the last 27 years is the fact that our reputation has been built up by quality and reliability, starting with our basic instruments. We started from the product base and gradually expanded to include process control and safety systems, and the supporting services,” says Corporate Marketing Services Manager Tony Stanton.

That sterling reputation has resulted in long-lasting relationships with clients, a perfect example of which is the Dutch Groningen Gas Field, run by one of the world’s largest distributed control systems. Begun in 1995, Yokogawa has maintenance and upgrade contracts



Yokogawa Europe President Harry Hauptmeijer

in the projects until after 2020.

“Of course, we cooperate closely in this very intensive partnership with the customer,” Hauptmeijer points out.

Yokogawa offers customers its VigilantPlant Lifecycle Management Program, which supports them through every phase of their operations – including design, installation, operation, maintenance and expansion.

Yokogawa manifests a clear commitment to the Netherlands as

the base of European operations by opening a brand-new European/African headquarters in May. The new facility will allow the company to streamline and harmonize operations, which are now spread out in three locations.

“The fact that we are going there with 600 to 700 people sends a signal to the Netherlands, and also to the market that Yokogawa is here to stay and here to grow,” Stanton says. ♦

www.yokogawa.com/eu

MOL Logistics Europe sees opportunities where others see challenges

MOL Logistics Europe, based in the Netherlands, is aggressively pushing through with plans to expand its network in the region even as most logistics companies downsize their operations amid continuing uncertainty about how long the global economic crisis will last.

According to MOL Logistics Europe Senior Managing Director Yuko Kane, the company can take advantage of the prevailing economic situation to make investments in its business but should protect its bottom line at the same time.

“I think this opportunity is a good chance, but we have to ensure that our daily business also doesn’t lose money. We have to cut costs while expanding our

business, which takes constant effort,” he explains.

With the recent opening of a new state-of-the-art storage facility just across the street from the company’s Tilburg headquarters, MOL Logistics Europe dramatically boosted its warehouse space, a development that Kane will capitalize on to attract more customers.

Upon building strong relationships with new clients for its warehousing services, MOL Logistics Europe hopes to provide them with more supply chain services, such as sea and air transportation, customs clearance and distribution services.

“Our target business model is based on this warehouse and our turnkey network to and from European countries,” he says.

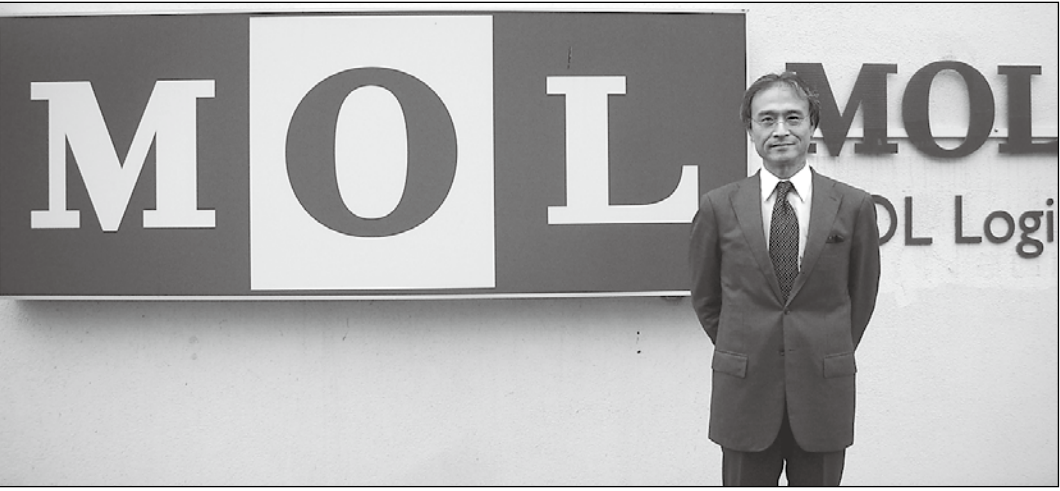
The company is also expanding

its network across Europe. Currently there are four offices in the Netherlands, with subsidiaries in the U.K., Germany, the Czech Republic, France and Italy, with aggressive expansion under way in Poland through the use of exclusive agents.

As Kane points out, MOL Logistics has an impressive global network but still provides personalized customer service, which larger competitors cannot match.

“To our dedicated customers we can give tailor-made services and completely comply with their requests. This is our advantage compared with other companies. Our focus is to offer better, more personalized customer services,” he says. ♦

www.mol-logistics.nl



MOL Logistics Europe Senior Managing Director Yuko Kane

Konica Minolta gains ground in Dutch market

With its excellent location and infrastructure, the Netherlands is at the same time a very attractive place for business and a highly competitive market where only the best companies can thrive.

Increased competition has given Konica Minolta Business Solutions Nederland greater determination to stay ahead through a more focused approach to the market and even better customer service.

Since the merger of Konica and Minolta, KMBSN has steadily gained ground in the country’s document-handling industry.

“We are making a smooth transition into one organization and are aiming to reach for higher targets,” says President Ernst Kolvenbag.

With a full range of printers and multifunction business machines, comprehensive sales and service, and a desire to grow, Kolvenbag is well equipped to boost Konica Minolta’s market share in the country.

“We have to grow and we recognize this as a challenge that we are ready for. We are aiming to ‘double-up’ in three to four years so we will be in a position to become a serious player in the market with the ability to focus on the top 1,000 Dutch companies,” Kolvenbag says.

“Our Dutch brand awareness

is strong. In two years, we have increased our brand recognition from 40 percent to 69 percent in the Netherlands by going after the sale, and communicating with and educating customers,”



Konica Minolta Business Solutions Nederland President Ernst Kolvenbag

he adds.

Meanwhile, KMBSN has also increased efforts to retain existing clients as part of its growth plan.

“While the Dutch office solutions sector is developing rapidly, we will have to focus on leading the way in this very competitive sector. We look into how people use their documents and offer appropriate solutions. With our experience, we have already created opportunities in the market,” he says.

“In the Netherlands, we want to create value for our customers by helping them reach their targets and responding to their needs. We have the advantage of being flexible in a tough market and we enjoy the fun of winning through our involvement with customers,” he also says. ♦

www.konicaminolta.nl

Specialist camera maker Adimec focuses on Japan



Adimec's staff outside the company's country headquarters in Eindhoven

High-precision industrial camera maker Adimec has big plans for its Japanese business in the coming years.

“Japan will be one of our most important markets. We expect to grow very fast in Japan in all business areas. We are well positioned and we have good relationships with the big OEMs in Japan,” says CEO Andries Hofman.

Undergoing an extended period of growth, Adimec is confident that the company will provide even more industry-leading technologies to the Japanese market.

“In the past two years, we have been in the process of maturing in Japan. We have been spending quite a lot of energy and effort to connect with other Japanese corporations to diversify, and to

bring our competencies to wider application fields,” says Just Smit, company founder and president for sales and marketing.

In fact, Adimec has accomplished what few foreign companies have in Japan as it formed partnerships with a substantial number of the largest OEMs in the country.

“The key thing is superior quality, which is very important in Japan. You must be very consistent and be a mature, reliable organization. Also, we offer the best possible image quality. That is being recognized more and more with Japanese customers,” says Hofman.

Adimec attributes a huge part of its success to its forward-thinking mentality and ability to customize

solutions for clients. Its business is divided among three divisions: Machine Vision, Medical and Government Sectors.

For all customers, Adimec analyzes their businesses to determine which products will be needed within three to five years. Also, 80 percent of its products are specially made according to the specific needs of clients. ♦

Contact Information
Adimec Holding B.V.
(Netherlands)
Phone: +31 40 2353900
Fax: +31 40 2353905
www.adimec.com
Adimec Japan
Phone: (+81) 3 5968 8377
Fax: (+81) 3 5968 8388
www.adimec.co.jp

Expansion and positioning amid a crisis



Koike Europe General Manager Yash Koike (left) at a trade fair in Germany

As many companies minimize their exposure during this downturn in the global economy, Koike Europe has bucked the trend and proceeded aggressively with expansion plans.

For the past seven years, Koike Europe, a leading manufacturer of cutting and automation equipment for shipbuilding and heavy metal industries, has experienced strong growth.

“In 2001, our sales revenue was around 4 million euros a year and had been since the mid-1980s. Many people laughed when I set the bar at 17 million euros by 2008. Instead, we expect revenue to pass 20 million euros,” says General Manager Yash Koike.

“Now is not the time to hold back either. The next three years will be about survival, but they are also about positioning ourselves to come out ahead of the competition. We are doing all we can right now to make sure that happens,” he adds.

In line with the expansion plans, the company opened a new warehouse space in October 2008 that

doubled the storage and working space capacity at its facilities in Zaandam. It also launched a new training facility on the same site.

For the structure of its global business, Koike makes a powerful argument for operating in the Netherlands and Europe.

“The advantage of having operations in Europe is that there is diversity here. There are developed markets, emerging markets and everything in between. If you can do business here, you can do it anywhere,” Koike says.

Meanwhile, the company has stepped up efforts to establish strong trust with customers through competent and complete after-sales service. To achieve that goal, Koike opened a new R&D facility in October in Germany to address the diverse needs of its European customers.

“We want to differentiate ourselves from local producers and distributors. If we can come together and sit down with our customers, no matter where they come from, there is almost nothing we can’t accomplish,” he says. ♦

www.koike.nl

Fujifilm readjusts business focus

When Fujifilm set up its first overseas manufacturing site in the Netherlands in 1982, business in Europe increased robustly and steadily for the next 22 years, until the strong, multimillion-dollar operation experienced a sudden and unexpected slump in sales.

“We grew until 2004 but soon after, a big sharp drop happened. Saturated demand for film and of course the development of digital cameras happened much quicker than our expectations. It was a very painful time for everybody,” recalls Fujifilm Europe President Shigehiro Nakajima.

In the wake of the downturn, Fujifilm Europe adapted to the altered conditions in the industry, and embarked on new activities that revived the company’s business in the region and the rest of the world. Under a plan called “Second Foundation,” Fujifilm identified a number of business areas on which to stake future growth.

While the company recognizes the decline in demand for photographic film, Fujifilm will continue manufacturing its traditional product even though its share in turnover declined to just 3 percent. Drawing on its experience and know-how in this area, the company invested in flat-panel materials – a segment that has since grown into a core business area.

The company has also raised its investment in the graphic arts and printing business, in particular in the computer-to-plate segment. As one of four worldwide production bases, its facility in Tilburg serves an important role in serving European markets.

Now Fujifilm is one of the most important suppliers in this indus-



Fujifilm Europe President Shigehiro Nakajima

try, including wide-format and industrial inkjet printing.

“The goal of this business is to make it into a ‘cash cow,’ and make a huge investment to stimulate the market and gain market share through good quality and good service. This part receives the highest priority from a resource point of view,” Nakajima says.

In what appears to be an unrelated operation, Fujifilm has also entered the medical and pharmaceutical business. In the long term, the strategy makes sense because for over 70 years, the company has built up a valuable chemical library and the expertise in its applications.

Its knowledge of handling light-sensitive materials has been applied successfully to health care, such as therapeutic uses of collagen.

“Fujifilm is changing. Fujifilm is starting new things. From a brand image point of view, Fujifilm is not a film maker any more. That is what we have to convey to the market,” he says. ♦

www.fujifilm.eu

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“Fujifilm is changing. Fujifilm is starting new things. From a brand image point of view, Fujifilm is not a film maker any more. That is what we have to convey to the market”

Netherlands provides ideal base for Hoya’s overseas business

Japanese optical products manufacturer Hoya Corp. considers the Netherlands as the perfect location for overseas business. The first Japanese company to move its global financial headquarters overseas in 2003, it later transferred the base of Hoya Vision Care to this country two years later.

Aside from its business-friendly tax structure, the country’s excellent infrastructure and central location allows Hoya to be close to where the money is.

It all makes a lot of sense for General Manager for Finance and Administration Michiel A. Copier. “We could bring all of the activities over here. It is a very good climate in all respects to have our headquarters here,” he says.

To further boost its business, Hoya acquired Pentax in August 2007 and is integrating the well-known camera maker into Hoya’s European corporate structure.



Hoya Corp. General Manager for Finance and Administration Michiel A. Copier

“We restructured the organization. Before, Hoya’s coverage in Europe was mainly vision care, mainly spectacle lenses. But we

are separating that, and are giving camera and life-care systems a place in our business,” says Copier.

The company has set up an extensive network across Europe for its vision-care business as its products are meant for varying consumers.

“Vision care is very customer-oriented because no two eyes are the same. While that means that we can sell lenses from the shelves, we prefer to sell lenses that are especially tailor-made for the customer. So that means you have to be very close to the customer,” he says.

Meanwhile, Hoya continues to expand with a heavy focus on Eastern Europe, Russia and Africa. On the back of recent acquisitions in the Czech Republic and South Africa, Hoya hopes to consolidate its business in many new markets in the coming years. ♦

www.hoya.co.jp/english

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Hitachi Construction Machinery dominates European market

Despite the ongoing global economic slump, Hitachi Construction Machinery Europe is clearly well positioned for the inevitable recovery, judging by the Japanese company’s extensive presence in the region and its recent performance.

One of the largest Japanese investors in the Netherlands, Hitachi Construction Machinery Europe established its headquarters and production facility in Amsterdam as the country offered the most favorable fiscal climate and infrastructure.

“We appreciate the Netherlands very much: the people, the government, the authorities and the workers. The Dutch government gives us excellent support,” says President and Managing Director Mitsuhiro Tabei.

Aside from overseeing the European market, the company also handles business in Russia, the Middle East and Africa.

When the overall market for excavating equipment shrank last year, Hitachi Construction Machinery boosted market share sharply, thanks to its reputation for the outstanding quality of its products and the excellent service of its dealers.

“There are many factors that make up Hitachi’s brand image. I believe



Hitachi Construction Machinery President and Managing Director Mitsuhiro Tabei

we have the total combination of excellence in our product, dealer network and after-sales service. It is very easy to lose a customer if they are unhappy with a product. We have to continue to support customers, like a relationship with a friend,” Tabei says.

“My dream is to be No. 1 in the market. That is my dream and I think we are on the right track to make that happen,” he adds.

Ahead of the expected recovery of the global economy, Hitachi Construction Machinery is developing several innovative products, among them hybrid and electric-powered excavating equipment.

Although still in the prototype stages, they expect to attract significant business as customers demand more energy-efficient equipment. ♦

www.hcme.com

Those companies favored the area because of its proximity to Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, which is among Europe’s top four business airports, as well as the country’s good tax climate, the sizable Japanese expat community and amenities for them.

SADC business parks contain the offices and logistics centers of Japanese giants Yamaha, Mitsubishi Motors, Nikon, Nippon Express and Sony Chemicals, among others.

“Japanese companies are very loyal and play an important role in the economic position of our

Protiviti makes mark in independent risk consulting

Failure is not an option when doing business in the global marketplace. Fully aware that companies want positive results, independent risk consulting firm Protiviti has swiftly gained a strong reputation in the Netherlands by eliminating failure risks and creating growth opportunities for its clients.

“Companies look to Protiviti to help them meet the risk and challenges of the global marketplace. We have developed a strong worldwide reputation and our global network extends to 17 countries with 3,300 consultants,” says Managing Director Carolina Wielinga.

“The solutions we offer focus on improving performance, and providing business intelligence, corporate governance guidance, risk management services and expert advice on compliance regulations. Our office in the Netherlands continues to play an important role in the global Protiviti network,” Wielinga adds.

Dedicated to serving also the Japanese business community in the Netherlands, Protiviti boasts a team of veteran specialists who work in various sectors, including communications and media, financial services, government and education, consumer products and retail.

“We have a growing number of



Protiviti Managing Director Carolina Wielinga and Co-Managing Director Carl Messemackers

Japanese clients in the Netherlands due to the large amount of Japanese investment here. Our dedicated Japan Desk provides clients with the consulting services they require in today’s business climate. We have good relations with our Japanese clients through our reputation and intend to build on our successes in the future through increased cooperation,” says Co-Managing Director Carl Messemackers.

Meanwhile, Wielinga recognizes the need for Protiviti to grow if the company is to meet the demands of existing and future clients.

“We are a young company and need to grow by diversifying our solutions. We have the backing of our global network and have the advantages of being flexible while remaining focused. In today’s financial world, businesses have to deal with an increasing number of international regulations and we have the knowledge to assist these companies. We have skilled consultants who are dedicated to our clients, and we intend to prove that we have the capabilities to serve them today and in the future,” she says. ♦

www.protiviti.nl

SADC develops sustainable multimodal hub in the Amsterdam airport area

Several Japanese companies have moved their European headquarters and other major operations (such as logistics centers and training facilities) to business parks around Amsterdam Airport Schiphol that have been developed by the Schiphol Area Development Co. (SADC).

Those companies favored the area because of its proximity to Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, which is among Europe’s top four business airports, as well as the country’s good tax climate, the sizable Japanese expat community and amenities for them.

SADC business parks contain the offices and logistics centers of Japanese giants Yamaha, Mitsubishi Motors, Nikon, Nippon Express and Sony Chemicals, among others.

“Japanese companies are very loyal and play an important role in the economic position of our



SADC Managing Director Ruud Bergh

region. To maintain competitiveness in Europe, we are working together with public and private companies on a new logistical interchange at the south of the airport, called ACT Beyond Logistics,” says Managing Director Ruud Bergh.

ACT (Amsterdam Connecting Trade) aims to become the most innovative and sustainable location in the world for logistics and related companies. ACT is unique as it is designed around the main principles of sustainability, with as many closed circuits as possible, which limits the amount of pollution and waste.

SADC wants to make ACT the No. 1 place for international businesses because of its excellent air, road, sea and rail transport infrastructure, and its advanced facilities to connect people, goods and information. ♦

www.sadc.nl

“Japanese companies are very loyal and play an important role in the economic position of our region. We are pleased when Japanese companies choose what SADC and the region offer. Our company specializes in integrated development. We also conduct an intensive marketing policy for

“Japanese companies are very loyal and play an important role in the economic position of our region. We are pleased when Japanese companies choose what SADC and the region offer. Our company specializes in integrated development”

Thinking global and acting local

Canon Europe has stayed ahead of its competitors because of its agility to adapt to the fast-changing global economy.

“The first phase of globalized business, which began in Europe in 1957, was to build sales companies that would meet the demand of each local market. In phase two, we had to adjust and become more integrated while maintaining our ability to meet specific demands at the local level,” explains President and CEO Ryoichi Bamba.

Located in the Netherlands since 1968, Canon’s European operations headquarters has assumed a territory that goes beyond the region to include Russia, the Middle East and Africa. For Bamba, there is an obvious advantage in the diversity and variety of the vast area.

“Country by country, even in Western Europe, people are very different. They provide a great test to Canon. Within our area of responsibility, there is a diversity of cultures and customs that live closely together. If we can succeed in this region, it is a great lesson in meeting the diverse demands of our customers in markets anywhere in the world,” he says.

“These days it is very tough to differentiate yourself from the competition. Technology and products are always very close in quality. We are always focused on this, of course, but we are concentrating just as much on deepening and strengthening relationships



Canon Europe President and CEO Ryoichi Bamba

with customers,” he adds.

Canon’s business can be roughly divided between its consumer business, and its corporate and government solutions.

While Bamba strives to improve the consumer business, he also realizes that Canon benefits greatly from its value-added business solutions, whose clients include Dutch banking giant ING.

Amid the global financial downturn, Bamba remains confident that Canon will grow further because of its fundamental strengths.

“We are quite optimistic despite the tough economic times at the moment. With a focus on quality and synergy, we will continue to be successful,” says Bamba. ♦

www.canon-europe.com

Capitalizing on a long history of quality and innovation

Toshiba has consistently been the front-runner in notebook computer technology. In fact, many of the innovations adopted by the industry globally were first created by the Japanese giant.

That tradition for innovation and strong reputation for quality are among the advantages that Toshiba offers its customers in the Netherlands.

“We know and understand the market because we have been at the forefront, and we’ve always been present. Because of that heritage, we are leaders in research and development, and that is why we are a highly innovative company,” said Jeffrey Willis, general manager of Toshiba Information Systems Benelux.

Aside from its innovative products, Toshiba has also built its business by inspiring confidence among customers and building a dependable dealer network in the Netherlands. As a result, Toshiba has earned a highly loyal clientele that ranges from huge multinationals to small and medium-sized companies.

Another key strength of Toshiba notebooks has been reliability. Toshiba users know about the quality and reliability of the company’s notebooks, and when problems do arise, there is a full service and support solution available in the Netherlands. This reinforces



Toshiba Information Systems Benelux General Manager Jeffrey Willis


the confidence that users and business partners have in Toshiba notebooks.

Producing only notebooks, the company is able to focus R&D in its core specialty, notebook technology.

“We are really focusing on having the best-in-class product for mobile computing,” stressed Willis, whose company achieved a large part of its success due to its specialist positioning.

“Our vision is to have the best mobile solution that allows people to work anytime, anywhere and that’s very much what we bring to market in the Netherlands,” Willis says. ♦


www.toshiba.nl



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Dutch PM looks forward to more fruitful future

The 400th anniversary of trade relations between the Netherlands and Japan this year has highlighted the future of what have been mutually beneficial long-standing ties between the two nations.

World Eye Reports recently interviewed Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende of the Netherlands to get his perspective on the state of Dutch-Japanese relations.

WER: How would you describe business relations between the Netherlands and Japan at present?



Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende

Balkenende: I would describe them as excellent and I am delighted to say that the same is true of our political relations. There is a great affinity between our two countries, based on our shared values – democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Japan and the Netherlands are well aware that global problems require global solutions, and that global solutions in turn require global action.

That’s why we are partners in the Kyoto Protocol, fighting climate change, and also partners in the International Criminal Court, fighting impunity.

There are hundreds of Japanese firms in the Netherlands, including many leading names like Mitsubishi, Fujifilm and Kikkoman. The Netherlands and Japan seem particularly suited as partners in innovation. Japanese and Dutch universities are working on solutions for the future, in such fields as nutrition, biotechnology and medical technology.

Another thing we have in common is our love of good design. We share a love of simple, minimalistic designs with clear lines.

What changes do you anticipate in the relationship between Japan and the Netherlands in the near future?

I hope that we will be able to strengthen our ties even more in the future. Although we are geographically far apart, our societies face similar challenges, like the problem of an aging population.

I also think we could be more active in exchanging knowledge and experience on energy efficiency and clean technology. For instance, the Japanese car industry has a good reputation for innovation and sustainability, whereas the Netherlands is a leader in water management.

Both countries have their strong points and can learn a lot from each other.

I also hope that our two countries will be working together more often on international peace missions.

What makes the Netherlands such an attractive place for Japanese companies to do business?

The Netherlands has traditionally had an open economy and we want to make it easy for companies to do international business in, or via, the Netherlands.

We have three main advantages: Our openness, our strong competitive potential and the fact that we welcome business investment.

That’s what makes the Netherlands – a small country with a population of just 16 million – one of the world’s top 20 economies.

And in the Global Competitiveness rankings of the World Economic Forum, the Netherlands and Japan are listed among the top 10 most competitive countries in the world.

Besides that, the Netherlands also has good services and facilities as well as a thriving culture. Expats often tell me how much they enjoy living and working in the Netherlands.

Our report will be published around Queen’s Day 2009. What message would you like to give the readers of The Japan Times?

In 1600, the Dutch ship De Liefde (Love) landed on the coast of Kyushu. Nine years later, the Dutch received permission to come and trade with Japan.

At the time, Ieyasu Tokugawa was the ruler of Japan. He declared: “When Dutch ships come over to Japan, no objection whatsoever shall be made to them. They may not be treated in an unfriendly manner.”

So, love, trade and friendship were the starting point for Japanese-Dutch relations.

I very much hope that we will go on strengthening our ties throughout the 21st century and that our two countries will continue to inspire each other to do great things.

Prospering together

One of the largest Japanese investments in the Netherlands (with a value exceeding 1 billion euros), Teijin has consistently strengthened its business in Europe since 2000, when the Japanese conglomerate acquired the aramid fiber business of Akzo Nobel.

Having marked last year more than 90 years of the worldwide operations of its parent company in Japan, Teijin Holdings Netherlands President Yoshihiro Ichii is very proud of where the company stands today as he oversees plans to expand business in the country and across the rest of Europe.

With its headquarters in Amsterdam, Teijin Holding Netherlands is the umbrella group of Teijin’s affiliates in Europe, which include DuPont Teijin Films in Luxembourg and Scotland, and Teijin Monofilament in Germany.

Its core business, Teijin Aramid B.V., is based in the Dutch city of Arnhem and produces Para-aramid fibers, which are used in applications such as bulletproof vests, tires, auto transmission belts, brakes, sealing materials and optical fiber cables.

From Arnhem, it also runs its R&D facilities, which play a crucial role in allowing Teijin to better serve the European market. In total, Teijin employs around 1,500 Dutch workers.

Europe’s importance to Teijin’s global operations is very evident in the figures. According to Ichii, Europe accounts for 8 percent of global sales but generated 26 percent of operating profits in 2007.

Nowhere is Teijin’s commitment to the Netherlands better illustrated than in its local projects in corporate social responsibility.

It is the main sponsor of Het Gelders Orkest (the Arnhem Philharmonic Orchestra), which has world-renowned Kenichiro Kobayashi from Japan as one of the three chief conductors.

Teijin is also the main sponsor of the Amsterdam City Museum, which is billed to become one of the world’s top modern art museums when it is completed late this year. Teijin is supplying the materials being used for the building’s unique-looking roof and ceiling.

“Since we have acquired certain businesses here in the Netherlands, it has been important for us to maintain Dutch management. CSR has also become very important to what we do as one of the largest investors in the Netherlands. We feel a responsibility to give back to a country that has been so important to our global success,” Ichii explains.

www.tejinaramid.com



Teijin Holdings President Yoshihiro Ichii

Casio quickly catches up with industry veterans

Although formed only two years ago, Casio Benelux has increased its market share in the Netherlands from around 2 percent in 2006 to around 8 percent this year.

The Japan-based company’s decision to open a wholly owned subsidiary in the Netherlands has clearly paid off as sales and brand recognition grew dramatically since Casio stopped using local distributors, and took over sales and marketing operations.

The company’s most popular product is the award-winning Exilim line of digital cameras, which is marketed as a high-end compact digital camera.

“In Europe we try to promote the image of Exilim cameras as a stylish, trendy and fashionable luxury product. That is the message we are trying to deliver all over Europe,” explains Casio Benelux Managing Director Shigeru Watanabe.

Aside from its popular compact digital cameras, Casio will also introduce new products with unmatched technology and features. An upcoming line of cameras is set to distinguish Casio from the rest of the field, even among its competitors that have been in the business much longer.

“Although it’s a kind of disadvantage that we have not been in the photo trade a long time, it can also be an advantage



Casio Benelux Managing Director Shigeru Watanabe

because we can do something totally new. Our name is known in the microelectronics field so it is a natural progression that Casio is introducing a brand-new kind of product to the market,” Watanabe explains.

Incorporating a high-speed CMOS sensor and a high-speed LSI processor, the Casio Pro EX-FH20 has an ultrahigh 40 frames-per-second burst rate for still images. It also has a 1,000 frames-per-second speed movie recording mode that can capture movement faster than the human eye can see for ultra-slow-motion replay. The EX-FH20 also boasts 9 megapixel resolution and 20x zoom capability.

Casio aims to leverage this industry-leading technology to further raise market share and solidify its position as a major player in the European digital camera market.

www.casio-europe.com/nl

Proud to be different in the Dutch market

Even before it launched the new Colt compact model, Mitsubishi Motors had achieved nearly 100 percent brand recognition in the Netherlands following extensive marketing efforts that have distinguished the company’s top-quality vehicles from those of the competition.

“Mitsubishi represents world-class engineering, quality and emotion that for our European customers translate into great driving dynamics, sharp styling, good value for money, and proven reliability. It is no secret that the European automotive industry is tough but Mitsubishi’s key advantage is our difference in the marketplace and the integrity of our engineering back in Japan. We intend to continue raising the profile of Mitsubishi throughout Europe by focusing on the customer and ensuring they are proud to drive Mitsubishi,” says the recently-appointed Mitsubishi Motors Europe President and CEO Gen Nishina.

Unlike France or Germany, the Netherlands has never had a significant homegrown automotive industry, and this has made the Dutch car market a competitive benchmark for carmakers and one in which Mitsubishi has invested considerably.

Today, Japanese quality meets Dutch quality with Mitsubishi’s Netherlands Car B.V. (“NedCar”) plant, the only large-scale automotive manufacturer in the country and Mitsubishi’s production hub in Europe, where the Colt family as well as the Outlander midsize crossover are built.

Meanwhile, Mitsubishi Motor Sales Nederland Managing Director Marco de Lange unveiled plans to



Mitsubishi’s electrically powered i MIEV model



Mitsubishi’s best-selling compact car, the Colt

expand the company’s product lineup and increase its investment in the country.

“We now have strong products and can face any competition in the Dutch market. An extensive product lineup is very important for our customers, and Mitsubishi is proud to be able to offer a wide variety of cars to existing and prospective customers,” he says.

In line with its corporate objective to protect the environment, the company launched in November a new Mitsubishi Colt, a compact, stylish car designed with European drivers in mind. It also features higher fuel efficiency and lower carbon emissions.

Part of that lineup is a Clear Tec model, which boasts the lowest carbon dioxide emissions of any B segment gasoline-powered car on sale in Europe. At 10,899 euros, the Clear Tec represents outstanding value for money.

The company is also considering the further introduction of its revolutionary electrically powered i MIEV, which forms an essential component of Mitsubishi Motors’ “Drive@earth” commitment to design cars that are enjoyable to drive and environmentally sound.

With such proven design and technological expertise, and with thousands of loyal customers, Mitsubishi is certain to continue building on its strong position in the Dutch market.

“Dutch customers remain committed to the Mitsubishi brand, and we aim to continue exceeding their expectations through our service and products. We have great cars and a great brand that has a long history in the Dutch car market. This proven reputation is supported by a strong dealership network with over 100 exclusive and multibrand outlets. We aim to increase our market share in the Netherlands and build on our reputation of being ‘Proud to be Different,’” says de Lange.

www.mitsubishi-motors.nl

Zuidas Amsterdam provides world of opportunities

Amsterdam has long been a hub for foreign companies looking to gain a foothold in Europe because of three often cited reasons: low corporate tax rates, highly skilled English-proficient workers and good quality of life.

Fast becoming a fourth reason has been the area of Zuidas Amsterdam, a joint property development venture between the Dutch Finance Ministry, the city of Amsterdam and a future group of private investors. This hybrid business, residential and leisure center has been attracting foreign companies, and local residents faster than any other area in the country.

Managing Director Jan Stoutenbeek cites two vital advantages of Zuidas.

“First, the location is unrivaled. We are six minutes from the international Amsterdam Airport Schiphol and less than 10 minutes from the city center. There is no other city within which it is so easy to travel to a major international airport so quickly. Second, we have the nucleus in place. Big names specializing in finance, law and accounting have offices here to support any international operations,” he explains.

Nearly 70 percent of companies in Zuidas are from outside the country, but it has drawn in some domestic giants, such as Akzo Nobel, ING and Fortis Bank, all of which moved their global headquarters to the area.

“Our philosophy is to provide quality in every aspect of Zuidas. Quality design, development, ma-

terials, public facilities, services and space are what will continue to attract people and firms long into the future,” says Stoutenbeek about the company’s focus.

A very important step in improving Zuidas’ infrastructure in the future is an ambitious project to move its major infrastructure below ground. In 2011, work on an underground high-speed train station and expressway will begin.

Zuidas expects to invest almost 4 billion euros on the underground project, which will increase the area for green spaces and facilities.

Despite the economic climate, Stoutenbeek has his priorities in order.

“The underground expressway and attracting international firms to the area are the two biggest goals for next year, with Japanese firms being a top priority,” he says.

If the current situation is any indication of the future, Japanese firms will play a crucial role in the continued growth of Zuidas. There

are 29 Japanese companies situated in the Zuidas area, comprising almost 15 percent of the firms on site. And that number is expected to rise in the coming years.

www.zuidas.nl



Two sweeping shots of Zuidas’ sprawling development area

DEVELOPMENT
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At Mitsubishi Motors we believe everyone can contribute to a cleaner environment, including us. Thanks to its compact size and use of the latest technology, the Colt is highly fuel-efficient and produces low CO₂ emissions. And to add to the environmental credentials of the Colt, the Colt ClearTec has got numerous fuel efficient attributes integrated like the “Stop & Go” system. Drive@earth represents Mitsubishi’s firm commitment to creating vehicles that deliver both driving enjoyment and environmental responsibility. Vehicles that can exist in total harmony with people, society and the Earth. It’s the simple elegance of moving through space with minimal impact. Drive@earth is Mitsubishi’s promise to champion a new era for cars and our planet, and our ongoing pledge to make the world a better place to live and drive.

DRIVE@EARTH

www.mitsubishi-motors.nl

Zuidas

Zuidas Amsterdam:
the place to be for your
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www.zuidas.nl