



An ‘exceptional partnership’

Following the success of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, Paris is getting ready to welcome the world in 2024. “Tokyo 2020 deserve a gold medal for their ability to organize the Olympic and Paralympic Games,” said **Tony Estanguet, president of the Paris 2024 Organising Committee**. “We are humbled by the heart and dedication our Japanese colleagues put into organizing these Games under extremely challenging circumstances. We are very thankful for their welcome and openness in sharing their experiences with us, in the same spirit of friendship that unites our two countries and we are now looking forward to the Paris 2024 Games.”

With the Olympic baton passed from Tokyo to Paris, Japan and France are continuing to work closely together on trade, and work ever more closely together in terms of culture and business.

“Japan and France have an ‘exceptional partnership,’ cooperating in the Indo-Pacific region, and sharing common chal-



People cheer while waving French “tricolor” flags near the Eiffel Tower on the Champ de Mars in Paris.

to be self-sufficient, they are gradually turning their attention to cross-border, open-innovation opportunities because of fast-paced research and development.”

As the world rebounds from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to create opportunities for cooperation.

“It is now time to lift restrictions, especially regarding mobility, in order to promote a vibrant rebound and engage in new projects, which correspond

cultural exchange, but I think it has never flourished as it is today,” said **Hitoshi Suzuki, president of the Maison de la Culture du Japon a Paris (MCJP)**. “The affection the French have for our culture is undeniable. MCJP will celebrate its 25th birthday in 2022 and as a young institution, we are very enthusiastic about promoting Japanese culture here in Paris.”

Finally, The Comité d’Echanges Franco-Japonais (CEFJ) also intends to



Tony Estanguet, President of the Paris 2024 Organising Committee



Junichi Ihara, Ambassador of Japan to France



Noriko Carpentier-Tominaga, Director-General of Comité d’Echanges Franco-Japonais

lenges such as fighting climate change and making the transition to a digital society,” said **Ambassador of Japan to France Junichi Ihara**. “Their good relations are based on common fundamental values, like the rule of law or the protection of human rights, as well as people-to-people exchanges in culture, business and commerce. Recently, France’s growing interest in Japan is outstanding and widely spread across different fields.”

to the numerous issues we are facing, including climate change and aging societies,” said economist **Sebastien Lechevalier**. “In these fields, technologies cannot do everything and social innovation is the most important factor; this is why a deep and sustained dialogue is required.”

The need to reconnect is clearly of vital importance to France, Japan and the rest of the world.

“I believe it is a fundamental human desire to interact across borders and

help France and Japan work more closely together.

“As a French initiative, CEFJ also celebrates 25 years next year and we will continue to stimulate exchanges between France and Japan,” said **Noriko Carpentier-Tominaga, CEFJ director-general**. “Communication and confidence are the keys to successful exchanges and we are committed to bringing people together to meet, create and grow with one another.”



Tomohiro Nomura, Director-General of the Centre Japonais des Collectivités Locales



Hitoshi Suzuki, President of the Maison de la Culture du Japon a Paris



Ieaki Takeda, Director General of the Japan External Trade Organization in Paris

Education, innovation and research and development are key aspects of French and Japanese society and the two countries are looking to strengthen their collaborations in these areas.

“It is vital that Japan and France, which share common values such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the observance of international law, build a cooperative relationship,” said **Ieaki Takeda, director general of the Japan External Trade Organization in Paris**. “There also is great potential for Japan-France cooperation in the area of startups. While large Japanese groups tend

experience new values and cultures,” said **Tomohiro Nomura, director-general of the Centre Japonais des Collectivités Locales**. “Such a desire is a driver to foster the development of regions and I am convinced that exchanges between Japan and France will have a positive effect on both countries, as they share common values.”

Art and culture play important roles in French and Japanese society and through this shared passion, France and Japan are continuing to explore one another’s cultural and national identities.

“Japan and France share a long history of

Visit www.sms-bridges.com for more insights on the “exceptional partnership.” Featuring **Harold Berrier** at Ydes, **Corinne Menegaux** at the Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau, **Naoko Ohta** at Klee and the world of luxury, cuisine and wine with **Tasaki & Co., Foodex Group** and **Vranken-Pommery Monopole**. ♦



Pioneering diagnostics in Japan with bioMérieux

Bridges spoke with Kentaro Yoshida, country general manager for bioMérieux Japan, on the company’s activities and pandemic innovations.

Bridges: Is Japan a unique market for bioMérieux?

Yoshida: As a world leader in the field of in vitro diagnostics for over 55 years, bioMérieux is today present in 44 countries and serves over 160 countries with the support of a large network of distributors.

The company provides diagnostic solutions (systems, reagents, software and services) to improve patient health and ensure consumer safety. Our products are primarily used for diagnosing infectious diseases and detecting microorganisms in food, pharmaceutical and cosmetic products.

In Japan, bioMérieux is dedicated to accelerating our new product registration while respecting the unique Japanese medical system. As a local company, bioMérieux Japan is

a stable and professional organization founded on our global initiatives, such as the combat against antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and sepsis.

How has the pandemic impacted bioMérieux Japan and what steps are you taking to grow the business?

Concerning the pandemic, bioMérieux’s strategy to fight COVID-19 illustrates our commitment to serve public health. We decided during the early onset of the epidemic to start work on the development of diagnostic tests for the detection of the SARS-CoV-2 virus responsible for the COVID-19 disease. In this global health crisis of unprecedented proportions, bioMérieux’s strategy to help governments and health care professionals fight the spread of COVID-19 is based on the development of complementary molecular and immunoassay tests and our expertise in automated nucleic acid extraction.

We introduced syndromic testing (the symptom-driven broad grouping of pathogens in one rapid test) with the multiplex PCR (polymerase chain reaction) system “FilmArray.”

Our Respiratory Panel includes the SARS-CoV-2 virus in addition to the 21 other common respiratory pathogens which our test is able to detect in approximately 45 minutes.



To improve patient health and ensure consumer safety, bioMérieux provides diagnostic solutions including systems, reagents, software and services.



We intend to continue investing in the right resources to develop our business in Japan, one of the most important markets in the world.

KENTARO YOSHIDA
Country General Manager
bioMérieux Japan

What innovations can we expect from 2021 to 2022?

We are focused on our ability to deliver more rapid test results for wider disease coverage. For the industrial market, we are playing an important role in ensuring consumer safety and product quality. PCR solutions have been developed for food pathogen detection in addition to innovative endotoxin detection assays based on recombinant horseshoe crab factor C for the pharmaceutical market.

As a major global leader in the field of in vitro diagnostics, bioMérieux Japan is not only providing solutions, but also raising awareness of AMR by producing and distributing educational materials.

What does the future hold for bioMérieux Japan?

We currently employ over 130 people in Japan and business continues to be particularly strong in the Japanese market through our “BioFire” range.

We became a 100%, fully owned and dedicated local subsidiary of bioMérieux SA in 2017. We intend to continue investing in the right resources to develop our business in Japan, one of the most important markets in the world. ♦

www.biomerieux.com
www.biomerieux.co.jp



Vision specialist Menicon celebrates 70 years

A leading manufacturer of innovative contact lenses and related products, Menicon Co. is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year.

Founded by Kyoichi Tanaka, Menicon is Japan’s first and largest contact lens manufacturer. A leading importer and exporter of soft and gas-permeable contact lenses and medical instruments, the

Japanese president of Menicon to reside in France, understands the needs of European partners and customers and is strengthening the Menicon team in France and expanding the sales network.

“Menicon has a long history in France and as a professional company, we are focused on supply-chain delivery, quality and price,” Yamashita said.

We are committed to meeting the expectations of our French partners and customers.

company is also active in research and development of intraocular lenses.

Represented in over 80 countries, Menicon SAS in France is the oldest subsidiary/branch outside of Japan and the French market remains key to the company’s success in Europe.

Atsushi Yamashita, the first

“France is a unique market in that only ophthalmologists can prescribe eyeglasses and contact lenses and we are committed to meeting the expectations of our French partners and customers.”

The company is strengthening its operations for disposable lenses while continuing its business for rigid gas-per-



President Atsushi Yamashita and General Manager Franck Leclerc of Menicon SAS

meable lenses, which make up the bulk of Menicon’s business in France.

Customers tend to stay with Menicon as the company delivers lenses direct to customers upon request, a service

that proved to be important during the pandemic.

With a European distribution center in Offenbach, Germany, the company is investing in automation and improved inventory manage-

ment to contribute to the company’s success.

Menicon is also taking a holistic approach toward the prevention of child-myopia progression with a range of contact lenses and fitting software linked to an application.

In addition to the sense of sight, Menicon sees opportunities in the areas of touch, smell, taste and hearing. With the company’s Vision 2030 strategy and “Miru” (Feel) initiative, Menicon’s future is based on “having fun and pleasure through the five senses and being empathetic.”

“We look forward to strengthening the company in France,” Yamashita said.

“Our plan for Menicon in the French market is to increase our sales across the board and strengthen our commitment to France.” ♦

www.menicon.fr/consumer



Partnerships built on passion

As Paris prepares to welcome the world to the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, construction and rail projects are well underway.

The Japan-based Vessel Group is making a name for itself in France and across Europe. The company, with a 105-year history, manufactures high-quality screwdrivers, driving bits, railway track maintenance impact wrenches, precision fastening products, cutting tools for robotics and electrostatic discharge-related products. Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, Vessel Europe is strengthening its position and taking on new challenges.

“As a company, we are inspired by strong communication and I firmly believe true partnerships create value,” said Kazuko Tokuoka, managing director of Vessel Europe.

“We value the relationships we have built with our customers and always strive to do better business.”

Today the company’s pan-European distributor network serves customers large and



Vessel Europe Managing Director Kazuko Tokuoka

small. In France the company works with railway SNCF, Renault and auto parts makers Valeo and Schneider Electric, and while industrial partners remain crucial to the company’s growth, the retail sector is a growth market for Vessel Europe.

Reaching out to retail

In France and across Europe, the pandemic, and subsequent lockdown, has led to an increase in homeowners and property developers refurbishing houses and office buildings.

“Our customers demand quality products that are able to help them get the job done and we have recognized a shift in customer demands towards retail solutions,” Tokuoka said.

Grow with people, grow with customers

“In order to realize our vision, I believe there is a strong need for constant dialogue, openness and cooperation — the value of partnerships, listening and exchanging with different cultures and customers and innovating cannot be underestimated,” Tokuoka said.

“We are passionate about continually strengthening our business ties with cooperative partners in France and across Europe. We look forward to gaining an even deeper understanding of customer requirements and establishing long-term partnerships based on professionalism and passion.” ♦

www.vessel-europe.com

VESSEL
Let us think.



As public health challenges know no borders, bioMérieux is committed worldwide to the fight against infectious diseases.

www.biomerieux.com