

JMEC NEWS

JMEC CELEBRATES AWARD-WINNING BUSINESS PLANS FOR JAPAN MARKET

Under cloud of COVID-19, JMEC 26 contestants researched, prepared and presented innovative plans

TOKYO, June 11, 2020 The Japan Market Expansion Competition (JMEC), a non-profit business planning skills-development training program supported by 18 foreign chambers of commerce in Japan, announced the winners for the annual JMEC business plan competition on June 3, 2020. This marked the completion of JMEC 26, reflecting the 26th year the program has been conducted. Thirteen teams comprising up to five members each, researched, analyzed and presented customized business plans for Japanese market expansion for their project client companies.

The sixty-one JMEC 26 program contestants, representing 17 different nationalities, were all mid-career business professionals working in Japan. JMEC 26 began in August 2019 with information sessions for prospective contestants. From November 2019 to January 2020 participants attended a series of lectures on business, accounting, market research, marketing, and presentation skills that were conducted on weekends by leading business personalities from the international business community in Japan. In mid January 2020 the contestants were placed into the thirteen teams and given their research projects.

Many teams were lucky to be able to travel to research their projects, interview potential collaborators and market experts, and research distribution channels before the COVID-19 state of emergency was declared. Each team produced a lengthy written business plan as well as a summary presentation targeted at both the project clients and the judging panel.

After months of research, analysing economic and sector data and endless video conferencing, the teams virtually presented their business plans to the panel of four judges on May 23 and 24, 2020.

JMEC Executive Committee Chairman Tom Whitson said: *“JMEC 26 was conducted under the challenging conditions of a national state of emergency due to COVID-19 that severely curtailed much of the research and interaction that preparing a business plan entails. I want to congratulate all the participants for their dedication to this project that resulted in a series of excellent business plans. You have all well and truly earned your certificates as graduates of our JMEC business training program. On behalf of the JMEC team, I want to thank the twelve companies that submitted projects to the program as well as the lecturers, judges, team mentors and consultants who gave up days of their time to make this program a success.”*

Thirteen project clients—including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), entrepreneurs, and global companies—commissioned customized business plans from JMEC, at a very reasonable price. Experienced and successful global business leaders in Japan then trained, mentored, and advised the JMEC teams to develop and present the plans to four senior JMEC judges.

The Top Three Prize Winners

The JMEC judging panel, being senior executives and successful entrepreneurs in Tokyo, evaluated and scored the written plans as well as the team oral presentations, to pick the award and prize winners. *JMEC Judge, Rike Wootten, commented, “The*

quality of this year's plans was exceptional—very little separated the winning teams. When we read the final plans and saw the presentations, we were impressed with the detail and insights the teams came up with under such difficult circumstances."

JMEC Team 12 won the 1st Prize in the competition with their business plan for cutting-edge Spanish biotechnology company AlgaEnergy, creating product solutions derived from microalgae for a range of industries such as agriculture, nutrition, cosmetics and aquaculture. Team Poseidon's project was focused on the roll-out of cosmetic brand MareVitae®. Miguel Rodriguez-Villa, Expansion Director at AlgaEnergy, stated: *"The quality of the team's work was exceptional and exceeded our expectations, with profound and valuable insights on the Japanese market, which are very useful for an appropriate approach regarding our expansion plans in Japan. On behalf of AlgaEnergy, congratulations to the team for their 1st Prize!"*

Team 13 won second prize with a business plan for 'Sun Tamaniwa Farm', an indoor vertical farming project by Hamish Ross, a Tokyo-based entrepreneur and investor, who commented: *"I was very impressed by the depth and conclusions of the plan, which was way beyond my original expectations. The plan has given me the confidence to progress with the project because the team were able to access potential customers and ideas that I hadn't thought of. Flexibility and the ability to think outside the box are a hallmark of JMEC teams and this team showed such characteristic in spades".*

Team 3 won 3rd Prize and had a second project for AlgaEnergy, the Spanish biotechnology company mentioned above—this one a project focused on microalgae-based solutions for the food and beverage industry, specifically microalgae enriched food condiments. Said Jose Maria de Gregorio Muniz, Development Projects Manager: *"Our JMEC team presented their findings and business plan to us last week - and we were much impressed by the quality of their research, analysis and outcomes. The team was very well organized and highly dedicated to the project, and their plan will enable us to draw very valuable conclusions!"*

Special Mention Awards

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

Team 6 received the *Best Presentation Award* for an impressive oral presentation to the JMEC judges for Global Dreamers Lab, a visionary museum facility project in Tokyo by Carl Williams, a US Air Force veteran with deep ties to Japan, where people from all backgrounds can find and nourish their dreams through interactive and extraordinary educational experiences. Said Williams: *"The JMEC team produced a business plan that was way above and beyond my expectations, and amplified my initial ideas. The plan provides a solid foundation and roadmap for taking the project forward, and I congratulate my highly dedicated team on their well-deserved award!"*

Team 2 won the *Best Market Research Award* for their extensive and outstanding market research efforts for their client Herniamesh, an Italian maker of medical devices, including surgical mesh solutions, sold through their worldwide distribution network. Said Marco Bertolino, Marketing & Sales Area Manager: *"We were very happy with the team's final business plan, which provided highly useful research and analysis to help us re-enter the Japanese market—and I congratulate the team on their Award!"*

Team 8 won the *Best Executive Summary Award*, with a potential market entry project for Ardex, a global company headquartered in Germany and a leading

solution and service provider of innovative tile and flooring systems. Said Andreas Oberecker, Ardex Asia Regional Managing Director: *"Choosing JMEC as partner for our project proved to be absolutely the right decision. Our JMEC team was highly motivated and moved quickly, and we were impressed by the level of technical and commercial detail that was uncovered."*

The EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation (EUJC) in Tokyo sponsored two of the projects in the JMEC 26 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 to the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan (ACCJ); the second prize winners won Hewlett Packard notebook computers and one-year memberships to the ACCJ; and the third prize winners received stylish German brand BREE travel bags and free tickets to one of the ACCJ's 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 26 years, JMEC has trained more than 1,300 young business professionals, many of whom have advanced to senior positions in their companies or started their own businesses.

Built around a business plan competition, JMEC provides classroom, and this year also online, training followed by hands-on experience for up-and-coming managers living and working in Japan. To date, JMEC has provided 265 high-quality business plans to help companies enter or expand their business 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 27

The JMEC 27 program starts in August 2020 with information sessions for potential participants, attended by JMEC staff and alumni. Program lectures commence on November 14, 2020. Please visit <http://www.jmec.gr.jp/> for further information.

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[Please see the following pages for team photos.]

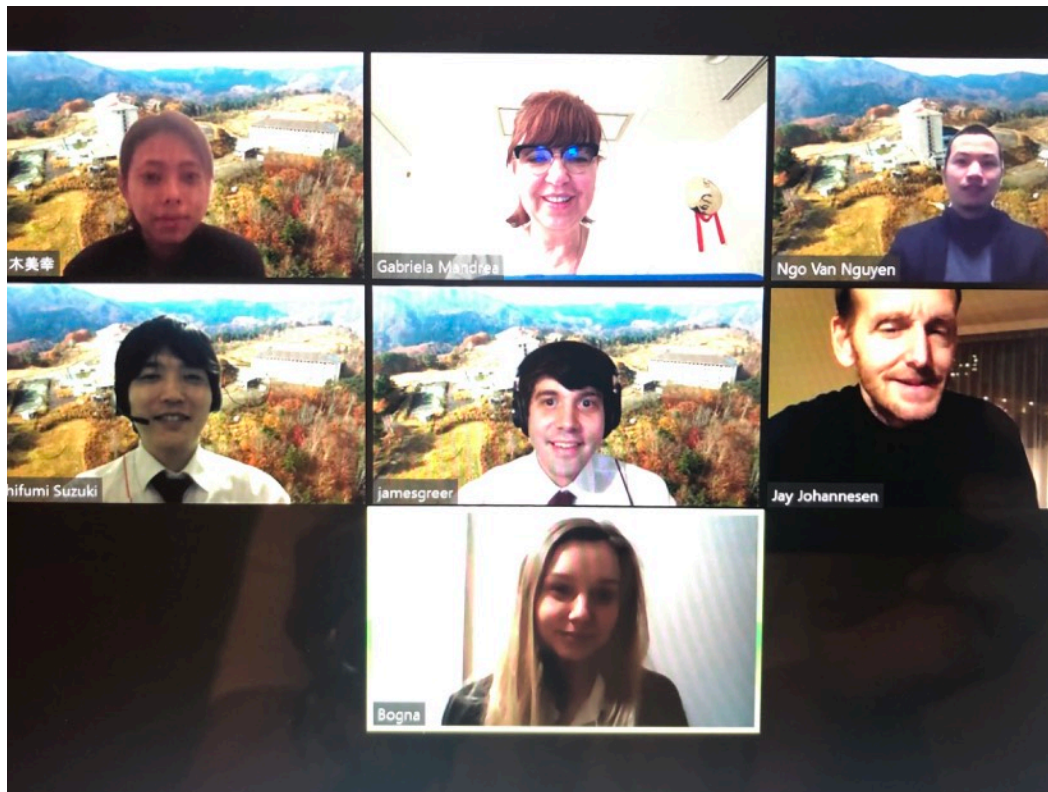


Team 12: **1st Prize Winners**

Project Client: AlgaEnergy - MareVita® Cosmetics

Clockwise from top left:

Jonathan Ho, Yasuko Yoshino, Hiroshi Koyama, Hailan Huang, Takenori Nishimura



Team 13: **2nd Prize Winners**

Project Client: Sun Tamaniwa Farm - a project by Hamish Ross

Clockwise from top left:

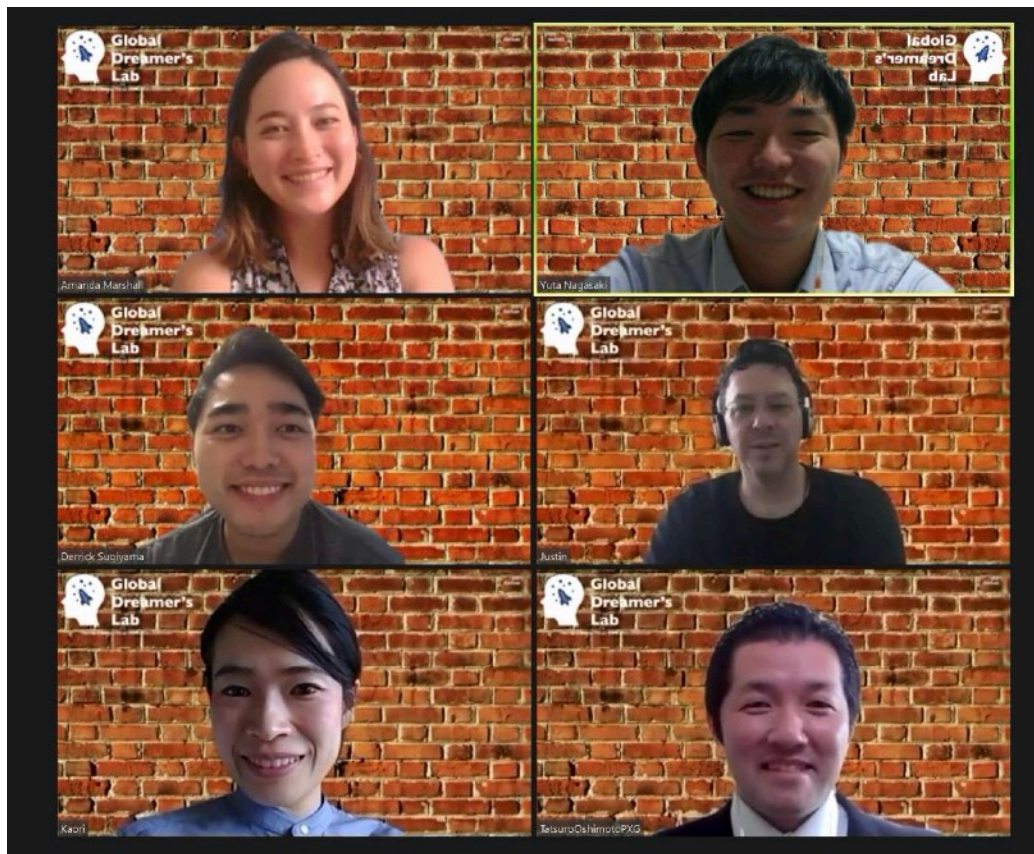
Miyuki Sasaki, Gabriela Mandrea (Team Consultant), Ngo Van Nguyen, Jay Johannesen (Team Mentor), James Greer, Toshifumi Suzuki, Bogna Baliszewska (bottom, center)



Team 3: 3rd Prize Winners

Project Client: AlgaEnergy - Macami Food Condiments

From the left: Geoffrey Kayiira, Nonoka Tajiri, Shunsuke Akiyama, Noriko Kubodera, Javier Lopez Gimenez



Team 6: **Best Presentation Award**

Project Client: Global Dreamers Lab - a project by Carl Williams

Clockwise from top left: Amanda Marshall, Yuta Nagasaki, Justin Dart (Team Mentor), Tatsuro Oshimoto, Kaori Mori, Derrick Sugiyama



Team 2: **Best Market Research Award**

Project Client: Herniamesh

From the left: Xing Zhang, Shisa Hoshino, Hajime Watanabe, Jinghui 'Sunny' Huang



Team 8: **Best Executive Summary Award**

Project Client: Ardex

From the left: Charles Feuchter, Yuka Miyazaki, Diah Wasis Wulandari, Yusa Kawauchi, Yuichi Fujimori