

Doing Business with the Japanese – a one stop guide to Japanese business practice
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This compact book has been produced by a team of well known and well respected writers and observers of Japan providing a wealth of useful information for those who do, or are about to do, business with Japan. It includes comments on the state of the Japanese economy and Japan's markets as well as detailed, how-to-do-it tips on Japanese protocols, the Japanese transport system and other areas of interest to business visitors to Japan. A novel aspect of the book, and one which I particularly liked, are the short vignettes from a cross section of people who have lived, worked, or otherwise dealt with Japan in one capacity or another. In a no-nonsense style, these give a real flavour of some of the issues in working with the Japanese.

It is designed as a one-stop guide and is written from a British perspective – good for a British audience, but perhaps limiting its appeal to other countries. This is a pity, given the quality of the material that it contains, much of which would be useful to any non-Japanese audience.

This is an edited book, comprising nine chapters by seven lead authors. However, this hides the fact that the names of no fewer than 18 contributors appear on the contents page, an indication of the richness and range of views contained in the book – the aforementioned vignettes account for some of this variety.

The first four chapters provide background information on Japan with particular reference to her current economic circumstances. These include a commentary on business opportunities in Japan, an analysis of the state of the Japanese economy, a discussion of Japanese markets (an important and, to non Japanese eyes, difficult area) and a view of what the future holds for Japan. It is all good stuff, and the contributors do a good job of explaining complex issues in a very clear, straightforward manner.

The remaining chapters cover some of the practical details of doing in business in Japan – a guide to Japanese law for British investors (note the British emphasis), doing business face-to-face (a guide to protocols for meetings, dress, entertaining and so on) and getting about in Japan. There is an interesting chapter on the future of Japan, comprising contributions from six people on issues such as growth sectors and opportunities, the role of women in Japan, lifestyle trends and so on.

All in all this is a valuable little book, containing a great deal of distilled wisdom on doing business in Japan.

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