



Jan Constantine Japan Market: Case Study



"Working with UKTI has helped us to open many doors in near and faraway places which otherwise we may never even have dreamed about. The help and support we have received from UKTI has given us the confidence and experience to move into new and exciting territories."

Jan Constantine – Creative Director

From Betley to Tokyo - British designer Jan Constantine finds success in Japan.

Sector: Fashion/Textile
UK Region: Cheshire/Staffordshire

The Jan Constantine story started in 2002, with Founder and Creative Director Jan Constantine creating hand-embroidered cushions on the kitchen table of her home in Betley, Cheshire.

Jan grew her business organically by showing her products at various trade fairs in London and through the support of the press. By 2009 the name was a recognised brand within the UK and supplied many major London stores such as Liberty of London, Harrods, Selfridges and Fortnum & Mason. Jan was accorded an official license to produce and sell home textiles for the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Jan has loved Japanese culture since her college days, so when their UKTI trade adviser Pat Steele suggested taking part in a Trade Mission to Tokyo, she jumped at the idea. Having been featured in the prestigious Japanese magazine RSVP and receiving some great feedback, "it felt very exciting and the right thing to do!" says Jan.

Jan Constantine was introduced to the Japanese market through a fortuitous meeting with a Japanese agent during a London trade fair. "He saw the products and immediately knew they would be successful in Japan", said Jan. Following this, the company commissioned an OMIS report from UK Trade & Investment and Jan attended a successful trade mission with UKTI to the British Embassy, Tokyo in the spring of 2013, where she met with buyers, distributors and key contacts from large department stores. A relationship was established, and continues to be nurtured, with Isetan department store in Tokyo, and the brand soon started to supply a distributor after receiving an invitation to exhibit at Hankyu department store's annual British Fair in 2013.

Jan Constantine was the third most popular brand at the Hankyu fair that year, and was subsequently invited back in 2014 and 2015, helping with raising the brand's recognition in Japan.

The brand has seen an amazing response to their products in Japan. "There is so much respect and delight from our Japanese customers who really appreciate the craftsmanship of each and every product," says Jan. "The Japanese market loves our British patriotic designs, and the customers love the story behind the brand and the designer."

Lifestyle and trade missions organised by UKTI and held at the British Embassy in Tokyo have been of invaluable help to the brand's business in Japan. "The support and knowledge offered to the British exporters by the trade advisors in Japan and the UK is superb," comments the designer. "The events are wonderful to be part of, and the prestige of attending them and being invited to the Embassy is great for prospective Japanese buyers and the press."

Japan will continue to be a focus market for the brand, and the next steps for Jan Constantine's business development in Japan will be to further develop their licensing program with [Copyrights Asia](#).

"Don't hesitate! Make your dream come true," says Jan, as advice to other UK companies dreaming of doing business in Japan.

"The help and advice from UKTI and the British Embassy in Tokyo make it easy to take part, explore, and experience the market. The financial support is very helpful, and the camaraderie and moral support from other Brits on the trip make it so enjoyable as well."



Jan Constantine

<http://www.janconstantine.com/>

Fast Facts:

- **Jan Constantine's hand-embroidered textiles and accessories are recognised in the UK for their iconic designs and quality.**
- **Jan Constantine has published a range of books and notebooks, including "Heirloom Embroidery" in 2009 and "Love Stitching" in 2011.**
- **Jan Constantine was awarded a London 2012 Olympic License to produce a collection of hand embroidered home wares bearing the official logo of the games.**
- **Jan was invited to meet HRH Prince Charles in 2014 at an event organised by UKTI to discuss exporting.**
- **Jan Constantine celebrated its 14th birthday in 2016 and has launched a collection of hand-embroidered cashmere cardigans as a new venture into fashion.**
- **The company also licenses its designs to other companies.**
- **Jan Constantine and her home have been featured in a number of Japanese home and lifestyle magazines.**