

## Support by D-VECS

D-VECS is a "Marketing Consulting and Business Development" company that is specialized in offering support to Western companies that want to do business in Japan. D-VECS can assist you in investigating whether there is a market for your products in Japan, in preparing your products and documentation for the Japanese market, in building relations with Japanese companies, in conducting test sales and in finding and contracting proper distribution channels or partners.

## Do you really need such a service?

Business in Japan – not unlike business in Europe – depends a lot on personal contacts. Tradeshows are excellent for exposing oneself to the world and for “collecting business cards”, but they are just the start of a long and intricate path. Following up the leads from a tradeshow or maintaining a relationship after the first introductions were made, is a time consuming process and it absolutely requires acts of “physical presence” (not once, but many times) either by oneself or by a trusted delegate.

Unless you already have a subsidiary in Japan or a very committed distributor, you will need services like those offered by D-VECS in order to build relationships with Japanese companies. Email communications from abroad are nice and needed, but that alone will not be enough for a Japanese customer/dealer to engage in a constructive relationship.

Although Japan is a major international power and although English is taught in school to all Japanese children from 12 years of age on, Japan remains a very monolingual society. Japanese businessmen are weary of companies who fail to admit this reality. Even if in a certain instance it might be possible to handle communications entirely in English, a real partnership can only exist if the foreign partner properly acknowledges the fact that Japanese people speak Japanese. Having one's product brochures and homepage available in the Japanese language are a first step in this direction.

Just like Flemish people, Japanese extremely appreciate it if a foreigner tries to speak the language. The ability to mix a foreign presence with Japanese language is one of the strong points of D-VECS.

Although superficially similar, Japanese business attitudes can be quite different from Western ones. Significantly different interpretations of the same English words can cause major problems for your business unless you have somebody on your side who understands what the Japanese really mean and who can explain you how certain words and actions on your side might be misinterpreted by the Japanese.

A famous example is of course the fact that Japanese will not say “no”, but “it might be difficult”. However, a much more dangerous situation arises from misunderstanding the levels of commitment. It is important that you are coached by somebody who understands the Japanese business practices.

## Business Model

D-VECS is available for short term assignments as well as for long term exclusive business relationships. D-VECS accepts business support projects ranging from very small (such as a very quick investigation whether there already exists a market in Japan for a certain service) to quite large (such as setting up and managing a Japanese subsidiary.)

For business support projects, D-VECS prefers to position itself as your consultant and advisor, rather than as your distributor. The intention is to ensure that D-VECS' goals are identical to your goals. Positioned as advisor, there can never be a conflict of interest between yourself and D-VECS.

Compensation for D-VECS' work can be flexibly arranged among various patterns, ranging from a "fixed fee" to a "result-dependent commission". For an initial task a typical charging system would be based on an hourly rate with compensation for project-specific costs and a stipulated minimum total charge.

## D-VECS' Founder

D-VECS was founded by Dirk Van Eester. Dirk is of Belgian (Flemish) nationality and has lived for over 20 years in Tokyo, together with his Japanese wife – whom he met at the university in the USA – and his 2 sons.

Dirk graduated from the Computer Science department of the Faculteit Toegepaste Wetenschappen (Faculty of Applied Sciences) at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Catholic University of Louvain) in Belgium. He holds a degree of Burgerlijk Ingenieur. After his studies in Belgium, he obtained his Master of Science in Computer Science at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University in Blacksburg, VA, USA.

Following a short stint as system programmer at Bell Telephone Mfg.Co., a major Belgian supplier of telephone exchanges, he joined Agfa-Gevaert, the European market leader in Imaging Products.

With Agfa he moved to Tokyo where he held the position of Marketing Manager for Agfa's Graphic Systems Division.

After leaving Agfa Japan, Dirk founded D-VECS and started offering Japanese business know-how to foreign companies, relying on both his commercial experience in Japan and on his Japanese language capabilities.

## Contacting D-VECS

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