



TAKASHI AOKI APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVE DIRECTOR & CEO OF MCCANN WORLDGROUP JAPAN

Promotion from agency to group level

TOKYO – August 20, 2025 – McCann Worldgroup announced today that Takashi Aoki, the current Representative Director & President of McCann Japan, will succeed Ji Watson and be promoted to the position of Representative Director & CEO of McCann Worldgroup Japan, effective 2 October 2025. In addition, as of the same date, Aoki will also assume the role of Representative Director & CEO of McCann Japan.

With Ji Watson returning to the US to reunite with her family after many years in Asia, this leadership transition has been strategically designed to strengthen the positioning of McCann Worldgroup in Japan, reinforcing its integrated offering and future-forward capabilities to better serve both domestic and international clients in a rapidly evolving market.

Aoki brings more than 25 years of experience across creative, digital and integrated marketing. He began his career as a content planner and writer, later spending 18 years with WPP, including over seven years at J. Walter Thompson Shanghai, where he helped drive brand growth across Asia.

In 2018, he joined Publicis Groupe, leading the launch of a digital transformation agency for a global automotive brand. He went on to serve in key leadership roles, including General Manager of Saatchi & Saatchi Tokyo and Managing Director of Media.Monks Tokyo. Under his leadership, agencies earned accolades such as Campaign Magazine's "Agency of the Year" in Creative, New Business and Production categories across Japan and China.

Aoki was appointed President of agencies, McCann Japan and Craft Japan, in October 2023, and since then has driven business momentum with a strong focus on strategic integration, creativity and operational excellence. He also serves on the board of the Japan Advertising Agencies Association and as an advisory committee member for Advertising Week Asia.

With this appointment, Aoki steps into a broader leadership role across McCann Worldgroup's Japan operations, further unifying the group's creative, digital, and production capabilities under one strategic vision (he retains his role as Representative Director & President of Craft Japan).

Ji Watson said: "As I prepare to hand over leadership responsibilities, I am filled with gratitude for the journey we have shared at McCann Worldgroup Japan. Leading this organization has been a great privilege, and I am proud of all we have accomplished together from driving consistent growth to building a culture of collaboration and innovation.

Takashi has been a key part of that success. In the past two years, he has proven himself to be a thoughtful, strategic leader with a strong commitment to our clients and teams. I have every

confidence that under his leadership, McCann Worldgroup Japan is well positioned for continued success.”

Ghassan Harfouche, President, McCann Worldgroup APMENAT commented: “Ji Watson has been a transformative leader, driving sustained growth, seamless integration, and a deeply inclusive culture in one of the world’s most significant advertising markets. Her leadership in Japan has built a powerful foundation - one that positions us strongly for the future.

I’m pleased to announce Takashi Aoki as her successor. In his current capacity as the President of McCann and Craft Japan, Takashi has demonstrated strong leadership with a clear vision and a deep understanding of our clients’ businesses. He brings the ability to lead across multiple markets and sectors, unite high-performing teams and deliver with creativity and operational excellence. He is uniquely equipped to lead our next phase of growth in Japan and has been working very closely with Ji to ensure a seamless transition. I look forward to working with him and our Tokyo leadership team.”

Speaking on his new appointment, Aoki says: “I feel greatly honored to be appointed as Representative Director & CEO of McCann Worldgroup Japan as Ji’s successor. Over the past two years, the evolution and agency transformation program that Ji and I have driven together have yielded tangible results, positioning us as a powerful and agile organization in this time of dynamic change. Moving forward, we will continue to expand our capabilities and integrate our solutions, further enhancing our value as an iconic agency and delivering outstanding solutions to our clients.”

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Media Contact

Samantha Strauss
Chief Communications Officer
McCann Worldgroup Asia Pacific
samantha.strauss@mccannwg.com

About McCann Worldgroup

McCann Worldgroup, part of the Interpublic Group (NYSE: IPG), is a leading global creative solutions company. The company is united across 100+ countries by a mission to build enduring brands together. McCann Worldgroup was named Network for the Year by the Andys in 2024 and Network of the Year by the EPICA Awards for the sixth time. The core McCann Worldgroup network is comprised of McCann, MRM, CRAFT, and FutureBrand, and partners with Momentum Worldwide, Weber Shandwick and UM to deliver solutions across the entire marketing spectrum.