

Success Stories: Ideas for Potential Players

MF Manufacturing



Sales / Services

Campagnolo Japan Ltd.

Long-established brand's status attracts bicycling fans



The world's top racers depend on Campagnolo's products.

Long-established Italian cycle sports company Campagnolo SRL, based in Vicenza, Italy, manufactures and sells all the main components that go into racing bicycles used by athletes in the Tour de France and other top races.

In March 2004, the company launched its Japanese subsidiary, Campagnolo Japan Ltd. Before that time, Campagnolo had supplied its products to Japanese cyclists through domestic distributors, who were also put in charge of after-sales service. These firms did not deal exclusively in Campagnolo gear, though; since they handled products from many manufacturers, they did not give the attention to the Campagnolo brand that the company had expected. With the aim of increasing customer satisfaction, Campagnolo switched strategies and took the next logical step, establishing itself directly in the Japanese market.

Road bicycle racing is a major, very popular sport in Europe and North America., but in Japan it remains a minor sport with a small racing population.

Even so, the Japanese market occupies an important position in Campagnolo's sales, representing the eighth-largest national market (by country and region) after the major Western countries. Mr. Yoji Takeichi, general manager of Campagnolo Japan, admits that the Japanese market is a little unusual: "Despite the small racing population,

2004 Campagnolo Japan Ltd. established in Yokohama.

2004 Japanese service center, providing after-service and spare parts, opened.



Yoji Takeichi, General Manager



expensive parts sell remarkably well.” He stated that “the high potential of this market was our motivation for establishing an operation here.”



Excellent engineering gives Campagnolo the edge over other racing bicycle manufacturers.

Preparations for starting up the Japanese operation were done at first by a sales representative from the Italian headquarters. Midway through this process, Mr. Takeichi took over as company representative in Japan, making use of JETRO’s support scheme. “We went to them with all sorts of inquiries,” he says. Campagnolo sought everything from advice on the legal system and business customs to referrals for international accountants and realtors. “And they always responded to our needs with great precision and consideration.” It was JETRO that provided the IBSC Hall event space for Campagnolo to use when it invited its customers and partners in Japan to a presentation on the company’s products and business.

Campagnolo Japan currently has a staff of just two, including Mr. Takeichi. It does not handle sales or distribution itself, but rather provides marketing, presentation, customer support and advertising services. Its agents in Japan continue to sell and supply products.

Asked why Campagnolo chose Yokohama as its base of operations in Japan, Mr. Takeichi says that there was no particular reason for that location, but that “In my own

opinion, we’re no longer living in a time when you had to be in Tokyo to do business. Lots of enterprises set up outside of Tokyo, and that’s especially the case in the cycling gear industry.”

An important part of the Japanese subsidiary’s business is handling customer questions and problems related to product warranties. Shortly after its founding, the local company launched a service center, allowing it to provide after-sales service and spare parts through dealers.

Looking back on the three years since the founding of Campagnolo’s Japanese subsidiary, Mr. Takeichi says the firm has settled into its role running a service center for Japan, and says that it got its business off to a good start by studying

and following the basic business practices of Japan.

The next stage, according to Mr. Takeichi, will be one of growth for the firm. He is gearing up to spread the word about his company’s bicycle components, energetically promoting the Campagnolo brand and making as many Japanese people as possible aware of the unsurpassed quality of the Italian maker’s products.

Communication is a key part of Campagnolo Japan’s stance, as the subsidiary is constantly in touch with Italy, sharing information with the head office. The company is also focusing on Campagnolo’s Pro-Shop Project to train its local distributors in high-level service and technical skills.

Japanese Operation

- Established :** March 2004
- Capital :** ¥15 million
- Employees :** 3
- Business :** Advertising of racing bicycle components, wheels and apparel, official service center, establishment of Pro-Shop network, trade shows, technical seminars, media services
- Location :** 12th floor, Ervic Yokohama Bldg., 65 Yoshida-cho, Naka-ku, Yokohama 231-0041 Japan
- URL :** <http://www.campagnolo.com/>
- Parent company :** Campagnolo SRL (Vicenza, Italy; about 420 employees)

