

ESG promotional content
produced by The Japan Times Cube

sustainable japan

Bicultural development consultant all about bringing people together

BCCJ head Lyle cultivates change for sustainability

Name: Richard Lyle
Title: VP, Head of Government Services and President of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan
URL: www.bccjapan.com
Hometown: Kent, England
Years in Japan: 30

Leaders & Readers

WARREN MEEHAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Inspired by the environmental movements of the 1980s and '90s while studying environmental science in England, and after reading James E. Lovelock's seminal work, "Gaia," Richard Lyle set off on a career that would see him truly live up to one of his favorite mottos: "Think globally, act locally." Over decades working both in the private sector and with government, Lyle has managed to interweave environmentally conscious solutions into everyday decisions and actions, often with market-based outcomes.

Now, as the vice president of trade and foreign direct investment at the international development consultancy Intralink, and as the president of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan (BCCJ), Lyle feels he is in a great place to further work with companies and governments to implement sustainability locally while fostering environmentally positive outcomes globally.

With over 30 years working in Japan, the bilingual executive took time out from his busy schedule to sit down with The Japan Times and talk about how Intralink and the BCCJ are fostering positive changes over mul-

iple sectors, why he enjoys the job and what keeps him busy.

"Intralink delivers three main services," Lyle explained. "Firstly, we provide Asia market expansion, which is helping mostly European and North American venture companies enter Asia. These include high-tech, med-tech, life sciences and companies in the decarbonization and digital space. We represent these clients in Japan and undertake business development for them."

The next area of support Intralink provides is for the government sector. "We help governments and regions bring missions to Japan, undertaking market research and helping those regions attract foreign investment from the country," he explained. Recent examples are Intralink's representative work for South Carolina's Department of Commerce, in which it secured millions of dollars in Japanese foreign direct investment to build factories, as well as bringing a trade mission from Washington.

The third area is corporate innovation. "We help Japanese corporates with their innovation strategies, sourcing technologies overseas to enable them to develop next-generation products. This involves tech-scouting and innovation strategy consulting," Lyle said. With a team of 40 people in their Tokyo office and a current client list numbering 50, Lyle happily joked that it keeps them all busy: "Our clients want us to close deals, basically, and usually we do."

As a consultancy that works with smaller startups and scale-ups, especially firms without the resources and connections in Japan, Intralink proved to be an invaluable resource during the pandemic, when travel was all but shut down. "While big consultancies are very

upstream, doing top-level work, Intralink also rolls up its sleeves, goes out and meets the people and gets the job done. Yes, we do the strategy, but we also go and implement it," Lyle explained. "We're fully bilingual and bicultural, and we're able to represent overseas companies here extremely well."

With his new role as the president of the BCCJ, Lyle is excited about opportunities for cooperation between Japan and the U.K. on sustainability initiatives, as well as fostering businesses to take on a more active role. "I strongly believe business has a very important role to play in sustainability and corporate responsibility," he said. "Of course the government plays its role, but at the end of the day, it's going to be technologies, services and products that companies make that will make or break us."

With a view from the front seat of commerce, Lyle considers that the motivation for business to become sustainable is driven by corporate responsibility — there is money to be made in the emerging sector — and that, simply, without sustainability companies won't exist. Lyle notes that Intralink leads by example, having set up an in-house sustainability committee called SusCom to find ways to reduce their own carbon footprint.

Lyle sees an important role for the BCCJ to help foster initiatives across government and the private sector. "Japanese companies look to Europe for leadership on green tech, and the BCCJ helps foster valuable connections," Lyle explained. "With technology, it's moving so fast, there's always going to be gaps, so how do you identify those gaps? That's where governments come in, because they provide the framework for it, whether it's a trade mission or an event at the British



COSUFI

Posts span public, private sectors

Richard Lyle completed a bachelor's with honors in applied science at the U.K.'s Kingston University and a master's in environmental technology at Imperial College in London. He joined the JET Programme and moved to Nagasaki, planning to travel after a year and return to England, but became a procurement manager with Mitsubishi Heavy Industries in Nagasaki. Then he moved to the British Trade Promotion Office in Fukuoka, overseeing trade with western Japan and investment into the U.K. and then as senior inward investment officer at the consulate-general in Osaka. He joined Intralink in 2009, becoming vice president of trade and foreign direct investment seven years ago. While at Intralink he has had roles as representative director at Avira KK, president of the American States Office Association in Tokyo and director of the Japan office of the Missouri Department of Economic Development, promoting trade and inward investment, for five years. In 2022, he was elected president of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan.

tainably protect devices and materials. He also cites securing venture capital in Japan for British startups, leading to the cybersecurity company CertiVox securing \$5 million worth of investment from Docomo Ventures.

It is not just the game-changing technology that Lyle enjoys about Japan. "It's safe, it's reliable, the weather is pretty good, and on the fringe it's got some really cool subcultures." When not cutting deals and facilitating meetings, Lyle loves to try any kind of watersport, and is also a big fan of barbecuing, a passion he picked up on a trip to the United States. He now helps out with the Hayama Barbecue Club, a group of barbecue devotees, regularly catching up with friends and family for food and sunset viewing on the beach near where he lives in Hayama, on the Miura Peninsula. "It's a beautiful place to watch the sunset, and everyone's invited," joked Lyle.

Embassy. Those initiatives start the conversation, but at the end of the day, it's businesses that can pick up those conversations and make them concrete."

The BCCJ facilitates this backdrop by holding regular events to bring together industry players in everything from agribusiness to the digital space — holding themed breakfast events, inviting guest speakers, setting up roundtable discussions. The recent "Hacking Sustainability for SMEs" meeting brought together small and medium-size enterprises with larger organizations to better understand each other's sustainability-related chal-

lenges. Lyle plans to hold a follow-up event to figure out what worked and what didn't. For Lyle, this cross-fertilization is what drives progress: "It's mainly about getting everyone into a room to talk."

Along with recently being elected president of the BCCJ and becoming the first member of the Intralink team to have worked on over a hundred projects, one job Lyle found rewarding was his work to help British nanotechnology company P2i to secure a multimillion-dollar deal to develop its ultra-thin coatings — a technology spun off from the Ministry of Defence — to sus-

Times Gallery



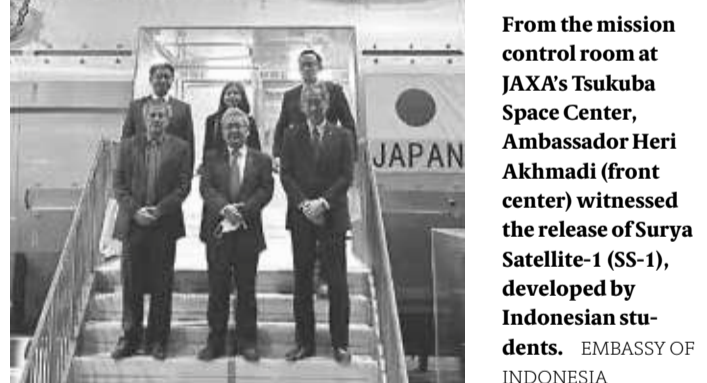
Grand Hyatt Tokyo in Roppongi welcomes students from the nearby school Aiiku Gakuen, for children in need of special care, in the Christmas area of its lobby. The kids enjoyed the festive area and activities such as a surprise visit by Santa Claus. GRAND HYATT



The Japan Friendship Golf Club comes together for a day of golf in Chiba to celebrate the holidays. They gather every month to build relations among golf enthusiasts from Japan and overseas. SONNY TOLENTINO



Panamanian Ambassador Carlos Pere and his wife, Elizabeth Heurtematte, attend the reception for the National Day of the State of Qatar on Dec. 14 at the invitation of Ambassador Hassan bin Mohammed Rafei al-Emadi. EMBASSY OF PANAMA



From the mission control room at JAXA's Tsukuba Space Center, Ambassador Heri Akhmadi (front center) witnessed the release of Surya Satellite-1 (SS-1), developed by Indonesian students. EMBASSY OF INDONESIA



The Nordic Christmas Gala, the largest event in Japan celebrating Nordic culture, was held on Dec. 8 at Meguro Gajoen in Tokyo. At left is Martin Koos, general manager of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan, and at right is Antti Kunnas, executive director of the Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Japan. DCCJ



The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan marks the new year on Jan. 18. President Om Prakash and Executive Director Laura Younger (third and sixth from left) stand with the U.S. Embassy's Charge Raymond Greene (second from left), JCCI Chairman Ken Kobayashi (fourth from left), JUBC Chairman Jun Sawada (third from right) and other guests. LIFE 14



The ambassador of Cuba, Miguel A. Ramirez, and his wife, Rosa M. Alvarez, are received at the headquarters of the Min-On Concert Association, which promotes international music and performing arts exchanges, by its president, Kazuto Ito (standing, third from right). MIN-ON CONCERT



Charge d'Affaires Natalia Salazar shares the meaning of the Bolivian traditional festival Alasita at a concert that the Japanese artist Takaatsu Kinoshita offered in tribute to the Ekeko (a figure that symbolizes abundance and prosperity) in the Kanagawa city of Hadano. EMBASSY OF BOLIVIA

Ricoh leads in decarbonization and circular economy efforts

Mission: Sustainability

OSAMU INOUE
RENEWS

Ricoh Co., a leading provider of digital services, information management, and print and imaging solutions, was one of the earliest Japanese companies to adopt ESG-oriented management. In December 2022, Ricoh was chosen as a constituent of the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index for the third consecutive year. Furthermore, Ricoh is included among the constituents of all five Japanese-stock ESG indexes adopted by Japan's Government Pension Investment Fund, one of the largest pension funds in the world.

In April 2017, Ricoh became one of the quickest Japanese companies to respond to the Paris Agreement when it pledged to aim for zero greenhouse gas emissions across its entire value chain. In March 2020 it set ambitious targets of reducing Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 63% and Scope 3 other emissions by 40% from the 2015 levels by 2030. In addition, the company is working to increase the share of renewable energy-derived power used in its operations to 100% by 2050.

Ricoh established the Environmental Promotion Section in 1976, the "Ricoh group environmental principles" in 1992 and then advocated sustainable environmental management in 1998, making it one of the earliest to make such a move. Since Yoshinori "Jake" Yamashita became president in 2017, the company has upgraded its sustainable environmental management into ESG management and has strengthened its strategies.

Participation in RE100

RE100 is a global initiative in which member companies commit to procuring 100% of the electricity they need for business operations from renewable sources. In April 2017, Ricoh became the first Japanese company to join it. A major factor that led to this decision was the 2015 U.N. climate conference, at which the Paris Agreement was adopted. It was an important conference in which a new international framework to replace the Kyoto Protocol was to be decided. Ricoh, which was chosen as an official sponsor, became painfully aware of the strong awareness held by the rest of the world.

"Ricoh was one of the companies that embraced sustainable environmental man-

agement early, and we took pride in having led other Japanese companies, but the rest of the world was a step ahead of us," said Satoshi Abe, general manager in Ricoh's professional services division. "So we agreed we'd have to change our goals and their design in a major way," he continued.

¥30 billion in sales

Ricoh's efforts on sustainability are not limited to measures centering on saving energy and using renewable energy to avert climate change. In the 1990s, the company launched a global program in which multi-function printers, other printers, toner, ink and replaceable components collected from customers are reused or recycled. In 1997, the first recycled machine, which Ricoh calls the "RC machine," went on sale. Over the decades following its launch, Ricoh's product and component recycling business grew to generate sales totaling about ¥30 billion (about \$275 million at that time) in fiscal 2021.

Ricoh was also early to begin working on an innovative technology to expand the reuse of iron: the adoption of electric furnace steel sheets, a product made entirely from recycled scrap steel. In March 2012, the company announced it would use electric furnace steel sheets that it had jointly developed with Tokyo Steel Manufacturing Co. in the steel structural components of its multi-function printers, becoming the first company in its industry to use electric furnace steel sheets in office equipment.

The Comet Circle™

In 1994 Ricoh designed the "Comet Circle," a diagram that represents a concept in which environmental loads are reduced across the entire product life cycle. This diagram is very similar to a widely known conceptual diagram of a circular economy.

Ricoh is aware that it is a manufacturer of products and that their basic designs have a significant bearing on environmental loads. Under the view that manufacturers have a responsibility to lead efforts to reduce environmental loads across entire product life cycles, the Comet Circle shows Ricoh's determination to play that role.

Changing customers

"What we have built up over three decades is the activity to make our business model a circular-economy-style one," said Abe.



Illustration of a labelless bottle SHO FUJITA

Because of that, Ricoh created a technology that uses lasers to print directly onto plastic bottles so they can be sold without labels.

The plastic labels wrapped around plastic drink bottles are a cause of plastic waste. They have to be removed before the bottles can be recycled, making such labels a source of inefficiency in the recycling process. However, label-free products are often available only in batches packaged in cardboard boxes that show ingredients and other required information. Guidelines by the Council for PET Bottle Recycling prohibit the use of ink to print directly on plastic bottles. Ricoh thus developed a technology for printing on bottle surfaces using a laser marking that does not affect the recycling of plastic bottles and does not involve ink.

For consumers, the new technology eliminates the bother of removing plastic labels from bottles when disposing of them. For beverage makers, it reduces the costs of making and printing on separate labels. For recyclers, it reduces the load on workers of separating materials. It is a breakthrough technology that is expected to facilitate the recycling of bottles at every level, from consumers and manufacturers to recyclers.

Sales of labelless plastic bottles using the laser-marking technology have only just begun, and they are not yet regularly available to consumers. But there certainly is a possibility that the technology may become mainstream in the near future.

Scan the QR code to read the full article about Ricoh's leading commitments and initiatives toward the environment.

