

PRESS RELEASE

TOP BUSINESS PLANS CELEBRATED AT JMEC A panel of judges recognized winning teams at 25th annual competition

TOKYO, June 5, 2019—The Japan Market Expansion Competition (JMEC) announced the winners for the JMEC 25 program at a gala awards ceremony at the Tokyo American Club.

JMEC Executive Committee Chairman Tom Whitson said: *“JMEC 25 brought together sixty highly motivated participants from around the world who overcame language barriers and other challenges to cooperate in small teams to analyze market opportunities for JMEC project clients. They developed realistic business plans to crack the Japanese market—and their commitment and energy made them fun to work with.*

“They've given up a lot in the last seven months. They've given up social life, family, friends, and sleep. But I think that they would all say that the learning experience and camaraderie has been worth the effort and sacrifice.”

Twelve project clients—including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), entrepreneurs, and global companies—commissioned customized business plans from JMEC, at a very reasonable price. Some of the most successful foreign business leaders in Japan then trained, mentored, and advised participants to develop and present the plans to three senior JMEC judges.

More than 220 guests—including senior executives and other leaders from embassies and foreign chambers of commerce in Japan—attended the JMEC Awards Ceremony and party at the Tokyo American Club on June 5.

The Top Three Prize Winners

JMEC Team 12 won the first prize with their business plan for Dutch high-tech company Plugwise, a leading company in the area of intelligent heating control solutions. Said Remco Aberson, Head of APAC at Plugwise: *“The whole process of this past year was very professional. The team had a good idea of where they wanted to go with the business plan and they made it work. The meetings we had were to the point and very efficient—the right questions at the right time. The mindset and the efforts of the team were outstanding. I truly believe they gave up their private lives to make the best business plan and win the competition. Very surprising to me was to find out that the market is much bigger than I first anticipated. While the team did their job and won the competition, it's now my job to implement the business plan and make it a success.”*

Team 6 won second prize with a market entry plan for leading Japanese jewelry designer Hirotaka Inoue, with his ‘Hirotaka’ brand—who said: *“We were very happy with our JMEC team's business plan, which provided us with a fresh outside perspective at what we do—and offered insightful marketing strategies. It was also very useful to get the background research data together with the plan, as these data are highly valuable for us”.*

Team 3 won third prize with a business plan for Pearson PLC, the global learning company. Said Stuart Connor, Qualifications & Assessment Director Asia at Pearson: *"Our JMEC team presented their research findings and business plan to us last week - they were very clear, very articulate, and very good on the Q&A. It was also great that not just during the presentation, but over the course of the last few months—we were able to share ideas and kick things around. Great work by the team and this has given us a lot to consider!"*

Special Mention Awards

In addition to the prize winning teams, four other teams received special mention awards from the judging panel to recognize outstanding efforts.

Team 10 received the Best Presentation Award for an impressive oral presentation to the judges for DataWise, a technology company with a special cloud services application. Harry Hill of DataWise said: *"The JMEC team surveyed and analyzed a broad range of sectors that could use the DataWise application, identified promising industries and confirmed interest with specific companies. JMEC showed us 'Blue Ocean' and the JMEC plan will be part of our next steps."*

Team 1 was given the Best Market Research Award for their extensive and outstanding market research efforts for their client J Juan Brake Systems, a leading maker of high-quality brake systems for motorcycles, headquartered in Barcelona, Spain.

Team 4's project for the Salvation Army in Japan received the 'Tell It Like It Is' Award for their candid and well thought out recommendations to improve the client's operations and help them expand their humanitarian efforts in Japan.

Team 8 had a project involving a sophisticated mercury oxide-based optical infra-red technology for scientific and industrial applications, developed by BBT Materials Processing Ltd. of the Czech Republic. The team won the Best 'Technical Demystification' Award for their illuminating explanation of a very complex technology.

The EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation (EUJC) in Tokyo sponsored two of the projects in the JMEC 25 competition under their Keys to Japan program. Team Leader Fabrizio Mura of the EUJC said this about the sponsored projects: *"We value JMEC teams for their ability to think out of the box and come up with detailed Japan market entry plans for some of our European SMEs with advanced technologies and services—including an overall analysis of the relevant market segments that will help other SMEs looking for advice on the Japanese market in these industries."*

JMEC prizes

The first prize winners won Finnair flight tickets to Europe and one-year memberships and event vouchers to the ACCJ; the second prize winners won Hewlett Packard laptop PCs and one-year memberships to the ACCJ; and the third prize winners received stylish German brand BREE satchels and tickets to one of the ACCJ's networking events.

About JMEC

Founded in 1993 by the Australian and New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in Japan, JMEC is a non-profit business planning skills-development training program supported by 18 foreign chambers of commerce in Japan. Over the past 25 years, JMEC has trained more than 1,300 young business professionals, many of whom have gone on to rise in their companies or start their own businesses.

Built around a business plan competition, JMEC provides classroom training followed by hands-on experience for up-and-coming managers living and working in Japan. To date, JMEC has provided 252 high-quality business plans to help companies enter or expand in the Japanese market.

JMEC is internationally accredited by Pearson PLC—the world’s largest learning company—as a Pearson Assured certified organization. Pearson Assured is an independent certification and international quality benchmark for organizations that design and deliver their own learning programs.

JMEC 26

The JMEC 26 program starts in August 2019 with information sessions for potential participants, attended by JMEC staff and alumni. Program lectures commence on November 9, 2019. See our Web site for information session details.

JMEC: www.jmec.gr.jp

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[Team photos follow on the pages below.]



Team 12: 1st Prize Winners

Project Client: Plugwise

From left:

Remco Aberson, Head of APAC, Plugwise; Tomoji Nogami, Business Development Manager, Finnair; Keiko Marutani, Mary Joy Tolentino, Masaomi Tsunoda, Hiroyuki Kosuge, Justin Dart (team mentor)

Absent: Akira Havermans (team consultant)

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Team 6: 2nd Prize Winners

Project Client: Palmetto Inoue (Hiroataka Inoue)

From left: Andrew Neuman (team mentor); Hidemitsu Asai, Sawaka Kuboyama, Kyoko Kanuma, Henriikka Saarela, Verna Holder (team consultant); Masahiko Shimada, General Manager, HP Inc.; Debbie Howard, President Emeritus, ACCJ.

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Team 3: 3rd Prize Winners

Project Client: Pearson PLC

From left: Gareth Allen (team consultant), Jay Johannesen (team mentor); Yoichiro Ishikawa, Marisa Cassidy, Charlotte Subramoney; Wolfgang Bierer, CEO, Endeavor SBC; Debbie Howard, President Emeritus, ACCJ
Absent: Maria W. Domingo

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