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**2. OCCI MATCHING EVENT LEADS TO CROSS-BORDER DEALS
OSAKA FOOD BUSINESSES AND EUROPEAN, ASEAN BUYERS ENTER TALKS
AND SIGN DEALS**

A food industry matching event hosted by the OCCI in March 2021 has led to new business between Osaka companies and overseas buyers, including an about-to-be-signed deal between a local purveyor of baby food and a Thai buyer, as well as ongoing negotiations among many other participants. The event was well attended by Osaka food industry companies and overseas buyers hungry for Japanese delicacies, with a particularly large contingent from

Southeast Asia and Europe. Hopes are now high that carefully designed marketing can help the Japanese sector reach demographics overseas that proved elusive in this country.

In another successful outcome of the event, a Swedish buyer has entered into a deal with an Osaka-based trading company dealing in amanatto confectioneries and black bean products. The buyer has said they were impressed by the Osaka company’s prompt and sincere response to questions that arose during negotiations, and that trustworthiness, coupled with the producer’s ability to make decisions smoothly, helped seal the deal.

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3. COMMITMENT TO THE SDGS AND A BRIGHTER FUTURE (KSK)

Japan’s population is rapidly aging, meaning dementia is an issue that weighs heavily on the nation’s mind. In its Comprehensive Strategy to Accelerate Dementia Measures (the “New Orange Plan”) released in 2015, the Japanese government stated an intention to create a society in which people can live a normal life in the communities they know and love. At KSK, a comprehensive provider of pharmaceuticals, the company’s commitment to helping achieve the SDGs contributes added momentum to the nation’s efforts in this area.

KSK procures medicines and medical equipment from manufacturers and sells them to small and medium-sized hospitals, clinics, and dispensing pharmacies. As part of its efforts to help build communities where people with dementia and their families can live with peace of mind, KSK launched its Caravan Mate initiative in 2015. Caravan Mate covers a broad variety of activities, including an educational, dementia-

themed summertime play aimed at elementary school kids (and their parents!), and a restaurant staffed by people living with dementia. The most effective way to slow the progress of dementia in a patient is early detection and treatment, and early medication is also said to have an important role. As such, KSK's efforts toward helping achieve the SDGs not only benefit society and raise the company's reputation, but also present business opportunities.

KSK has a long tradition of commitment to its local communities, and the company was quick to ensure its business was aligned to the SDGs upon advice from a local doctor. The process began by taking a long, hard look at the company's business activities.

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4. TRADE DOCUMENT CERTIFICATIONS AFFECTED BY COVID-19 IN FY2020

Amid Overall Decrease, Some Regions, Product Categories See Numbers Rise

The chamber issues general trade-related certificates, including certificates of Japanese origin and certification of invoices, as well as special certificates of origin for those countries and regions with which Japan has economic partnership agreements.

Certifications of trade-related documents by the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) were down overall in the year ended March 2021, subdued by the ongoing effects of Covid-19, according to a release by the OCCI.

Trade Document Certifications Down Due to Covid-19

OCCI certified 80,704 trade-related documents in FY2020, which mainly involved issuing certificates of Japanese origin. This number was down 14.9 percentage points from FY2019 as a result of the sluggishness in business activity caused by Covid-19.

Documents bound for destinations in Asia and the Middle East were most common, but these too were down 9.6 points and 22.5 points respectively, while those for Europe and North America were both down approximately 20 points, and Central and South America 33.3 points. The decrease was less pronounced among documents bound for Oceania (down 4.3 points), while those bound for Africa increased by 16.2 points.

Among the most common products for which certifications were issued, those for metals and chemicals were down only around 10 points, while the decrease was sharper for textiles at approximately 20 points. Certifications for food products were up 2.9 points.

OCCI Offers Help for International Trade Procedures

The OCCI provides free advice regarding the TPP11, the Japan-EU EPA, and the Trade Agreement between Japan and the USA, as well as the Japan-UK CEPA's self-certification system.

It also offers a service for drawing up the Statement on Origin needed to apply for customs tariff exemption under the schemes of the TPP11, the Japan-EU EPA, and the Japan-UK CEPA (charges apply).

※1 Certificate of Trade-related Documents

※2 Certificate of Japanese Origin by Local Chambers

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5. SME & MID-SCALE BUSINESS SENTIMENT SURVEY

The Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry has released the results of its latest SME & Mid-Scale Business Sentiment Survey. Conducted between April 6 and 20, 2021, the survey polled 2,940 OCCI member companies with capital of ¥1 billion or less, and responses were received from 396 (RR: 13.5%).

In response to the question “What kind of actions are you taking or considering regarding digitalization?”, the most common responses were: online banking (53.3%); use of online conferencing systems, e.g., for sales and marketing, negotiations (43.9%); use of computerized attendance management, payroll calculation, and accounting systems (38.6%); and switch to paperless operations (35.6%).

Conversely, only a few companies (regardless of scale) said they kept electronic records of skills, techniques, and know-how (7.8%); used collected data for product development or improving services (5.3%); shared data with other companies for product development or improving services (2.3%).

A majority of respondents said they were not interested in e-commerce and had no e-commerce plans for the future (65.9%), but almost a third of respondents said they were interested but had yet to take any action

(28.8%).

Only 4.3% of respondents said they were already active in cross-border e-commerce. In response to the question “What challenges do you face regarding cross-border e-commerce?”, the most commonly cited challenges were: language difficulties, e.g., dealing with buyers and communicating with overseas e-commerce platform operators (46.6%); laws and business regulations of the target countries (39.7%); lack of staff capable of handling cross-border e-commerce (38.2%); and credibility issues regarding payment methods and systems (36.6%).

The survey is broad in scope and covers many other topics of interest.

Details of the survey can be found at the OCCI website.

[URL:https://o-bic.net/upload/pdf/file00000891](https://o-bic.net/upload/pdf/file00000891)

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6. ALL THE LATEST ON EXPO 2025 OSAKA, KANSAI, JAPAN

Expo Venue to Host Field Testing of Innovative Business Ideas

The Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exhibition have selected nine fascinating projects (out of 39 proposals received) for an initial round of field testing at the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan venue on Yumeshima island.

The projects include “Experience the Sky” flying car rides operated by Lift Aircraft, Inc.; drone entertainment and advertising experiments by 7sense, Inc.; and experiments in future applications for driverless vehicle technologies by Osaka Metro Co., Ltd.

In addition to finalizing arrangements specific sites and carrying out the tests, “Team Osaka,” a group organized by the OCCI and the Osaka city and prefectural governments to pursue these field tests, will offer the participating businesses assistance (e.g., with promotion) to help transform their ideas into viable business operations.

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DO YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION ?

[Information on COVID-19 in Osaka] New!

<https://o-bic.net/e/covid/>

[O-BIC as one-stop service center for creating a foothold in Osaka]

<http://o-bic.net/>

[Information about scheduled events (in Japanese only)]

<https://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/event/index.php>



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