Did you know that Japan has a reputation for being at the forefront of the personal care trends in Asia? That is a large part of what attracted us to this market and, ultimately, led to Permira V’s most recent investment in John Masters Organics (“JMO”). We spoke with Alex Emery, Head of Asia, and Ryo Fujii, Head of Japan, to learn more about the business.

**Ryo Fujii**  
**Head of Japan**

Q. Ryo, we have been looking at the personal care market in Asia for some time, what was it about JMO that really stood out?

Let me start by telling you a little about the business. It was set up in 1991 by John Masters, a well-known celebrity stylist in SOHO in New York with a real brand vision. From the start the brand has been committed to promoting urban wellness and providing luxury, organic beauty that treats both its customers and the earth with respect. This ethos has been very successful and the company’s premium, organic personal care products are distributed in more than 40 countries today.

JMO is the leading organic personal care brand in Japan today.

- It is the No.2 player in the wider natural haircare segment
- It has a strong track record in topline growth
- It has a 55-strong store network with positive like-for-like growth

The market dynamics are also strong with the organic part of the personal care market growing rapidly (11.5% CAGR 2013 – 2018E) and JMO currently enjoying a 33% share of this market.

The acquisition also offered the opportunity to combine JMO with Styla (JMO’s largest distributor in Japan) thereby granting JMO a direct route to the customer.

**Alex Emery**  
**Head of Asia**

Q. Alex, this isn’t Permira’s first foray in Asia, did our Asian experience help win over the management team?

That’s true. As a firm we have been active in Asia for a decade and currently operate from offices in Tokyo, Hong Kong, Seoul and Shanghai offices. Over that time we have made four investments—all successful examples of our growth oriented strategy. Most recently the Permira IV fund invested in Akindo Sushiro, a sushi restaurant chain operator in Japan. Certainly we have learnt a lot from our experience with Sushiro, especially around key catchment areas in Japan, global supply chain management, quality control and product offering, that we will be able to bring to JMO.

But our Asian experience wasn’t the only thing that won the management team over. It was also our extensive brand experience in the consumer space, from Hugo Boss and Valentino to Dr. Marten’s. They were also impressed by our geographical presence beyond Asia (Permira has 14 offices globally) which will give JMO access to professionals on the ground in their target markets as they seek to expand.

**What do you see as the key opportunities for JMO?**

The JMO team has a strong business strategy which will help the business grow its presence significantly in the next few years. It is centred on three core areas:

1. Growing the brand organically through further store roll-out, with a target of doubling the network within the next four years
2. Investing in new product development to expand product variety, particularly within the body and skin care range;
3. Expanding the brand internationally beyond the US and Japanese markets. Asia is a large and growing market and JMO is well placed to...