



This report explores the 160-year relationship between Japan and Switzerland, characterized by innovation, cultural exchange and mutual respect. It delves into the countries' extensive collaboration in trade, technology and sustainability.

Key areas of cooperation include the automotive sector, sustainability initiatives and the startup tech scene. Renowned Japanese companies like Mitsubishi Motors, Toray Membrane and Nabtesco Technology Ventures share their insights.

The report also features Swiss industry leaders, including watchmaker Frederique Constant and RC Tritec AG, a leading supplier of glow-in-the-dark materials to the Swiss watch industry.



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# From tradition to innovation: The evolving Japan-Switzerland partnership

## MM Automobile Schweiz: Revving up Mitsubishi Motors' success in the Swiss market

Mitsubishi Motors has delivered on the dependability of its name in Switzerland for decades. In 2006 the brand bolstered its presence by establishing a partnership with Safenwil-based Emil Frey AG. The car importer and retailer assumed a majority stake in Mitsubishi Motors' import arm, operating under the name MM Automobile Schweiz AG and propelling growth in the Swiss market.

Bruno Campino, managing director of MM Automobile Schweiz AG, shares some valuable insight.

**Bridges: What key factors underpin the strong and enduring relationship between the Emil Frey Group and Mitsubishi Motors?**

**Campino:** Both companies stand for innovation, sustainability and long-term partnerships. A partnership built through mutual respect and admiration can only grow — and become stronger.

**What strategies did your company launch to enhance**

**the brand and overcome the unique challenges of the Swiss market?**

Our company always tries to convey Japanese values to the end customer. Mitsubishi is a brand that perfectly represents the Japanese manufacturing quality.

But the new Mitsubishi Motors strategy for Europe (an alliance with Renault and Nissan) brought with it major model changes; it was a big challenge for us to convince the Swiss customers that they will find Mitsubishi "Motors-ness" also in the new models.

**What features make the Swiss market an ideal fit for Mitsubishi Motors and how are you tailoring your approach?**

The Swiss market is extraordinarily complex. We are a small country with high mountains and flat regions. More than 50% of the cars sold are four-by-four. Purchasing power is high in our country, but on the other hand, the Swiss people are also very conscious and always look for the



**Bruno Campino**, Managing Director of MM Automobile Schweiz AG  
MITSUBISHI MOTORS

best offer. We score with a particularly good "value for the money" ratio. We offer great products at fair prices.

**What makes Mitsubishi vehicles a compelling choice and what are the most popular car models?**

Mitsubishi Motors' most popular models are the Space

Star and the Colt. The Outlander — the first four-wheel-drive SUV in the market with plug-in hybrid technology — was also very well appreciated by our customers; we are now extremely excited to introduce the new version very soon. The new Outlander plug-in hybrid is an eco-friendly family car with a bold and premium design that brings everyone everywhere and back home safely. It perfectly embodies the Mitsubishi Motors-ness the Swiss customers want to experience. ■

[www.mitsubishi-motors.ch](https://www.mitsubishi-motors.ch)



## Swiss-Japanese ties in focus: Interview with ambassador

Japan and Switzerland have a strong 160-year partnership built on innovation, cultural exchange and mutual respect. They collaborate in trade, technology and sustainability. In this interview, Ambassador Yoshinori Fujiyama discusses recent milestones, future collaboration opportunities and the deepening cultural ties between the nations.

**Bridges: What key trends and opportunities do you see in the Swiss-Japanese economic relationship?**

**Fujiyama:** The value of trade between the two countries and the number of Japanese companies operating in Switzerland have increased, since the entry into force of the Japan-Switzerland Economic Partnership Agreement in 2009. The economic activities between our countries have grown more actively.

I would be happy if activities in the area of start-ups and innovation could further deepen economic relations between our countries by the establishment of the Consulate of Switzerland in Osaka.

Furthermore, the 2025 World Expo in Osaka will be held next year,

where Switzerland will show its strong presence with its own pavilion with its outstanding innovation, power and sense of sustainability. I am convinced that deeper relationships between our countries in the government and private sectors will lead to positive developments, including economic collaborations.

**How have cultural ties strengthened and what initiatives are being undertaken to deepen them?**

Cultural exchanges between Japan and Switzerland are expanding into various fields, including music, art, dance, architecture and food. The academic exchange was drastically enhanced this year in the field of international politics, environment protection, comparative law and so forth thanks to the cooperation of many Swiss academic organizations. Obviously, we have a strong cultural interest in each other.

In this anniversary year, countless commemorative events were and will be held in both countries, and one of the highlights in Switzerland was the Japan Festival held at the Bern History Museum in September, which enabled many



**Yoshinori Fujiyama**, Japanese Ambassador to Switzerland  
JAPANESE EMBASSY

visitors to look back on the 160-year history of exchange by experiencing a variety of Japanese culture. Commemorative events are still to come, so please check the event calendar on our embassy's website. I hope that the foundation of mutual understanding and respect, which are even reinforced with active cultural exchange, will contribute to the further development of relations between our countries. ■

For the full interview, please visit:  
[sms-bridges.com/CH24-amb](https://sms-bridges.com/CH24-amb)

## RC Tritec AG: Illuminating the watch world

Have you ever marveled how your watch glows in the dark? Much of that magic can be attributed to the innovative luminescent technology developed by RC Tritec AG. As a leading expert in this field, the family-owned company has been at the forefront of creating Swiss Super-LumiNova pigments that offer exceptional brightness and durability.

Albert Zeller, CEO of RC Tritec AG, discusses the company's journey, the unique properties of its pigments, and the reasons why renowned Swiss watch brands consistently choose them as a trusted partner. Through his insights, Zeller showcases the company's enduring reputation in the industry, illustrating its dedication to innovation and the high standards that have made it a key player in the world of luminescent solutions.

**Bridges: Can you tell us how your family business innovated and adapted over the decades?**

**Zeller:** It all started with my great-grandfather, who was searching for innovative products. Back then,



**RC Tritec AG** is at the forefront of creating Swiss Super-LumiNova pigments that offer exceptional brightness and durability.  
RC TRITEC AG

radium-based applications were seen as high-tech products. However, it was quickly discovered that radium is harmful to people's health; therefore, he sought an alternative to radium-activated luminous compounds. Our solution was the invention of a tritium-activated glow-in-the-dark powder.

Tritium was still radioactive but less dangerous compared to radium paint, and its radiation was harder to measure and absorbed by the watch case. By the 1950s, this was considered the best solution, allowing us to begin supplying our materials to the global watch industry.

However, as you know, the perception of radioactivity changed over the decades. The Cold War and accidents such as the one at Chernobyl led to a different demand in the watch industry: Everyone wanted to offer non-radioactive solutions. This prompted us to collaborate with our Japanese partners to invent an alternative technology based on a ceramic that can be charged by ultraviolet light. This innovation, known as Swiss Super-LumiNova, is now used by all the major Western watch brands.

**Can you explain in layman's terms how Super-LumiNova pigments work?**

Actually, you can imagine each grain of our pigments as a tiny light battery. This battery is charged with UV

light, which can be found in any light source. The UV light excites electrons, elevating them to a higher energy state. The activated electrons are then stored and released back to their base state after a certain period. This loss of energy emits visible light from the system. The advantage is that you can repeat this process indefinitely, meaning there will never be a reduction in luminous performance.

**What sets your pigments apart and why do all exclusive Swiss watch brands choose RC Tritec AG?**

Due to our intensive research and development efforts, we offer the brightest and longest-glowing luminous pigments available. We have a strong focus on quality and strive to meet all of our partners' needs. This means you will always receive the exact same color, performance, grain size and other specifications as you have been using before. If someone has a special request or demand for a particular color, we will make it a reality. ■

[www.rcritec.com/en](https://www.rcritec.com/en)



## Local solutions, global expertise: The impact of Toray Membrane Europe on water treatment

Toray Membrane Europe, established in 1990 and headquartered in Munchenstein, spearheads the global water treatment industry, providing advanced water treatment solutions across Europe and Africa.

Its specialty is cutting-edge membrane technologies for diverse applications, including comprehensive post-installation support to ensure the optimal performance and long-term sustainability of its systems. As a subsidiary of Japan's Toray Industries Inc., Toray Membrane Europe leverages the parent company's extensive expertise and technological advancements.

Addressing water challenges is a core mission for Toray Membrane Europe. "Our objective is to contribute our technology to society by providing water for drinking, municipalities and industrial purposes. We focus on energy efficiency and affordability in our solutions. We have supplied equipment to various



**Kenichi Uchihori**, Managing Director of Toray Membrane Europe  
TORAY MEMBRANE EUROPE

countries for drinking water and desalination projects," Kenichi Uchihori, managing director at Toray Membrane Europe, said.

To this end, the company's strategy is deeply rooted in localization, reflected in its hiring practices and collaborations with local entities. Employing local experts and partnering with regional engineering firms, Toray Membrane Europe tailors solutions to meet the specific needs and regulatory requirements of each market.

"Our primary principle is localization. We understand that there are different needs and demands in each region, even within Europe and Africa. We try to capture these specific demands on a local basis. Additionally, we focus on providing comprehensive services, including pre- and post-sales support, to ensure safe water delivery," Uchihori said.

Guided by the cutting-edge technologies developed by the Japanese parent company, Toray Membrane Europe's sales efforts — notably from facilities in Spain, France, and Germany — drive

innovation to tackle common and unique water treatment issues, alike.

With about 90% of its business concentrated in Europe, the company is setting its sights on enlarging its footprint in Africa. Uchihori noted: "Currently, over 90% of our business is in Europe. We're strategically expanding into Africa this year, for its long-term potential."

This expansion aligns with the company's commitment to improving water quality and accessibility across diverse regions, supported by the deep expertise and robust local engagement provided by the Japanese influence of Toray Industries. ■

[www.water.torayropur.com](https://www.water.torayropur.com)

