

# Managing Director Japan Bel Group

In order to extend its reach in Japan, Bel needed to recruit a new Managing Director. Penna succeeded in finding a candidate that fulfilled all the criteria: a fluent Japanese and English speaker with the ability to communicate effectively in a multicultural environment.

## **Background**

Japan is the 5th largest country for BEL international with 20 Million Euros of Turnover and 4.000 tons sold (5.500 tons in Asia). Bel has been present in Japan for over 25 years and was established over 10 years ago.

## **The requirement**

In Japan, Bel is mainly present in the niche of cream cheese (The Laughing Cow, Kiri) with 35% of independent bakeries as clients. The obstacles for Bel's expansion were weak brand awareness and weak penetration by household. Bel aimed to double the business in Japan in 5 years and needed to attract a new Managing Director to help achieve this goal.

## **Our approach**

Penna was retained to find the best candidates in the market. An international team supported Catherine Ceva, Head of Penna Consumer Practice for Penna Board Executive Search.

Catherine's experience of Japan where she lived for several years, her fluent Japanese, as well as her experience in the Consumer Sector in Japan and France, positioned Penna to provide a differentiated service to the Bel Group.

## **Challenges**

The challenge was to find candidates that had a marketing background from a multinational company based in Japan. It was essential for the candidates not only to speak fluent Japanese and English, but also to demonstrate the capacity to communicate effectively in a multicultural environment reporting to a French mother company.

## **The results**

Penna successfully presented a shortlist of 5 strong candidates enabling Bel to hire the best candidate in 3 months.

The pace and the quality of this Executive Search project and the Executive hired to lead the group in Japan, contributed to establishing the base for the future expansion of the Bel Group in Japan.

## **For more details**

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