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I don't believe that the Democratic Party is an enemy of Japan. I think this is spread by certain people who have a vested interest in saying that.

Pop Vox

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Kuchikomi

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New Products

Karaoke mic for MP3 players LAT-PPKARA01, Logitec Wireless access point for gaming devices CG-WLGA01, Corega Digital cembalo C-30, Roland

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Book Kitchen

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IT/Computer/Media Jobs in Japan

GaijinPot.com features the latest IT/Computer/Media jobs in Japan for foreigners and bilingual Japanese. Listings updated daily. **BROWSE NOW**

Two gung-ho career women connect business with academia at Osaka University

By Yone Sugita



Katy Horiuchi, left, and Harumi Hotta

OSAKA — The former Osaka University of Foreign Studies received an endowment from several corporations to support a unique set of courses in the fields of the humanities and the social sciences. Students can receive academic credit for their coursework.

The first endowment course, Analysis of Current International Events, which includes guest lectures by top journalists, was established in 2004 with funding from the Yomiuri newspaper. This course has been and still is very popular with students. Since 2004 even more corporations have decided to help fund course

programs.

When Osaka University of Foreign Studies merged with and became part of Osaka University in October 2007, it was running seven endowment courses supported by five different corporations. In the 2008-2009 school year, three new courses will be added, and the total will be 10 courses endowed by seven corporations.

One unique and interesting course is "Introduction to International Careers," organized by Mainichi Communications Inc (<http://ryugaku.mynavi.jp/>) and taught by two energetic and bright women, Katy Horiuchi, director of H&K Global Connections (<http://www.hkcg.jp/en>) and Harumi Hotta, director of Business-Paradigm (http://www.business-paradigm.com/e_home.html). They work on the front line in business on a daily basis and can bring the hottest information about their most recent experiences to classroom. They serve as a bridge between the business world and the university.

Yone Sugita: Katy, H&K Global Connections is a new company established in 2006. Please tell us a little bit about your company and the services you offer.

Horiuchi: We are an international marketing agency for small companies who want to expand their business in both Japan and overseas. What is unique about us is that our marketing methodology is based on a business owner's "Personal-Branding." Identifying a customer's Unique Selling Point based on this methodology is one of our key outputs. We also coordinate marketing communication such as websites, literature, and PR, etc, to maximize brand value. Our customers are both Japanese and foreigners and are satisfied with our high quality work and flexibility.



Sugita: "Personal Branding" is a rather special and interesting concept. How did you come up with this idea for your marketing strategy? Is it suitable for "group-oriented" Japanese people?



Horiuchi: Personal Branding is marketing activity based on yourself, not on your company name or on the community to which you belong. Through Personal Branding, you tell your story about your own "strengths and skills" together with your personal values. The ultimate goal is to let your name to be associated with a "positive image" by your target market. For example, Steve Jobs, Michael Jordan, Ryoko Yawara (an Olympic judo gold medalist) are some examples of successful cases.

Personal Branding is popular in the U.S., but still new in Japan. Personal Branding can be applied to various types of business, but we are focusing on small-to-mid sized companies in the service sector including in design. Students or professionals who are seeking new jobs can also utilize Personal Branding to leverage their value. That is why we decided to share our knowledge with students at Osaka University. We witnessed companies' turn-around such as restructuring and bankruptcies while we worked for them. We felt that the company life cycle has been getting shorter, and that if the company's CEO was changed, the company's strategy and services were also changed.

Since IT is a global phenomenon, good products can be easily copied and it has been getting difficult to "differentiate" only through products and services. Therefore, we concluded that the real differentiator for the new era will be "people" and "Personal Branding." Individuals have their own unique "strength" and "personality" and they are all different. We believe that if you leverage yourself, you can better and more easily differentiate your product or service.

It is a decidedly suitable concept for Japanese people, because Japanese people tend to avoid standing out and tend not to disclose the CEO's profile effectively. Now that Asian companies are catching up with Japanese technology, it will be critical to differentiate by leveraging the Personal Brand.

Sugita: Business-Paradigm specializes in European MBA consultation and is managed by two Japanese women. Please tell us a little bit about your company and its services.

Hotta: Business-Paradigm is located in both London and Tokyo. We have an unrivalled reputation for providing Japanese candidates with European Universities – BA, MA, MSc, and MBA-related information and services: school selection, professional career consulting, business-start-ups, management education, corporate programs and incubator services.

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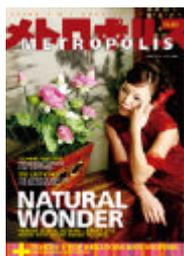
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