

Part 5: The Phase of Refining the Brand



Honing the JAC Style
For a Business That
Can Grow Sustainably

JAC took the opportunity of the 2008 financial crisis to reconsider the way it had done business to date.

To create a foundation that would be able to hold steady even when society underwent immense change, JAC needed to ascertain what strengths it had and then establish such a platform carefully.

Based on this approach, JAC started taking up the challenge of building up its brand.

Organisational Restructuring Aimed at Building Up the Global Brand

As she worked to restructure the business, Hiromi Tazaki believed that rather than trying to work out what was the most efficient form of business at one particular moment, the most important starting-point for the business's growth strategy going forwards was to build a robust foundation. A business which was perfectly optimised for the current moment or the market of today made it easy to expect short-term results, but might be extremely vulnerable in the face of change. Sustainable growth surely could not be expected from this model. Hiromi's focus, therefore, was on further shoring up JAC's strengths, even if this task took some time. There was no doubt in her mind that this strengthening of the

company's foundations was what would produce long-term growth in the years ahead. So, what was JAC's strength? One strength, surely, was that JAC was a global recruitment brand, rooted in the UK. It was precisely this identity that had enabled JAC to differentiate itself from the other recruitment companies that had expanded in Japan; strengthening this brand, Hiromi believed, would enable JAC to develop a unique position for itself. JAC's first step in shoring up its global brand concerned its department that was engaged in introducing bilingual human resources to foreign companies in Japan; JAC made this department a subsidiary company and worked to build up the business. Ever since JAC had expanded

into Japan, it had engaged in the introduction of human resources to multinational companies which were entering the Japanese market, and the track record it had developed in this way was the source of its image as "JAC, a company that works well with foreign firms". However, as the scale of this business had expanded, latent problems with the organisational management had come to the surface, eroding JAC's relative advantage in this area. Essentially, trying to manage a team that now numbered around 30 non-Japanese consultants required a skilful manager, but as JAC simply could not find human resources at this level, the full potential of the department was not being effectively



Hiromi in 2014 receiving her "The Hall of Fame" award in honour of her personal achievements as the person making the greatest contribution to the development of the recruitment industry



In 2015, changed its listing from the JASDAQ Securities Exchange to the First Section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange

harnessed. JAC therefore decided to use this opportunity to take the plunge: invest in the right human resources, and restructure the organisation. JAC then looked outside the organisation to find a non-Japanese potential manager with plenty of experience in the recruitment domain, made the department as a subsidiary (JAC International Co., Ltd.) in 2011, and then worked to further invigorate the business that the new organisation was carrying out for multinational companies. As part of JAC's ongoing restructuring process, the company in 2013 acquired C.C. Consulting (currently CareerCross), the operator of a job vacancy website for bilingual human resources, and made this as a subsidiary. JAC had in fact fixed its sights on C.C. Consulting from an early stage as a company which possessed

unique value for the point of contact it provided between companies and high-quality bilingual resources in Japan (a scarce resource that has always been difficult to find in this country); now, with JAC aiming to bolster its global brand, the company believed that bringing C.C. Consulting within the JAC company umbrella would generate positive effects on business at JAC International and JAC Recruitment. JAC therefore went ahead with the purchase. Although some of the policies JAC put in place as part of its organisational restructuring did not bring about any noticeable effects immediately after implementation, there is little doubt that they have helped JAC develop an image as a company with particular strengths in global recruitment. These policies could be described as part of JAC's steady progress

towards its goal of establishing the strong points that are unique to the company over the long term. Following this in 2018, JAC acquired all shares of JAC Recruitment Asia Ltd. (currently JAC Recruitment International Ltd.), a corporation expanding overseas that was part of the Group organisation, and made it a subsidiary. In fact, this purchase amounted to no more than reestablishing JAC's connection with an organisation which it had previously disconnected from the Japanese corporation as part of a streamlining process in the run-up to becoming a listed company. However, the reintegration of JAC in Japan and overseas offices at precisely this point in time seems to have further bolstered the image of JAC as a global company.

Establishing Service Brands to Promote Specialisation

Having taken on a more strongly international character through the establishment of these subsidiaries, JAC's next move was to further advance its position as a recruitment company with strength in specialists. From the beginning, JAC had made a name for itself as a recruitment company dealing with professional bilingual human resources. However, with the company now putting down roots in the Japanese market through its expansion in scale, at some point this particular feature of the company had started to weaken. Yet with rival companies at this time trying to expand their transaction figures rapidly by focusing on maximum efficiency, it was becoming more important for JAC in strategic terms to establish a clearly-differentiated position for itself as a firm engaging in high-added-value recruitment, rather than trying to compete in the same area as these competitors. This would assist with JAC's strategy of further transforming itself into an organisation delivering highly professional human resources through high-level consulting.

As part of her quest to increase the level of specialisation, Hiromi made the consultant teams fully compartmentalised by type. This involved not merely dividing up departments by industry, but further compartmentalising each team based on the specific nature of each task. With this compartmentalisation, the number of working units grew rapidly, like the florets on a head of broccoli. As a result, each consultant soon became highly familiar with a limited domain, allowing each to establish a special position for themselves. Moreover, because consultants were now able to talk to customers on an equal footing during business negotiations,

expressing familiarity with the kind of truly professional information that rivals were unable to acquire, this helped to win customers' trust, with customers thinking "Any candidates introduced by this person are sure to be just what we need". Based on this kind of specialised approach, JAC created 11 different service brands targeting different areas, including JAC Executive, JAC Digital and JAC Career, with the objective of inspiring higher expectations among customers by clearly demonstrating the value that comes from being matched with the human resources they truly want.

A team for introducing executive human resources had started work from quite an early stage, but as the nature of its services and targets was so vaguely defined, it could hardly be said to be functioning effectively. A new service brand under the name JAC Executive was created in 2011 as organisational restructuring. Once JAC had set out its target and the nature of its services in specific terms, including stipulating that its services were limited to introducing candidates in the high-income bracket of ¥15 million a year or more, the team found itself able to meet the needs of customers looking for executive human resources, and business began to grow. In addition to pushing these services forwards, in 2020 JAC also bought up VantagePoint, a company engaging in headhunting services, and made it a subsidiary. Acquiring a specialised company in the niche realm of headhunting for consulting firms, and bringing it within the Group umbrella, further enhanced the range of services JAC could offer for introducing executive human resources.

At the same time, in 2019 JAC also

started up its JAC Digital service brand to handle the introduction of IT human resources, an area that was rapidly attracting more attention from society at large. By organising the JAC Digital team into different areas handling specific aspects of work within the IT domain, JAC was able to work closely in tune with customers' needs, leading to an increase in business transactions. JAC then started up JAC Career, which took a completely different perspective to recruitment by functioning as a service brand for introducing promising young candidates. Part of JAC's objective was to build up deep-rooted relationships with the kind of human resources who had the potential to serve in top-level management in companies, due to the possibility that they might be involved with JAC at numerous points in their careers going forwards.

In addition to these service brands, JAC also developed some new niche services aimed at responding to customers' diversifying needs for human resources. These included services such as JAC IPS (Interim Professional Solutions), which introduces work-ready professionals to serve for limited periods of time such as during transitional periods when businesses undergo major change, and JAC RPO (Recruitment Process Outsourcing) in which JAC carries out hiring services on behalf of a customer's own personnel department, responding flexibly to customers' individual needs, such as wanting to bolster their hiring functions temporarily when expanding the scale of their organisations. These new services have enabled a more finely tuned response to customers' needs.



Discussing growth strategies at employee training in 2018



April 2022: The first in-person entrance ceremony held for two years since the COVID-19 pandemic. April 2025: 149 new grads joined the company.



Overcoming the Pandemic and Moving Ahead into the Future

In 2020, having made progress with reestablishing its operations in this way to emphasise its strengths and got itself onto a growth trajectory, JAC once again faced a situation that rocked society to its core: the COVID-19 pandemic. A state of emergency was proclaimed by the Government of Japan on 7 April, prohibiting people from leaving home for non-essential reasons as an anti-infection measure, while companies were requested to put restrictions on employees coming into the workplace with the aim of reducing in-person working by 70%. JAC, particularly the top managers and its administrative departments, worked hard to rush to take measures in response to this situation. They rapidly put a series of measures in place, including setting up system environments to allow remote work and formulating rules for working from home (WFH). And from that moment on, for two months, JAC's offices had been emptied of people.

However, the basic work of a consultant does not change much, even when working remotely: setting up appointments with customers and candidates, holding meetings, and working out and proposing the perfect matches for both parties. Although there was perhaps a little temporary confusion at first, JAC's consultants—who had long been accustomed to working with a high level

of autonomy—quickly adapted to the situation. While the greater difficulty of communicating with people without meeting them face-to-face was a constant challenge, an advantage of this way of working was the opportunities it created to meet with customers and candidates located far away, with whom meetings had previously not been possible. As a result, although sales in 2020 were about 10% below those of the previous year, the damage was not severe, and the figures were once again on an upward trajectory by the following year. Looking at the more severe losses which JAC's competitors suffered in the wake of the pandemic, this suggests that JAC was now seeing the fruits of its efforts to strengthen and improve the organisation after the experience of the 2008 financial crisis.

Now, JAC Group has reached its 50th anniversary as a company. As we have seen, the trail reaching to this point has been a long process of trial and error. Sometimes, trying to break into new areas has involved struggles and distressing failures; but each time this has happened, JAC has tried to use these tough experiences as motivation, and has come back stronger. Having started as a small business in the UK, this company is now spreading throughout the world, further honing its identity as it continues to

connect people and companies in large numbers. Going forwards, JAC will continue to pursue further growth. Having driven the business forwards over all these years, Hiromi now has a new resolve for the company. "Over the years, JAC has never stood still; we have always kept on growing. I think we've been a very exciting place to work, for everyone who has been employed here. As of March 2025, we have grown to encompass a workforce of 2,148 employees in total, at 33 offices in 11 countries all over the world. Yet JAC's progress is still not complete. What I am really aiming for as my next target for JAC is for us to become a ¥200 billion company and No. 1 in the world. I truly believe that JAC has the potential to do this". Yet growing in size is just one target along the way to JAC's ultimate goal as a company: to bring as much happiness as possible to both customer companies and candidates through our higher-level consulting. However far AI develops, we should believe in the power of human beings, and create value through our relationships with people. That, always, is the ultimate goal for all of us working for JAC. As we take up this challenge towards our vision, the next chapter of JAC's history will be written.

JAC's New Era-Quantum Leap Towards the Next 50 Years