

Young American penetrates Japanese manufacturing industry



Interview with
**Julian
Bashore**

Representative Director / Business Development Manager of Bodycote Japan K.K.

Very few Western companies hire young, 36-year-old leaders to open their regional office in Japan. UK-based Bodycote plc, the world's leading provider of thermal processing services, chose Julian Bashore to do just that.

Why? Because Bashore studied Japanese and business strategy at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, which included one year abroad at the Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies (KCJS), a consortium of 14 American universities that sponsors a rigorous, two-semester academic program for undergraduates who wish to do advanced work in Japanese language and cultural studies. He also spent 13 years at PPG Industries, Inc. (PPG), which manufactures coatings, glass, and chemical products, in Ohio and Michigan as a Technical Liaison with PPG's Japanese customers, followed by 9 years in Nagoya with PPG.

A fluent speaker of Japanese and someone who prides himself on his people skills, Bashore beat out 20 other candidates late last year to become the Representative Director and Business Development Manager of Bodycote Japan K.K. And within just a few months, with the help of Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), Bashore had incorporated Bodycote in almost record time and moved into the 40th floor of one of Nagoya's most sophisticated office buildings.

Asked what he finds attractive about Nagoya, also the area home to many of Bodycote's customers in the aerospace and automotive industries, after 10 years of life there, Bashore's immediate response is that local people are very kind, open, and friendly, and there is less hustle and bustle than in Tokyo. What is more, the cost of living is very good. "You can live in a larger apartment than in Tokyo," he smiled.

But Bashore reinforces that being a Westerner doing business in Japan can be advantageous. For one thing, he says it is easier to get your foot in the door with a non-Japanese name. Also as the only Western member of 2 local industry associations, he gets noticed a lot. The same could be said for his membership in the Greater Nagoya Initiative (GNI). GNI, which he joined this year as one of its few Western members, is one of the most powerful manufacturing destinations in the world, defined as the area within 100 km radius of downtown Nagoya, and home to a concentration of major corporations of international repute.

How about his young age? Isn't that a problem? "My age has not been a disadvantage at all. If anything, it is an advantage." Yes, Bashore is young. But moreover, he is clever to do business in Japan as a Representative Director and Business Development Manager of Bodycote Japan K.K. He values the differences between the Japanese and Westerners, and actively gets along with everyone there in Japan and Nagoya, such as participating in local trade association events. "I recommend other Western companies entering Japan to become part of the local community, not only industry associations but also public organizations. You can understand and obtain information on your market and competitors," he suggests.

Now Bodycote Japan K.K. has a short history since its establishment, but driven by Bashore, a valiant penetrator, they are surely bound to become a powerhouse in the industry in the not-so-distant future.

Julian Bashore was born in San Francisco, California and raised near Reading, Pennsylvania. He graduated from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and spent a year abroad at the Stanford Japan Center, to study Japanese language, culture, economy, and politics at Kyoto Center for Japanese Studies, and became an accomplished Japan specialist who grew up on both sides of the Pacific. After graduation, he entered PPG Industries. After 13 years of service with a manufacturer of coatings and chemicals, Julian Bashore is now setting up the Japan subsidiary of Bodycote plc, as a Business Development Manager - Japan. As a member of the Thermal Processing SBU, he will lead Bodycote's aggressive expansion into the 2nd largest heat treatment market in the world. Julian also serves as the Representative Director of Bodycote Japan K.K.