

# Japan

## Business Guide

Travel Guide Inside

Compiled by:

Swiss Business Hub Japan

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**JAPAN IN NUMBERS**

**Area**

377'975 km<sup>2</sup> (Switzerland: 41'290 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Capital city**

Tōkyō

**Inhabitants**

125.68 Mio. (2021)

**Time zone**

UTC+09:00 (JST)

**Calling code**

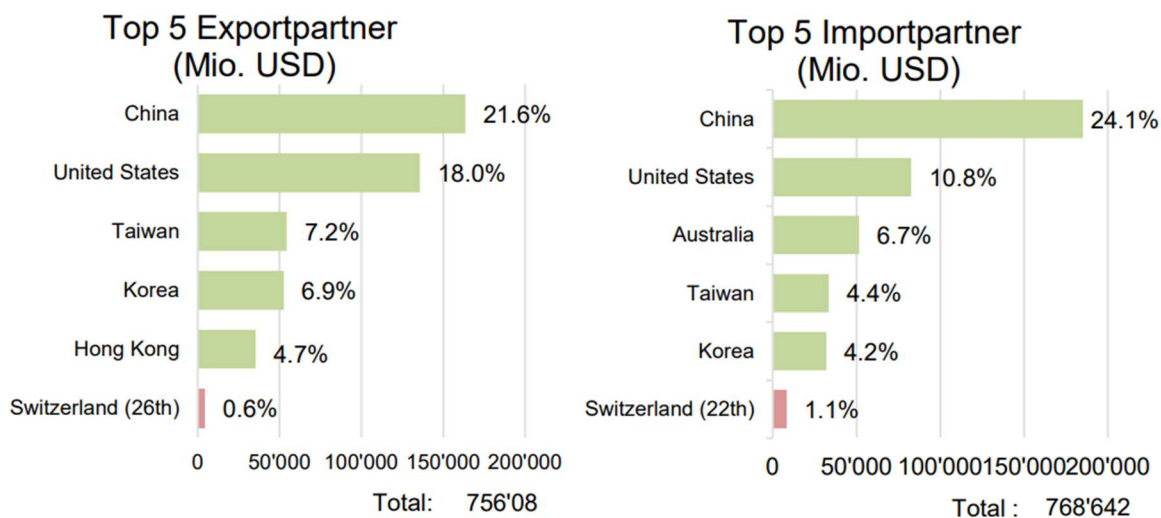
+81



**Economic Indicators**

Japan	2020	2021	2022	2022
<b>BIP-Wachstum (%)</b>	-4.5	1.6	2.4	2.3
<b>BIP (Mrd. USD)</b>	5'040.1	4'937.4	4'912.1	5'291.4
<b>BIP/Kopf (USD)</b>	40'049	39'340	39'243	42'459
<b>Inflationsrate (%)</b>	-0.0	-0.3	1.0	0.8
<b>Arbeitslosenrate (%)</b>	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.4
<b>Haushaltsbilanz (% des BIP)<sup>6</sup></b>	-10.1	-8.9	-7.2	-5.8
<b>Leistungsbilanz (% des BIP)</b>	3.0	2.9	2.4	2.7
<b>Handelsbilanz (Mrd. USD)<sup>6</sup></b>	28.8	9.2	2.6	8.9
<b>Bruttoverschuldung (% des BIP)</b>	259.0	263.1	262.5	258.3
<b>Internationale Reserven (Mrd. USD)<sup>6</sup></b>	1'391	-	-	-

## External Trade



(2021)

## Treaties and Memberships

Important international memberships:	FAO, G7, G10, G20, IADB, IBRD, ILO, IMF, OECD, UNO, UNCTAD, UNIDO, WTO
Important regional organizations:	ADB, APEC, ASEAN+3, ASEM, EAS
FTA active:	Singapore, Mexico, Malaysia, Philippines, Chile, Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, ASEAN (Goods), <b>Switzerland</b> , Vietnam, India, Peru, Australia, Mongolia, CPTPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership TPP excl. USA, also TPP-11), EU, US, UK, RCEP (ASEAN+6)
FTA closed:	ASEAN (Services, Investment)
FTA being negotiated:	Colombia, trilateral China-South Korea-Japan (CJK), Turkey
FTA negotiations on hold:	South Korea, GCC, Canada

Information taken from the [SECO Factsheet Japan](#) & [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan](#)

## BUSINESS TRAVEL

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

To enter Japan, usually a visa would not be required for those who hold a Swiss or Liechtenstein passport and who stay in Japan for no longer than 90 days for short-term business such as market surveys, business liaison, business talks, signing contracts and after-sale service for investment goods imported into Japan or other similar activities. Please refer to the website of the Embassy of Japan in Switzerland for up-to-date information: [https://www.ch.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr\\_de/coronavirus\\_de.html](https://www.ch.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_de/coronavirus_de.html)

When entering Japan, you should possess a fixed-date, confirmed return or onward journey ticket and necessary supporting documents which provide evidence justifying the purpose of the trip. Furthermore, a traveler may be asked to show evidence of sufficient funds for the proposed period of stay in the country.

A visa is required if the purpose of your stay is long-term residency or employment of other business activities. Please note that there is no visa agreement regarding working holidays between Japan and Switzerland.

All information concerning visas for Japan are to the best of our knowledge. Please be aware that the only authority that can make official statements on visa proceedings is the Japanese authority in Bern or the Immigration Office in Japan. We do not take responsibility for any outdated information.

### **Young Professionals**

The Government of Japan and the Swiss Federal Council established a program concerning the exchange of young professionals who go to the other country for a limited period of time to take employment within the field of their previously acquired professional technology or knowledge, in the hope of familiarizing themselves with business, professional and technical practices in the country and improving their linguistic knowledge. The young professionals will be granted a permit for a temporary stay to take employment within their respective field, notwithstanding the situation in the labor markets. For further information:

#### **State Secretariat for Migration (SEM)**

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/arbeit/berufspraktikum.html>

#### **Embassy of Japan in Switzerland**

<http://www.ch.emb-japan.go.jp/> (General)

[https://www.ch.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr\\_de/young\\_professional.html](https://www.ch.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_de/young_professional.html) (Visa and Young Professional Program)

### **Travel Advice for Japan, Swiss Foreign Ministry**

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/japan/en/home/travel-advice.html>

### **Arrival and departure procedures at airports**

Tokyo Narita: <https://www.narita-airport.jp/en/step> , [Access](#)

Tokyo Haneda: <https://tokyo-haneda.com/en/flight/int/index.html> , [Access](#)

Kansai (Osaka): <https://www.kansai-airport.or.jp/en/flight/route> , [Access](#)

### **Public transportation in Japan**

<https://www.japan.travel/en/plan/getting-around/>

Further information in Swiss national languages and in English on essential travel information such as domestic transportation, accommodations, currency, map, weather, travel tips, etc.

<https://www.japan.travel/de/de/> (Deutsch)

<https://www.japan.travel/fr/fr/> (Français)

<https://www.japan.travel/it/it/> (Italiano)

<https://www.japan.travel/en/> (English)

(Source: Japan National Tourist Organization)

## LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

Generally, the language for international business activities in Japan is English. Unfortunately, it is sometimes still the case that the language is a large hurdle for Japanese people in business matters. More often than that, Swiss business people encounter communication difficulties on account of not only language but also cultural barriers. For some cases, it is recommendable to hire an interpreter who also reads facial expressions, gestures and “real meanings” of yes and no. The [Swiss Business Hub Japan](#) will gladly advise and support your business endeavors in overcoming intercultural barriers.

Intercultural challenges and tips:

<https://www.s-ge.com/de/article/exportwissen/20201-c3-japan-geschaefstreffen> (Deutsch)

<https://www.s-ge.com/fr/article/know-how-export/20201-c3-japon-reunions-daffaires> (Français)

<https://www.s-ge.com/it/article/export-knowhow/20201-c3-business-meeting-giappone> (Italiano)

<https://www.s-ge.com/en/article/export-knowhow/20201-c3-japan-business-meetings> (English)

## EXPO 2025

EXPO 2025 Osaka is scheduled to be held:

April 13 – October 13, 2025

Official site: <https://www.expo2025.or.jp/en/>

## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

The “Golden Week” at the end of April/beginning of May, December 27 – January 5 are Japanese holiday periods. Those periods and a couple of days before and after each period should be avoided when travelling to Japan for business.

## National Holidays 2023

New Year's Day	January 1
Coming of Age Day	January 9 (Second Monday of January)
National Foundation Day	February 11
Emperor's Birthday	February 23
Vernal Equinox Day	March 21
Shōwa Day	April 29 (Part of Golden Week)
Constitution Memorial Day	May 3 (Part of Golden Week)
Greenery Day	May 4 (Part of Golden Week)
Children's Day	May 5 (Part of Golden Week)
Marine Day	July 17 (Third Monday of July)
Mountain Day	August 11
Respect for the Aged Day	September 18 (Third Monday of September)
Autumnal Equinox Day	September 23

Sports Day	October 9 (Second Monday of October)
Culture Day	November 3
Labor Thanksgiving Day	November 23

## HEALTH AND INOCULATIONS

### Drinking water

Tap water is safe to drink anywhere in Japan. Mineral water and other kinds of soft drinks can be easily obtained from vending machines, convenience stores and other retail shops. Vending machines mostly only accept cash or major e-money cards issued by railway companies. See [Methods of payment](#), below

### Hospitals

Medical systems and facilities in Japan have high standards, although the language could be a problem.

The staff at Tokyo Medical & Surgical Clinic, <http://tmsc.jp/emergencies> is fluent in English and can be reached for emergencies at Tel: 03-3436-3028.

Further medical facilities with English and other foreign language-speaking staff:

[http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/health-medical/medical-care/info\\_hospitals.html](http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/policy/health-medical/medical-care/info_hospitals.html) (Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)

Emergency services: <http://japanhealthinfo.com/emergency-services/> (Source: Japan Healthcare Info)

### Inoculations

There are no inoculations required for entering Japan from anywhere around the world.

Medical Emergency number in Japan: 119

Police Emergency number in Japan: 110

## TIME ZONE

The whole area of Japan operates in a single time zone, which is GMT + 9 hours. Japan does not have summer time, therefore, the time difference with Switzerland is +7 hours in summer and +8 hours in winter.

## WEATHER

Japan has distinct seasonal differences with various characteristics that will need to be calculated for. The following are information concerning the Tokyo area.

**Spring** – Generally cool/cold during March and gradually warmer in April/May. June is the rainy season, where it can rain for 3 weeks on end. The temperatures fluctuate around 18-25 degrees, meaning it is very warm and humid, despite the downpour. In this season, it is recommended to wear lighter clothing that can be taken off and dried if needed.



**Summer** – Japan’s summer can reach very hot temperatures of well over 30° degrees Celsius and high humidity. Water and shade should be sought during these hot periods. Should you find yourself in trouble, and do not feel well on road, do not hesitate to ask for help (especially turn to the police officers at the “Koban” police boxes. They are very friendly and happy to help).

**Autumn** – During October and November, Japan cools down and the temperatures become more pleasant. An important information for visitors during the time from September to October is that this falls into Japan’s **Typhoon season**. Heavy lightning storms and gale-force winds may suddenly arise for visitors who have not checked the weather forecast. Flights are frequently cancelled, so make sure to keep up-to-date with the airport’s information.

**Winter** – Winter in the Tokyo area records low temperatures, often around 0-5 degrees Celsius, with the possibility of snow. Tokyo has many sunny days in winter, making it a dry and windy season. Should there be snow forecast, please calculate plenty of extra time for business meetings/airport transit, as metro and train services tend to have heavy delays.

Alternate weather in Japan information site: <https://www.accuweather.com/en/jp/japan-weather>

## EARTHQUAKES / TSUNAMI

As Japan is situated on the Pacific Ring of Fire where the tectonic plates are in constant shift, Tokyo (and Japan for that matter) is subject to dozens of earthquakes each year. Most of which are minor (Richter scale 1-4), but the chances of a large earthquake are constant. The prognosis of a large earthquake in the Tokyo (Kanto) area has been looming for the past decade and early warning systems as well as structural advances are being put into practice to minimize the damage in such a case.

Tokyo, protected by its bay, is generally not in a dangerous area for tsunami occurring after an earthquake, but depending on the area, floods or tidal waves may still occur. In case of a warning, please make sure to follow any signs with the following image:



Earthquake warning applications have been developed for smartphones to enable quick information (smart phones may also give off automatic warning signals before heavy earthquakes through Japan’s cell phone network):

- 1) [Yurekuru Call ゆれくるコール \(iOS\) | Google App](#)
- 2) [Erdbeben + Benachrichtigung \(iOS\) | Google App](#)
- 3) [Safety Tips \(Disaster Info, Medical Institutions, Emergency Contacts\) iOS | Google App](#)
- 4) [Japan Shelter Guide \(finding shelters in Emergency\) iOS | Google App](#)

## ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

The voltage throughout Japan is 100 V which is different from North America (110 V) and Central Europe (220 V). (Note: Swiss appliances that charge a battery may still work, but will charge slower). Japanese electrical plugs have two pins and fit into North American outlets. Plug adapters may be bought at airports and consumer electronic stores.

<http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/arrange/essential/electricity.html>

## METHODS OF PAYMENT

The currency in Japan is the Yen, designated as ¥

The exchange rate with Swiss Francs on June 16, 2023 was

100 Japanese Yen = 0.63 Swiss Francs

100 Swiss Franc = 15'835 Japanese Yen

Japan has been a cash-based society, and still is. Small shops and neighborhood restaurants, especially in rural areas still rely on cash payment. However, COVID-19 accelerated digitization including cashless payment. In places that do take credit cards, Visa is most widely accepted, followed by MasterCard, American Express and Diners Club. Despite the high quality of customer service in Japan, it is not customary to tip, even in restaurants, bars, taxis or hotels.

In theory, foreign currencies can be exchanged in banks and post offices; in practice, some banks refuse to exchange anything but USD cash and travelers' cheques. A better exchange rate can be received when withdrawing from ATMs. Furthermore, various smartphone payment apps are available for long-term residents. For business travelers from Switzerland, besides credit cards, the following IC cards can be useful.

### Pasmo and Suica

The pre-paid smart cards are issued by the Japanese railway companies such as Suica, Pasmo, etc. The cards can be used for riding trains, subways, buses, taxis, paying at shops, especially convenience stores and kiosks.



The cards can be bought at station ticket machines for a deposit of JPY 500 that is refunded when the card is returned. There is also a mobile version of the Suica card, which can be downloaded to Android and Apple devices via App Store or Google Play.

For information on cash withdrawals at ATMs: and on using credit cards

<https://www.japan.travel/en/plan/currency/> (Source: Japan National Tourist Organization)

## TRANSPORTATION

For planning a trip in advance, [www.hyperdia.com](http://www.hyperdia.com) can be a helpful tool. The route as well as the price is calculated and the system offers several options to be chosen from. This service is also available in English and makes it really easy to travel around Japan. In addition, [Google Maps](#) offers very accurate information and timetables, and also indicates major train delays.

Japan Rail Pass is a good way for people entering with a tourist visa to get around at a cheaper price: <https://www.jreast.co.jp/multi/en/pass/index.html>

For International airport access, domestic flights, railways, subways, busses, taxis and car rental please refer to <http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/arrange/transportation/index.html>

(Source: Japan National Tourist Organization).

Shinkansen ticket booking:

<https://shinkansen-ticket.com/pages/is-online-booking-in-english-available-for-shinkansen>

Flights within the country are offered by multiple airlines, some of which are not on the common search engines. Making sure to check all options may be beneficial when travelling on a budget:

- [Peach](#)
- [JAL](#)
- [ANA](#)
- [Jetstar](#)
- [Skymark](#)

## HOTELS

Information on hotels: [https://www.jalan.net/en/japan\\_hotels\\_ryokan/](https://www.jalan.net/en/japan_hotels_ryokan/)

Hotels where the airport limousine buses stop: <http://www.limousinebus.co.jp/en/hotelguide/index.html>

## INTERNET

Free Wi-Fi access for visitors

<https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2279.html>

Data SIM cards are a great alternative option if you don't need your phone available for calls to your usual number and want to use VoIP services and internet (Apps). Here is a site explaining how and where to get these cards: <https://trulytokyo.com/how-to-buy-a-sim-card-in-tokyo/> (Found on: Truly Tokyo)

Free Wi-Fi Smartphone apps:

<https://japanfreewifi.com/>

<http://www.ntt-bp.net/jcfw/en.html>

Rental pocket WiFi and other WiFi services are available for visitors (just a few examples below):

<https://www.japan-rail-pass.com/services/pocket-wifi>

[https://www.docomo.ne.jp/english/service/d\\_wifi/](https://www.docomo.ne.jp/english/service/d_wifi/)

## BUSINESS HOURS

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays and National Holidays
Offices	09:00 – 17:00	Closed	Closed
Banks	09:00 – 15:00	Closed	Closed
Post Offices	09:00 – 17:00	Closed	Closed
Department Stores	10:00 – 20:00	10:00 – 20:00	10:00 – 20:00/21:00
Shops	10:00 – 20:00	10:00 – 20:00	10:00 – 20:00
Convenience Stores	24h	24h	24h

## USEFUL APPS FOR TRAVELING TO JAPAN

<https://www.japan.travel/en/plan/useful-apps/>

## ADDRESSES AND OPENING HOURS OF EMBASSY AND CONSULATE

### Embassy of Switzerland

5-9-12 Minami-Azabu

Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-8589, Japan

<http://www.eda.admin.ch/tokyo>

Tel.: (+81) 3 5449 8400

Fax: (+81) 3 3473 6090

### Office hours

Monday-Friday 09:00-12:00

Saturday and Sunday closed

### Consulate General of Switzerland in Osaka

<https://www.eda.admin.ch/countries/japan/en/home/representations/embassy-tokyo/consulate-general.html>

The new Consulate of Switzerland in Osaka is part of the Swiss network for education, research, and innovation, Swissnex, making it the 6th location after Boston and San Francisco in the US, Shanghai in China, Bangalore in India, and Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. The Swissnex locations are established in some of the world's most innovative regions. As competence center for education, research, innovation and startups, Swissnex in Japan is set up in Kansai, which is said to be very entrepreneurial and open to trying new ideas. This comes on top of high-quality, ever continuing improvement and impeccable service in Japan.

For consular and visa-related matters please contact the [Embassy of Switzerland in Tokyo](#).

## DOING BUSINESS

### JAPAN AS A TARGET MARKET: WHERE TO START?

If you consider Japan as your next target export market some market research is essential before trying to get hold of a list of potential distributors. It is only possible to create the right requirement profile of your partner if you understand your customers, competitors and the nature of distribution channels in Japan: Your success depends upon the capabilities of your partner and it is highly unlikely that you find a qualified business partner based on some contact lists for cold calls. It will also hardly be possible for you based in Switzerland to check out the up-to-date needs and wants of your potential customers, whether your potential partners have the necessary expertise, a network of relationships in the industry and are capable of providing after-sale services. It is essential to look at the Japanese market very carefully and understand how business is done in Japan. Even if something is completely logically understandable for Switzerland, or in any other country, it does not necessarily mean that the same is true for Japan.

Further, personal contacts are very important for Japanese. Japanese people prefer to do business with someone they are properly introduced to by a trusted person/organization and have met face-to-face with. They are willing to enter into a business relationship only when they are sure they are dealing with a reliable person representing a reliable company (it is not only the quality of your product that convinces your customer, but also who you are). Although meetings in person are always the preferred form, as a consequence of COVID-19 virtual meetings have become a part of our daily life in Japan (see also [Online meetings](#)).

Once you have got a chance to meet your potential partner/customer, patience is required: The group decision-making process in Japanese companies where members of the middle management play great roles takes a lot more time than in Switzerland. Recently, however, globally active Japanese companies have been becoming aware of the importance of making rapid and high-quality decisions to improve business operation. They thus expect to be provided with relevant and accurate information based upon which they can make decisions in a timely manner. It is beyond a company and product overview. It has to demonstrate how the Japanese client company can benefit from your product/proposal.

When doing business with Japanese companies, thorough research and solid preparation to identify the pain point of your potential customers are key elements for success.

#### Terminating your existing distributor

Some Swiss companies terminate their Japanese distributors simply believing that sales performance will automatically improve by replacing the distributor and that they will immediately find a better one without losing customers. This is unfortunately not always the case.

Sometimes, poor distributor performance is due to lack of understanding and poor communication also on the part of the Swiss manufacturer. Working closely with your distributor, clearly identifying what they expect from you as well as you from them and providing necessary support are indispensable. Changes in the business landscape can play a role too. Before looking for a new distributor, talk to your existing partner first. Open, honest and sincere communication can avoid problems and conflicts. If you do not identify reasons for failure, you can make the same mistakes with the new distributor. It is also essential

to end a business relationship with an extraordinary degree of caution and care. In every industry, the Japanese business communities are sometimes surprisingly close-knit. If not handled delicately, replacing a distributor could damage the Swiss company's reputation and business.

**Swiss Business Hub Japan will gladly help you: We can collect and analyze market information on regulations, customers and competitors both by desk and field research, identify your qualified potential business partners, actively promote your company as well as your product, escort you to the first business meetings and assist you in verbal and non-verbal communication. We can help facilitate discussions with your existing partners.**

[Markteinblicke](#) (Deutsch)

[Zoom sur le marché](#) (Français)

[Sguardo al mercato](#) (Italiano)

## **BUSINESS PRACTICES**

### **Dos and Don'ts**

#### **Meeting and greeting**

Although between Japanese bowing is a usual way of salutation, a bow is not expected from a Swiss business person. Japanese with international experience will initiate a handshake.

#### **Business cards**

The first thing after the initial greeting is to exchange business cards (called "meishi" in Japanese. The word belongs to the most important business Japanese vocabulary list).

First introductions are made while exchanging business cards. Bilingual business cards, with one side printed in Japanese and the other in English, are standards in Japan. They must absolutely be clean and unused. Always take a substantial quantity of them with you.

Cards should be presented individually with both hands with a slight bow. Individuals who are of lower rank or younger, or who are seeking something from the other party, offer their cards first.

Your business cards should clearly state your position. An academic title or degree is not included on your business card unless it is relevant to your job function. Having "Dipl.-Ing.", for example, put on your business card may cause confusion as the title on your card is supposed to help your Japanese business counterpart classify your position within your company.

Present your card with your name facing the recipient. When you give your card, never distribute it onto the meeting desk, hand it individually to each person with both hands. When you receive a card, study it carefully. Do not fold, write on it or immediately put it into your pocket, as this is considered a sign of disrespect.

#### **Names and forms of address**

In Japanese, you can refer to both men and women by their family names, followed by "san" – an example is "Toyota-san". There is no distinction between gender and marital status with the "san" suffix. Do not address a person you first met by his or her first name, unless specifically invited to do so. Never

use “san” with your own name. Only use it when referring to someone else. You can, of course, address Japanese people in English using Mr., Mrs., and Miss or Ms. plus the family name.

When responding to an e-mail written in English (or D/F/I) by a Japanese business contact you have never met before and you are not sure if the person is a man or woman and/or which part is the first or the last name, it would be reasonable to assume:

- The given name is written first, followed by the family name: e.g. Hayao (given name) Miyazaki (family name)
  - Recent controversy concerning the name order means in the future, Japanese names may be written in the Japanese order in international media as well as in business (last name, first name).
- If the (possible) first name has many vowels/polysyllabic, it is very likely that it is a man: e.g. Toshihiro, Uichiro, Shonosuke: **Men**  
Naoko, Hanako, Yumiko: **Women**
- When in doubt, you can use the full name followed by "san" as an honorific suffix for both women and men: e.g. Dear Ken Watanabe-san. Never address someone without an honorific title at all: e.g. Dear Ken Watanabe. Swiss people often do it, which is, however, a no-go.

Japanese traditionally say and write their family name first, followed by their first name. However, many Japanese who deal with Western business professionals use the Western name order. When introducing yourself, make clear which is your family or your given name. When introduced and in doubt, it is no problem to ask.

## Languages

Few Japanese people are sufficiently fluent in English in business communication. When never educated/employed outside of Japan, even those who are capable of speaking/writing in English, very often communicate in the Japanese way of thinking which can lead to incomprehension or misunderstanding. Directness in communication on the Swiss side, such as saying right out “No” to suggestions and ideas brought up by the Japanese counterpart is considered impolite. The Japanese would say that something would “be difficult”, actually meaning “No”. In some cases, hiring an interpreter is therefore a good idea not only to avoid misunderstandings, but also to understand gestures and facial expressions or even silence. It may also demonstrate your commitment to the Japanese market. The same applies to having your documents translated into Japanese.

While on one hand it is true that business communication in the English language is still an issue in Japan, on the other hand, the Japanese are on average well educated. It sometimes happens that your Japanese counterpart picks up some words in one of the Swiss national languages.

## **Documents**

Basically, do not just machine translate documents that your Japanese partner/counterpart will read. Should you decide to do so, and even if you choose a high-performance machine translation system, the translation should be reviewed by a human translator. Should you require a translation of business documents/brochures/etc. or a review, [the Swiss Business Hub Japan](#) will help you.

## **Dress and shoes**

The Japanese dress well and rather conservative. Men should not wear bright colors; dark suits and subtly colored shirts as well as ties are appropriate in most business situations. Women should wear conservatively styled dresses or suits. Too much jewelry, low-cut dresses, heavy make-up or wearing too much perfume is not encouraged.

In Japan, it happens that you suddenly find yourself in the situation where you have to remove your shoes (when invited to private homes, many Japanese-style restaurants, and even going into some offices and meeting halls). Think of wearing shoes that can be easily slipped on and off with no laces. Do not wear old, worn-out socks.

## **Cool Biz / Super Cool Biz**

In 2005, the Ministry of the Environment in Japan launched a campaign to slash the CO<sup>2</sup> output in summer. They promoted, that the temperature to which air conditioners were cooling, should be set to a higher degree (28°C) in summer and in exchange, the employees were allowed to wear lighter and less traditionally formal suits. Thereby, saving energy while dressing in an appropriate way for the high temperatures outside. Cool Biz, following the electricity shortage after 2011 also “Super” Cool Biz, means no neckties, being able to wear short-sleeved shirts without the blazer (the dress code may still vary from company to company).

Please find an example here: <https://guidable.co/work/cool-biz-in-japan/>

## **Gifts**

The visitor is the one who offers gifts at the first meeting. The Japanese do business in groups and more people may attend meetings than you have expected. Therefore, bring a few extra gifts. Individual gifts should be given to people who made extra efforts in dealing with your project, taking care of your travel arrangements, etc.

Do not expect a gift to be opened in front of you. Tell the recipient “Please open it” if you would like it to be opened. Do not open your gift unless asked by the giver to do so, as this is considered greedy. You may ask the giver: “May I open it?” When opening a gift, never tear the wrapping paper. Wrapping paper is selected for its design, elegance and significance. It is considered good form to undo a package with care. You will not only preserve the paper but also show proper respect for the effort that went into making the paper, selecting it and wrapping your gift.

Luxury chocolate and chocolate truffles are popular gifts from Switzerland. Please be aware that Lindt is quite prominently represented with their own stores in Japan.



## Online meetings

Video conference calls have become part of everyday life. The positive side: Meeting online tremendously lowers the hurdle for the Japanese to accept a meeting request. If they think that the Swiss company representative will travel all the way from Switzerland to Japan for a sales call, the Japanese would only accept to meet her/him if they see high potentials for business collaboration. When it comes to communicating, the Swiss Business Hub Japan observed that Swiss companies have a hard time understanding Japanese counterparts. Sometimes it is just the English pronunciation. At other times, trouble is caused by a high context culture (non-verbal communication) of Japan. [Swiss Business Hub Japan](#) will gladly help you avoid miscommunication during your online meetings.

## Developing relationships and trust

As mentioned before, it is important to win support and trust not only of the CEO, but also of the middle management. Swiss companies need to visit their Japanese counterparts once or twice a year. In addition, meet and greet them at tradeshows when- and wherever possible, and invite them to visit your company in Switzerland too.

## Opportunities for Swiss SMEs

<https://www.s-ge.com/en/japan>

## INDUSTRY REPORTS

- **AI** <https://www.s-ge.com/en/publication/industry-report/20191-c6-artificial-intelligence-japan>
- **Clean Energy** <https://www.s-ge.com/en/publication/guide/2022-e-clean-japan-c3-how-energy-business-japan>
- **Green Mobility** <https://www.s-ge.com/en/publication/industry-report/20211-c5-japan-green-mobility-clean2>
- **Railway** <https://www.s-ge.com/en/publication/industry-report/20192-c5-japan-infrastructure-railway-market>

## INFOGRAPHICS AND ONLINE PRESENTATIONS

- **Hydrogen in Japan**, <https://swissbiz.jp/mobility-hydrogen-japan/>
- **AgriTech in Japan**, <https://swissbiz.jp/agritech-in-japan/>
- **RegTech in Japan**, <https://swissbiz.jp/regtech-in-japan/>
- **HealthcareTech in Japan**, <https://swissbiz.jp/healthcare-tech-in-japan/>
- **Fintech in Japan**, <https://swissbiz.jp/swiss-fintech/>
- **MaaS in Japan**, <https://swissbiz.jp/maas-in-japan/>
- **Cosmetics in Japan**, <https://swissbiz.jp/cosmetics-japan/>
- **Food Market in Japan**, <https://swissbiz.jp/foods/>

For customized market information, contact:

Swiss Business Hub Japan: [tokyo.sbhjapan@eda.admin.ch](mailto:tokyo.sbhjapan@eda.admin.ch)

## SWISS PAVILIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS IN JAPAN

### SWISS Biotech Pavilion at BioJapan 2023 (Biotechnology), Yokohama

<https://www.s-ge.com/en/event/swiss-pavilion/swiss-pavilion-biojapan-2023>

### SWISS Pavilion at Fuel Cell Expo 2024 (Hydrogen), Tokyo

March 2024

### SWISS Pavilion at Mass-Trans Innovation Japan 2023 (Railway technologies), Chiba

November 2023

<https://www.s-ge.com/en/event/swiss-pavilion/swiss-pavilion-mass-trans-innovation-japan-2023>

For further information, please contact: [tokyo.sbhjapan@eda.admin.ch](mailto:tokyo.sbhjapan@eda.admin.ch)

## UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON THE JAPANESE MARKET, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES IN JAPAN

Follow Swiss Business Hub Japan on LinkedIn to stay updated on market trends, business opportunities, upcoming events and more.

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/swiss-business-hub-japan/>



## CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS

Swiss Business Hub Japan offers customized solutions to support Swiss companies, especially small and medium-sized businesses with intention to expand their exports to Japan. We work in cooperation with external industry specialists, when necessary, to help Swiss exporters step-by-step throughout the entire exporting process.

Services include:

- Gaining initial assessment from local opinion leaders of a product's chances in Japan
- Gaining regulatory, legal and cultural knowledge about the product's market requirements
- Gaining knowledge of potential customer groups, their purchasing behavior, purchasing channels and expectations
- Gaining knowledge of national and international competitors and their market activities for the successful positioning of the product in Japan
- Supporting your specific sales activities
- Searching for possible distribution partners
- Setting up meetings with potential distribution partners as well as providing logistical support for traveling in Japan
- Assisting in the search for qualified staff
- Assisting in setting up business in Japan
- Assisting in business meetings and communication
- Assisting in follow-up, keeping in touch
- Assisting in managing the relationship with your distributor

To discuss your needs and identify the service(s) you will need to succeed in the complex Japanese market, please contact **Swiss Business Hub Japan in Tokyo** at our address below.

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## **DISCLAIMER**

This Business Guide is intended to provide only basic information and addresses that may be useful for Swiss companies traveling to Japan for business.

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