

The comprehensive service site that supports location of enterprises from both inside and outside Japan, into "Hyogo-Kobe" through one-stop services.

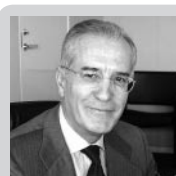
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Kobe Selected for Training Center to support goal of "Sheer Driving Pleasure"

"BMW Group Academy Kobe" moves into Kobe Port Island (2nd Stage) and opens

This January, BMW Japan opened its consolidated training facility "BMW Group Academy Kobe" in Port Island (2nd Stage) as the first direct investment to the training facility by the foreign car manufacturer in the western part of Japan. The facility offers a variety of training options including management, sales, marketing, after sales processes and technical solutions. The center forms an important part of the business strategy for BMW Group Japan that has been designing the sustainable and profitable growth. We spoke to the President, Mr. Jesus Cordoba, about this major move into Kobe.



BMW Group Japan

President

Jesus Cordoba

—What responsibilities does the BMW Group Academy Kobe bear?

The facility is designed totally and perfectly in accordance with the BMW's image and CI. We cared about not only the architectural design but also the surrounding environment.

The training that is carried out here includes multiple responsibilities. It covers the comprehensive training for BMW, MINI and BMW Motorrad authorized dealers, which include management training, technical and non-technical training for sales and after sales staff. The content is basically identical with our another facility at Makuhari, but, depending on needs, we may also conduct specific trainings only at Kobe.

—Why did you build a training facility in Western Japan?

BMW is currently growing at a fast speed. Between 2001 and 2006, the sales have increased by 73%, and last year we marked a record by selling 62,000 units. With BMW brand alone, the users exceed 500,000. In order to provide the best services to our customers, we do need to provide comprehensive trainings to our dealers as well. Since half of our users and dealers are living in Western Japan, based on our motto of 'Closer to our Customers', we felt that it was important to establish our 2nd training facility in Western Japan.

—Why did you choose Kobe?

First of all, the access is excellent. Kobe airport is very close, Shinkansen access is very convenient,

and the location is quite close to the city center. Also, since we are automobile and motorcycle maker, it was naturally important that a good road infrastructure be in place, with an easy access to the parking lot. In addition, the accommodation and pleasant surrounding environment were also important, as these assure the pleasant stay and enhance the effectiveness of the training after all. We had a look at a number of candidate cities, but none of them were able to satisfy all of our needs as well as this area of Kobe.

When we first learned about Kobe during the selection process, we were surprised that such a great city exists in Japan outside of Tokyo. It has an international atmosphere, and is very open to Western culture. With a strong export base, this is certainly a city that can compete strongly with anywhere in the world.

Government support was another major factor. We received a very impressive package from the Kobe City Government regarding land. We are also extremely grateful for the various help given by the Hyogo Prefectural Government in the consideration of tax exemptions etc.

—What is your impression of Kobe and its people?

Kobe is a very unique and authentic city. It has a long history, with a strong brand image, and fits perfectly with the premium brand value of BMW.

Also, Kobe people have a good balance between work and private life, and seem to watch out for high quality. They also have the image of working hard towards difficult goals, through leadership and innovation. What BMW produces are not just means of transportation, but the mobility with joy that may even change the lifestyle. I feel that our vision fits well with the lifestyle of Kobe people.

—What do you think of the Japanese market?

We feel it's the most difficult in the world. The reason is that, firstly, you have 10 local car manufacturers all crammed into a space about the size of California. Also, there are strong relationships between consumers and brands, and customers and stores. There is a strong brand loyalty here which can't be seen anywhere else in the world. It is extremely difficult to let the consumer to convert the loyalty from one to the other in this market.

—What are you hoping to achieve from your business activities in Kobe?

With the construction of our Academy, we've now become a part of Kobe. We hope that we can contribute something as a corporate citizen to Kobe, and develop strong bonds with the people here. For example, we are looking to do a variety of things in the community, such as sharing management know-how to universities, etc.

We are very proud of being in Kobe. We really hope that the people of Kobe also feel glad that we are here now. We make every effort, step by step, to make that happen.

BMW Group Academy Kobe

Address: 1-4-7 Minatojima-minamimachi, Chuo-ku, Kobe City
Land Area: 1,499.98m²
Floor Area: 1,331.30m²
Structure/Class: Two Story Steel Structure
Facility Content: 3 Technological Training Rooms (Classrooms and Labs), 2 Non-Technology Training Rooms, Office, Lobby

BMW Japan

Head Office: 1-10-2 Nakase, Mihama-ku, Chiba City
Established: 22nd September 1981
Business Area: Automotive Industry
Employees: 289