

## Business Hint from Kyudo

Author

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**[Brief background]**

Mr. Chouchan has been the Representative Director & CEO of Godiva Japan, Inc. since 2010, the President of the French Chamber of Commerce in Japan since 2022, and he is currently the Representative Director & CEO of Orchid Inc., the parent company of Godiva Japan, Inc., and Pierre Marcolini Group. He has a profound knowledge of Japanese culture and holds a Kyudo Renshi (Instructor license) with a 5th Dan degree. He is currently a Board Director of the Kyudo International Federation. He has a Master of Management from the French Leading Business School: HEC Paris.



In the “Biotechnology in Japan” series, we share contributions on Japanese culture and traditions. In this fifth installment, Jérôme Chouchan, the Representative Director & CEO of Godiva Japan, Inc., who has been managing luxury brands for over 30 years in the international market, particularly in Japan and Asia, writes about business tips from the teachings of Kyudo, the Japanese martial art.

I began practicing Kyudo at the age of 29, and since then, I have strongly felt that there are commonalities between Kyudo and business. While Kyudo offers various teachings, the spirit of "Seisha Hicchū" (正射必中), meaning "the right shoot always results in a hit" has proven to be particularly valuable in my approach to business.

In Kyudo, the "target" corresponds to the business goal of sales and profits. "Seisha Hicchū" emphasizes that a correctly shot arrow will invariably hit the target. However, just as one can fail to hit target by being overly fixated on hitting the center of the target and neglect the correct "form" of shooting the arrow, a business can falter if too focused on sales and profits. Succumbing to the pressure of numbers may lead to losing sight of the essence of strategy and, consequently, missing the mark.

Simultaneously, the principle of "Seisha Hicchū" entails the indispensable elements of preparation and concentration. When releasing the bowstring, it is essential to maintain the correct posture and

focus. This parallels the business world, where preparation and concentration are key to success. I believe that prioritizing the creation of products and high-quality services for customers, constructing and implementing strategies to achieve this, is crucial for a company's growth.

Our company has a mission to "We Create Memorable Occasion of Happiness" I have adopted this mission as my 'Seisha,' and I contemplated that for Godiva to provide happiness to customers, the brand should be both "aspirational" and "approachable." While the previous image of the Godiva brand was strongly associated with "special" and "luxurious," I aimed to develop products, distribution channels, and formats that maintain quality while making the brand more relatable, thereby narrowing the distance with customers.

Another important teaching I value is the concept of "Isshā Isshā" (一射一射), which translates to "One Shot at a Time." This attitude involves approaching each shot without being influenced by past successes. In business, it translates to consistently

facing customers with a fresh mindset without being bound by past achievements. Despite the natural inclination to repeat what has worked before, approaching product development, marketing strategies, and engagements with business partners with a renewed dedication each time is a vital process for achieving successful outcomes.

In Kyudo practice, my instructor only observes my posture while drawing the bow. No comments are made about whether the arrow hits the target or not. Strangely, by consistently concentrating on shooting with a renewed mindset and correct posture, positive results follow. Business operates in a similar manner, where focusing on the process, valuing customer experiences, and giving one's best effort are crucial.

In two years, Godiva will celebrate its 100th anniversary. With the spirit of "Seisha" to deliver gratitude and memorable happiness to customers, I will shoot each arrow with heartfelt dedication. Please look forward to the future of Godiva. Additionally, in my life, Kyudo has provided numerous guidance and insights. I aspire to contribute, albeit modestly, to the global promotion of Kyudo as a way of expressing my gratitude.

