



## ETP participant interview

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Participant name: **Eberhard Baehr**

Company and title: **Bayer HealthCare, Country Division Head, Japan**

ETP cycle: **ETP Japan 4 (1983 – 1985)**

***'ETP gives you the chance to focus on language training and achieve a working level in Japanese, while giving you sufficient access to the business world'***

*Q. Professionally, what was the key benefit you gained from completing the ETP?*

A. Communication skills in language and way of thinking, as well as business contacts.

*Q. What did you find most interesting about the programme?*

A. The programme uniquely combines language and business. It gives you the chance to focus on language training and achieve a working level in Japanese, while giving you sufficient access to the business world to familiarize yourself with business customs and to get valuable contacts in the business world.

*Q. How do you think your company has benefited?*

A. They got an employee who 'hit the ground running', being fully prepared for all things he would encounter in Japan and uniquely suited to bridge the gap in business culture and way of thinking between Japan and Europe.

*Q. In your opinion what is the most interesting aspect of Japanese culture?*

A. Coming to Japan relatively early in my career I was convinced that there was only one way of doing things, only one successful way of doing business: 'our way'. My most important learning was that both in life and in business there are 'other ways' and they can be successful too. So in short the most interesting part was and is experiencing the difference.

*Q. Favourite Japanese food?*

A. The attractiveness of Japanese food lies largely in its variety and seasonality, yet if you force me to make a choice, it would probably be Shabu Shabu.

*Q. Most interesting place to visit in Japan?*

A. Kyoto of course, Nara and Koya-san (if you like it a little more quiet) and Meiji Jingu, but also Roppongi and Shibuya for good balance.

*Q. What do you enjoy most about living in Japan?*

A. The fascination of a modern, highly advanced, yet still strange society. The reliability of both people and infrastructure. The safety of the cities.

*Q. What would you say to someone considering taking part in the programme?*

A. Do it!

*Q. What advice would you give to someone who is about to relocate to Japan*

A. Don't worry, you will never get lost in this country, someone will find you and take care of you. With the Yen being strong, Japan has become more expensive again, but you can buy everything. Be prepared that things might work completely differently from your past experience. You can be sure that they work somehow, you just never know how.