

TEAM PROJECT

Marketing strategy for Bumble

Launch onto the Japanese market

Intercultural Marketing

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Introduction

Bumble Trading Inc. offers an online dating application that enables users to meet new people for dating, friendship, and business. Bumble app is considered to be a “feminist” app because in heterosexual matches, only female users can make the first contact with matched male users. However, in same-sex matches either person can send a message first.

Bumble was founded in the United States but it currently operates worldwide. In our project, we are focusing on the launch strategy of the app onto the Japanese market. The paper consists of three main parts. Firstly, we introduce the product – Bumble app. Then we present the cultural research we conducted in order to find cultural differences and specific Japanese attributes to be able to adapt our strategy to the Japanese market. Last but not least, we describe the proposed strategy based on the previous research.

1. Product description

Bumble is a location-based social and dating application that uses a format similar to Tinder. However, it is incredibly innovative. Bumble is the first app of its kind to bring dating, friend-finding, and career-building into a single social networking platform which is for free. Furthermore, the app disrupts traditional stereotypes concerning dating since it empowers women and in heterosexual matches only allows female users to make the first move.

1.1 How does it work?

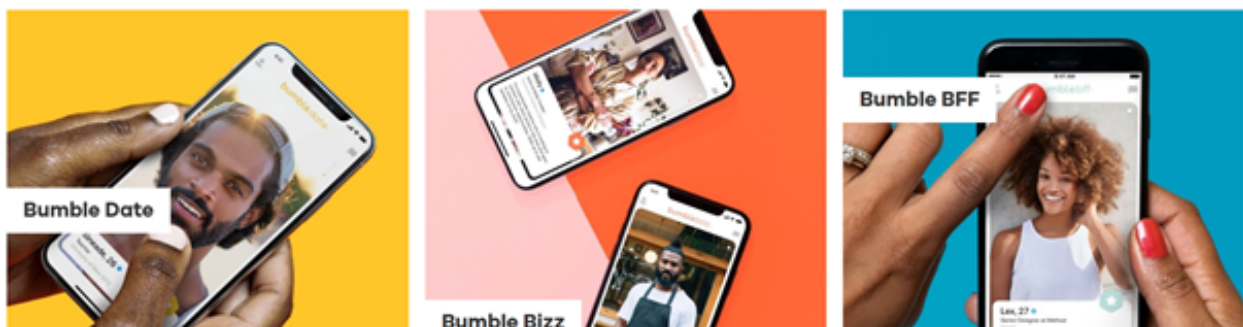
Users browse through profiles and swipe right if they are interested, left if they are not. If they find someone they are really interested in meeting, they can use a SuperSwipe to let them know. When two users form a “Connection” by liking each other’s profiles, messages can be exchanged. But this app has an interesting twist – only women can send the very first message, which is how it earned the nickname “the female-friendly Tinder”. Because women initiate the conversation, Bumble effectively cuts the amount of "sleazy" messages they receive via other apps.

The app empowers users to swipe through potential connections across three different modes:

1) Bumble Date: Bumble Date is the oldest version of Bumble app used for dating. It works on the same principle as Tinder – users browse through profiles, and swipe right if they are interested, left if they are not. And if they find someone they are „really“ interested in meeting, they can use a SuperSwipe to let them know.

2) Bumble BFF: The main reason for creating Bumble BFF was not dating but finding new friends – it is for people who are alone in a new city, school or a place or for someone who just wants to meet some new friends and create new friendships.

3) Bumble Bizz: Bumble Bizz app was created for the business world. It helps users to find mentors and create new career opportunities in a similar way as LinkedIn.



1.2 Why should women make the first move?

According to different studies, the person who makes the first move is often in control. And research shows that people feel more positive when in control. When a woman on Bumble matches with a guy, she has 24 hours to start the conversation. If she doesn't want to say anything, she won't. She has all the power, and while correlation doesn't always mean causation, she should be more positive about chatting. Or at least that's what the studies suggest.

"Bumble exists to empower women..." (Fast Company)

"Bumble is just an app: but it's changing the discussion." (Wired)

"Bumble offers an alternative that prioritizes meaningful connections, with women calling the shots." (UK Sunday Times)

"Bumble rejects hate speech to make users feel safe on its dating app." (Texas Standard)

"What makes Bumble different from other dating apps...is its focus on giving women all the power." (Business Insider)

2. Cultural research

2.1 Use of language

Using English when marketing towards a non-English, Japanese-speaking audience is really common. According to some copywriters, English is simply *cooler* than Japanese and, as a result, gets more attention. *"English looks less cluttered and is easier to use for design. Additionally, English looks very differently from Japanese, which is a great way to attract wandering eyes exactly where you want them to be. This is, of course, in part due to the drastic technical and visual differences between the Roman and Asian character sets. So maybe using simple English could get more people to notice a promotion. In the same vein, International brands also typically use English in their promotional materials to reinforce their imported image. English allows the target to perceive something exciting and foreign. English is considered cool and modern in terms of marketing."*¹

For Japanese advertisements it is common to consist of a few words in English and the rest in Japanese. Everyone in Japan has studied English for about 6 years. Japanese language, as many others, uses borrowed English words. In this process they usually

¹ How to Use English in Japanese Advertising & Promotion. Humble Bunny [online]. Retrieved from: <https://www.humblebunny.com/how-to-use-english-in-japanese-advertising-promotion/>

keep its original meaning but the formal look is different. This process is usually called Japanese English. “*These words are often established into Japanese by converting the words from alphabet-based roman letters to the katakana alphabet (an alphabet used distinctly for foreign-borrowed words). For instance, the words “taste” (Teisuto) and “time” (Taimu) are both regularly used in their Japanese form.*”¹



Example of the use of language in Japanese advertising: Mini Cooper ad
Source: <https://www.humblebunny.com/how-to-use-english-in-japanese-advertising-promotion/>

2.2 Values and symbols

Harmony, order, and self-development are some of the most important values that underlie Japanese social interaction.² This also has an effect on the dating culture and creating “harmonious” relationships between family, friends and romantic partners. Basic ideas about self and the nature of human society are drawn from several religious and philosophical traditions. Religious practice, too, emphasizes the maintenance of harmonious relations with others (both spiritual beings and other humans) and the fulfillment of social obligations as a member of a family and a community.³ These values are also visible in Japanese modern society – dating shows and romantic entertainment shows still follow certain formula despite the westernization of the media.

2.3 The economic and political situation

There has recently been a political change in Japan due to the last Emperor resigning and leaving his son in charge. Every new Imperial era has its name, this one is named “Reiwa”. It means “beautiful harmony” in English.⁴ Japan is known for their political stability and also their well-maintained rule of law. That way, they are strengthening

² Ronald E. Dolan and Robert L. Worden, editors. *Japan: A Country Study* [online]. Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1994. Retrieved from: <https://www.loc.gov/item/91029874/>

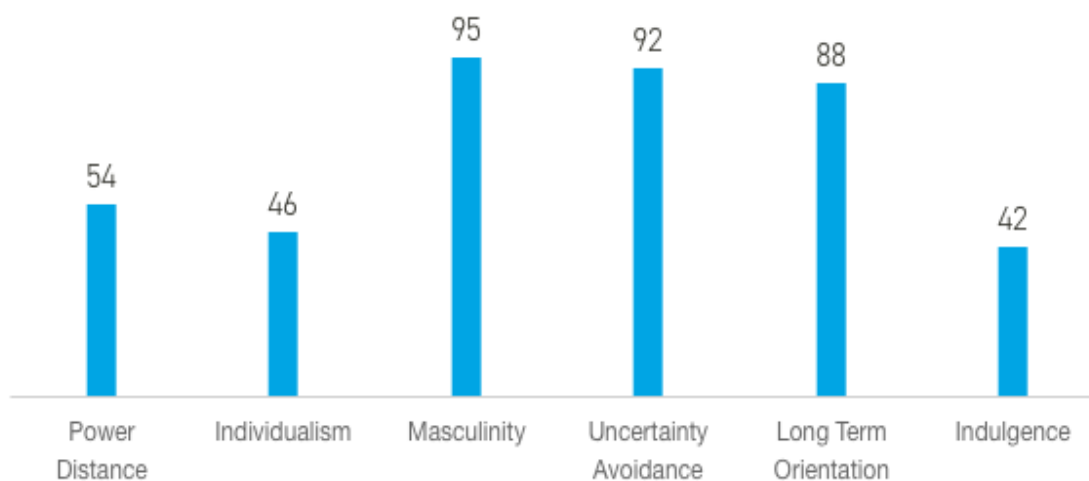
³ Joy, A. Dating in Japan: The Culture Clashes You Need to Know. *Culture Trip* [online]. 2017. Retrieved from: <https://theculturetrip.com/asia/japan/articles/dating-in-japan-the-culture-clashes-you-need-to-know/>

⁴ For Tokyo calendar maker, announcement of Reiwa era name was cue to get printers rolling [online]. *Japan Times*. 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/04/03/national/tokyo-calendar-maker-announcement-reiwa-era-name-cue-get-printers-rolling/#.XKShjRMzbs0>

Japan's economic freedom. Japan is also the 30th country in the 2019 Index of Economic Freedom.⁵

The regulations of digital businesses in Japan are not in any way specific, as Japan does not have a special legal regime concerning digital business. There are a variety of laws and regulations relevant to digital business. Some of the laws are specific to online business, whereas others apply to all business activities. Setting up an online business in Japan involves the same legal process as setting up a "bricks and mortar" business. The first step is for the promoters of the new business to decide how they intend to do business in Japan. For example, if the online business is already established outside of Japan and the promoters want to access the Japanese market, nothing further is required. They are free to offer goods and services (with standard limitations involving the regulation of certain industries such as banking, insurance and finance, or items that violate Japanese public policy such as obscenity or gambling) to the Japanese market via a .com or other top-level domain.⁶

2.4 Cultural differences according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions



Hofstede's cultural dimensions scores in Japan
Source: hofstede-insights.com

⁵ Japan Economic: Population, Facts, GDP, Business, Trade, Unemployment [online]. Heritage. 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.heritage.org/index/country/japan>

⁶ Digital business in Japan: overview [online]. Thompson Reuters Practical Law, United Kingdom. 2018. Retrieved from: [https://uk.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/5-621-1305?transitionType=Default&contextData=\(sc.Default\)&firstPage=true&comp=pluk](https://uk.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/5-621-1305?transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default)&firstPage=true&comp=pluk)

2.4.1 Power distance

With the score of 54, Japan is on the verge of being a hierarchical society. It is important for Japanese people to maintain their hierarchical position when they are socializing and to act accordingly to their social status. This is particularly obvious in the business sector where every decision must be confirmed by the top management of a firm. However, Japanese society is not as hierarchical as the society in other Asian countries. Furthermore, Japan has always been a meritocratic society.⁷ That means that people are rewarded and their social status is based on how hard they work and what they achieve. Therefore people who were born into rich and important families should not be in advantage.⁸

2.4.2 Individualism

Once again, although Japan is borderline collectivistic, it is not as collectivistic as other Asian societies. Japanese people are more private and reserved.⁹

2.4.3 Masculinity

Japan scores extremely high on the masculinity dimension – a score of 95. It is one of the most masculine societies in the world. That means that the society is driven by success and achievement rather than caring for others which is perceived as feminine. For Japanese people, it is important to win and be the best. They start learning that from a very young age and their school system is motivating them to want to win every time. Japanese workaholicism is a product of this aspect of their culture. They are very serious about their careers and they are most motivated when there are competitors on the market. Another example of the high score of Masculinity in Japan is their need for perfection in every aspect of their life.¹⁰

2.4.4 Uncertainty avoidance

With the score of 92, Japan is one of the most uncertainty avoiding societies in the world. It means that Japanese people are afraid of the unknown and always want to have the situation under control. Their life is full of rituals and ceremonies that must be conducted in a precise way. People have to behave accordingly to their traditions. For this reason, any kinds of changes are not popular in Japan.¹¹

⁷ What about Japan?. *Hofstede Insights* [online]. ©2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/japan/>

⁸ Definition of 'meritocratic'. *Collins Dictionary* [online]. ©2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/meritocratic>

⁹ What about Japan?. *Hofstede Insights* [online]. ©2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/japan/>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

2.4.5 Long term orientation

Japan's score on the Long term orientation dimension is 88 which is one of the highest scores in the world. Therefore, Japanese people try live their life the best they can and to serve the society at large. That is particularly visible in the business sector where they prefer steady growth to an immediate profit.¹²

2.4.6 Indulgence

At 44 Japan scores low on the Indulgence dimension which makes it a restrained society. Japanese people control their behaviour and their desires based on what the society considers right or wrong. They do not focus on enjoying life and they tend to be pessimistic or cynical.¹³

2.5 Changing roles of women

With Japan being one of the most masculine countries in the world, women used to be considered inferior to men and men had usually been the main providers in every family. However, with the establishment of democracy and equal rights in Japan women started to gain financial independence which has impacted their gender roles. Nowadays, arranged marriages are not common anymore and women can choose the partner they like and women and men are more equal in their relationships than ever.¹⁴

Unlike in many Western cultures, where there is still pressure for the man to make the first move, it's not uncommon or weird for Japanese women to ask out someone they're interested in.¹⁵ Of course, it is still changing and not completely straightforward but it is an important feature of the Japanese culture. In addition, many Japanese men often expect the woman to pay her own way on a date¹⁶. That also makes Bumble a suitable dating app for the Japanese market as it focuses on the girl making the "first move".

¹² What about Japan?. *Hofstede Insights* [online]. ©2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/japan/>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "Soushoku:" Men and the Changing Definition of Masculinity in Japan. *SUGATA Research* [online]. ©2013, 2015.02.16. Retrieved from: <https://www.sugataresearch.com/news/blog/2015/02/16/草食-soushoku-men-and-the-changing-definition-of-masculinity-in-japan/>

¹⁵ Joy, A. Dating in Japan: The Culture Clashes You Need to Know. *Culture Trip* [online]. 2017. Retrieved from: <https://theculturetrip.com/asia/japan/articles/dating-in-japan-the-culture-clashes-you-need-to-know/>

¹⁶ Ibid.

2.6 Dating in Japan

2.6.1 Traditional dating

There are many traditions and rituals connected to dating in Japan. One of them is called “goukon”. It is a group blind date usually organized by a woman and a man who bring their single friends. It is a small get-together for single people meant specifically to meet someone new to date. Although the dating culture in Japan is changing, “goukons” are still very popular. There always has to be an equal number of participants of each gender, e.g. 6 males and 6 females or 10 males and 10 females. There are rules that need to be followed – “goukon” starts with an introduction of each participant and after that everyone is encouraged to sit next to the person they find interesting. Towards the end of the event, men ask women for their phones number or social media accounts etc. It is polite to text them to see if they got home safely right after “goukon”. In general, “goukon” is considered to be a better and faster way of getting to know new people in the Japanese workaholic society. Group dating is a very popular tradition in Japan.¹⁷

Another type of “goukon” is called “machi kon”. Basically, it is a much bigger version of “goukon” with a few hundreds of participants. It is based on bar- and restaurant-hopping and organized singles parties.¹⁸ A quite recent addition to the “goukon” category is called “aiseki izakaya”. “Aiseki” means sharing a table and “izakaya” is a type of Japanese restaurant serving drinks and small plates. “Aiseki izakaya” is a type of “izakaya” where you share table with other people which gives you the opportunity to meet new people. Moreover, there are special restaurant chains meant simply for “aiseki izakaya”.¹⁹ To encourage women to come to these establishments, women drink for free in “aiseki izakaya” while men pay for everything.²⁰

Another dating technique typical for Japan is called “nanpa”. It is a type of flirtation conducted by Japanese boys and young men. They wander around the streets and call on girls they don’t know, asking them out or even trying to seduce them. When women do the same thing, it is called “guyakunan”.²¹ Both of these usually happen on busy streets. During “guyakunan” women watch the man passing on the street and start a conversation with the ones they fancy. Usually they do not invite the man for a date, unlike

¹⁷ Goukon and the Rules. *Jay Japanese* [online]. March 17, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://jayjapanese.blogspot.com/2017/03/goukon-and-rules.html>

¹⁸ ‘Machikon’ singles’ parties help rejuvenate local businesses. *The Japan Times* [online]. Feb 14, 2012. Retrieved from: https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2012/02/14/national/machikon-singles-parties-help-rejuvenate-local-businesses/#.XNnXQS_yoUs

¹⁹ Aisekiya Izakaya: Practising your Japanese for cheap at Japan's random group date restaurant. *Tofugu* [online]. December 5, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.tofugu.com/japanese/aisekiya-izakaya/>

²⁰ Cupid aims his arrow at loveless Tokyo drinkers. *The Japan Times* [online]. Jul 1, 2014. Retrieved from: https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2014/07/01/food/cupid-aims-arrow-loveless-tokyo-drinkers/#.XN28wS_yoUt

²¹ Japanese Slang: Nanpa Suru and Gyakunan Suru. *Coto Japanese Academy* [online]. August 17, 2015. Retrieved from: <https://cotoacademy.com/japanese-slang-nanpa-suru-gyaku-nan-suru/>

men do during “nanpa”, but only flirt casually. However, it is far less common than “nanpa”.²²

2.6.2 Changing dating culture

Just as any other social interaction, dating in Japan is connected with many rituals and traditions. However, the way young Japanese people meet is changing. More than ever, they use the internet and smartphone apps to meet new people. There are more reasons behind this development of the Japanese society. Firstly, it is difficult to meet new people organically in Japan. In Japanese society, people tend to stick to their work group, family, classmates etc. Japanese people are workaholics and they have little time to date. The lack of free time is also the reason behind Japanese traditional get-together such as “goukons”.²³ Secondly, Japanese people are often shy and socially awkward and have fear of social interactions. They have low self-confidence and are shy to approach a member of the opposite sex in public. For this reason, the use of dating apps is increasingly popular in Japan.²⁴

Lastly, in the last few decades, fewer and fewer young Japanese men and women are going on dates or having sex. A nationwide study conducted in 2017 found that around 30% of Japanese people in higher education have never been on a date. Furthermore, Japan is struggling with low birth rate and an aging population. One of the reasons is that young Japanese women want to be independent and focus on their careers which is something their ancestors could not do.²⁵ That is associated with Japanese workaholism and the lack of free time they have. With more time devoted to careers, they might not have the time to go to social gatherings meant for meeting new people, such as “goukons”. Therefore, we believe that dating apps have a big potential in Japan since they allow people to find potential romantic partners even faster than through their traditional group blind dates.

It is also important to notice that (LGBT) rights in Japan are relatively progressive by Asian standards, although LGBT people lack full legal equality.²⁶ A 2015 opinion poll found that a majority of Japanese support marriage among the Japanese public, especially the

²² Gyaku-nan: boy-hunting. *Tokyo Cherie* [online]. February 19, 2009. Retrieved from: <https://tokyoherie.wordpress.com/2009/02/19/gyaku-nan-boy-hunting/>

²³ The 8 biggest differences between dating in Japan and America. *Insider* [online]. ©2019, May 10, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.insider.com/differences-japanese-and-american-dating-2018-2>

²⁴ Why young Japanese are dating less than before. *Deutsche Welle* [online]. ©2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/why-young-japanese-are-dating-less-than-before/a-46549861>

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Japan's conservative ruling party cites 'gay rights' in manifesto in bid to burnish image overseas" [online]. South China Morning Post. 7 July 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/east-asia/article/1986665/japans-conservative-ruling-party-cites-gay-rights-manifesto-bid>

younger generation²⁷. So dating apps are also a way for sexual minorities to connect, and Bumble is also used for finding same-sex matches.

2.6.3 Setbacks of online dating

Dating sites and apps are popular in Japan, however, lots of people don't like the uncertainty of it.²⁸ That corresponds with the high score on the Uncertainty avoidance dimension in Hofstede's cultural dimensions. There is also kind of a taboo connected with online dating thanks to a case of scam dating sites in the years from 2004 to 2015. For more than 10 years eight executives ran several popular Japanese dating websites. The principle of these websites was that 2.7 million members paid more than 34 million USD in order to chat with whom they wrongly believed to be women looking for love. Employees of these dating sites were even reportedly paid to continue conversations with the men via email and mobile messaging programmes in order to trick them into believing they were having some success and should continue to pay membership fees despite never actually meeting women. One of the regular users of these websites spent more than 65,000 USD over the years.²⁹ This can be one of the main reasons why Japan as a country that excels in technology didn't master "swiping right" so quick.

2.7 Communication channels in Japan

2.7.1 Television

Even though digital media is very popular and effective nowadays, television influence is still remarkable. However, its influence is decreasing each year due to the popularity of online sites like YouTube. For television advertising, it is really common to have a sponsorship agreement.³⁰

2.7.2 Print

Japan has five national newspapers. The two largest ones have about nine million subscribers. Many households subscribe to a national paper and a local paper as well. Although it is an effective method of advertising, it is generally more expensive than other types of advertising. Ads in newspapers are expensive because of the high costs of

²⁷ Watanabe, C. "Majority of Japanese Support Same-Sex Marriage, Poll Shows - Bloomberg Business" [online]. *Bloomberg*. 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-11-29/majority-of-japanese-support-same-sex-marriage-poll-shows>

²⁸ The 8 biggest differences between dating in Japan and America. *Insider* [online]. ©2019, May 10, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.insider.com/differences-japanese-and-american-dating-2018-2>

²⁹ Dating site had 2.7 million members... and only one of them was a woman: Bosses behind online scam are arrested in Japan. *Daily Mail* [online]. 2015. Retrieved from: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3116784/Dating-site-2-7-million-members-one-woman-Bosses-online-scam-arrested-Japan.html>

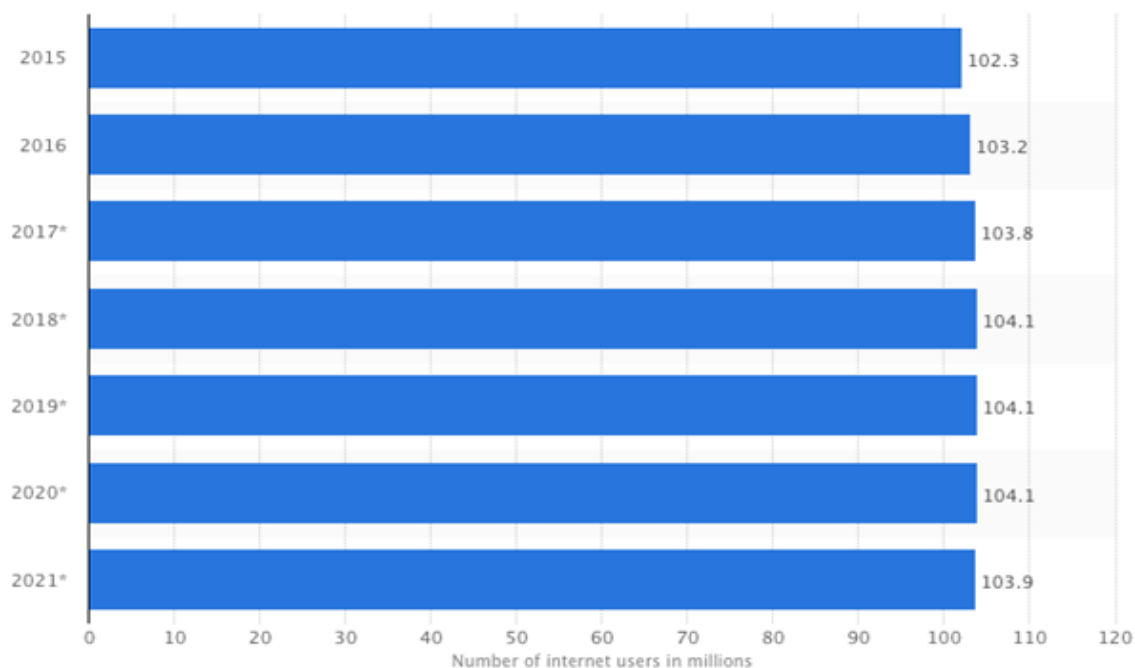
³⁰ How to advertise your products in Japan – conclusion [online]. Luhman. Retrieved from: <http://luhman.org/japanese-reports/sell-to-japan/150-how-to-advertise-your-products-in-japan-conclusion>

newsprint in Japan. Classified ads for used goods are almost non-existent because the cost of the ad would be higher than the owner might hope to get from the sale.³⁰

2.7.3 Digital media

Japan has over 100 million internet users and like in other countries this number is increasing year by year. About 70% of Japanese people have smartphones, and 54.3% access the Internet using smartphones. The amount of users accessing the internet via smartphone is actually slightly lower than those accessing via computer. The most popular smartphone used by Japanese people is the iPhone, it has a usage rate of 54.1%.³¹ Social media allow for the use of a marketing technique that Japanese people really love. That is content marketing and storytelling. Stories that are detail-oriented and seemingly authentic are extremely popular in Japanese advertising.³²

Unlike the rest of the world, the site Yahoo is more common in Japan than Google. However, it marks a continuous decrease since 2016. Nowadays, the mostly used social site is Twitter. Facebook holds the second place with 27 million users and Instagram is the third most used with 16 million active users.³³



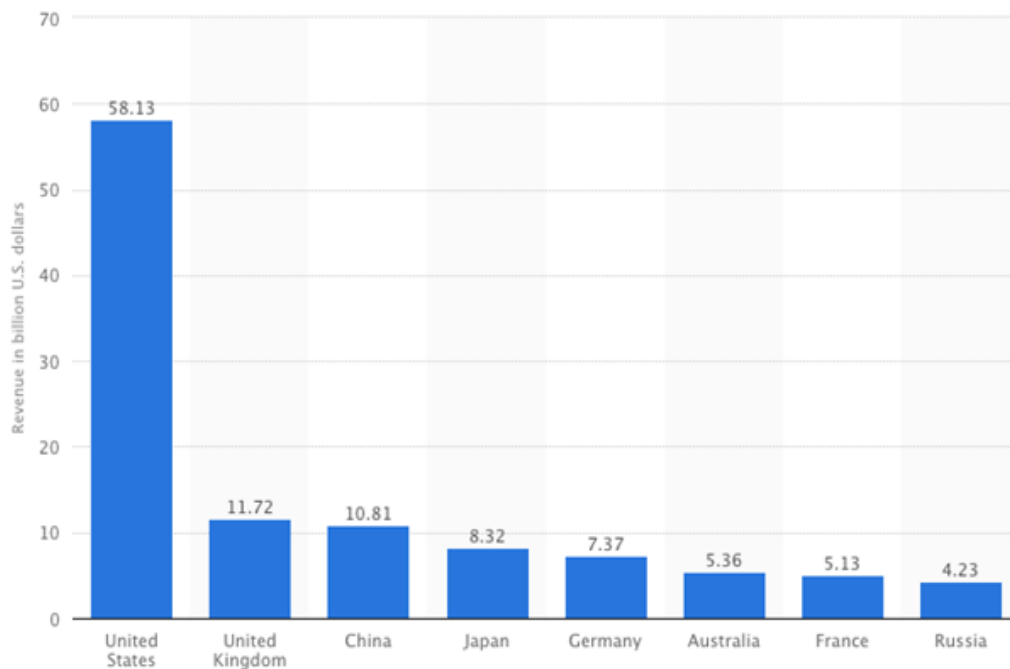
Number of internet users in Japan from 2015 to 2021 (in millions)

Source: Statista 2017 *After 2017 is estimated number.

³¹ 5 things you need to know about japanese digital marketing [online]. Japan Buzz. 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.japanbuzz.info/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-japanese-digital-marketing-2017/>

³² The Japanese Way of Marketing Products People Love. *Blog Btrax* [online]. Apr 10, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://blog.btrax.com/the-japanese-way-of-marketing-products-people-love/>

³³ 5 things you need to know about japanese digital marketing [online]. Japan Buzz. 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.japanbuzz.info/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-japanese-digital-marketing-2017/>



Online advertising revenue in major online advertising markets in 2017 (in billion U.S. dollars)

Source: Statista 2017

3. Marketing strategy

The purpose of the campaign is to launch Bumble onto Japanese market. Our main goal is to introduce the app to a target group of both females and males in the age from 18 to 30 years. We want to promote its main benefits for the young Japanese generation. That is the empowerment of women and the simple functionality of the app which saves the time people would have to spend going out and meeting new people and enables them to focus on their careers. In the long term our goal is to persuade people to download and use Bumble regularly.

For our strategy we used the 4 Ps marketing mix. Marketing mix is defined as "a set of marketing tools that the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target market". The 4 Ps stand for Product, Price, Place and Promotion.³⁴ We have already covered the product in the first part of the paper. Since Japanese people find English cool and it is popular to combine English and Japanese in advertising, we are keeping the name "Bumble" and are not translating it into Japanese. There will be a few minor changes to the app specifically for the Japanese market – it will include an option to add more information and even to share one's salary range. The reason is that Japanese people

³⁴ KOTLER, Philip and Kevin Lane KELLER. *Marketing Management*. 15 Global edition. Boston: Pearson. 2016. ISBN 978-1-292-09262-1.

are perfectionists who are obsessed with their careers and who are anxious about uncertainty. This way, they will have much more detailed information about their potential love interests and they won't have to be as stressed.

3.1 Price and Place

The price of the product is as follows: downloading the basic version of the app is for free, special features require a monthly subscription. Bumble Boost's – which is a premium subscription of the app – cost ranges from 1400 to 2700 Japanese yens. The places of distribution of our product are the touchpoints where people can download the app. That is our official website for any mobile phone software, App Store for iPhone and Google Play for Android. We will also be using a few other online distribution channels that are popular in Japan, such as Sugotoku, SmartPass and App Pass.³⁵

3.2 Promotion

In promoting Bumble app to Japanese people we want to focus on media that are popular and relatable for the target group. Firstly, we want to focus on digital media. As we described previously, there has been a huge rise of popularity of the online media in past few years in Japan and our target group is made up of people who use modern technologies and social media daily. But most importantly, it only makes sense to focus on digital marketing since we are promoting an online app. That way, we will be able to provide direct links or a “swipe-up” links for downloading the app to our target group. Focusing our campaign on printed media wouldn't make any sense since the product is only accessible in the digital sphere. Based on the popularity of different social media among our target group, we decided to place ads and other branded content on Facebook and Instagram. Secondly, we would like to focus on TV sponsored videos and ads as television is a still very significant media in Japan. We want to include both national and private TV channels in our campaign.

Our campaign is based mostly on videos and visuals from the videos. We will create four main videos that will be the foundation for all our content. For those, we decided to use the style of “manga” – Japanese comic books that tell stories in pictures – as a way to present this app to our targeted group since this cartoon style is something Japanese people are really familiar with and something they love. This way, even though the app is a new and foreign concept, it will be more recognizable and seem more familiar to the Japanese people.³⁶

³⁵ WHY CHOOSING JAPAN FOR YOUR APP BUSINESS? [online]. Upswell. Retrieved from: <https://www.upswell.jp/en/app-market/>

³⁶ Manga [online]. Merriam-Webster. Retrieved from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manga>

3.2.1 Storytelling

The main concept of our strategy is storytelling as it is an extremely popular technique in Japan. We expect it to be easier for Japanese people to relate to a story that resembles their own lives. That way, we want to create their desire for the product. We will tell a story of a Japanese young women and a Japanese young men through four main “manga-style” videos. We decided to make long versions of the videos for our Facebook profile via Facebook Watch, Instagram profile via IGTV and our YouTube channel. Those videos will serve as our main content and their goal is to describe the way Bumble works and to convince our target group to download the app. We hope that those videos will be entertaining and interesting enough for people to share them on their social media accounts. Then we will make shorter versions of those videos which will serve as advertisements and sponsored posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, pre-roll ads on YouTube and TV ads. The purpose of the visuals based on the videos is to keep reminding the story and its characters to our target group and gain the interest of our potential customers.

The strategy consists of four different videos. The first one shows a Japanese girl who is tired of going to “goukons” because she is not lucky enough to find someone who fits her needs. Then she downloads Bumble and the audience gets an explanation of how it works through her point of view. The second video is about a Japanese boy who works a lot and doesn't have time for almost anything else. He doesn't even have the time to go to “goukons”. For this reason, downloads Bumble and the video shows how it works from the male perspective. In the third video, we can see the same girl and the same boy as they get a match with each other. The video shows us both of their perspectives, the girl making the first move and the boy being excited about it. The last video portrays them setting up a date on Bumble, then going through the date, being really happy and charmed by one another and then there will be a fast forward them getting married and having kids.

The first and the second video idea:



The third video idea:



The fourth video idea:



3.2.2. Influencers

With the rising popularity of influencer marketing and its importance within our target group, we chose to work with Japanese most popular influencers. They are going to share and promote simple, relatable stories about meeting someone via Bumble. We will share their stories of both finding new friends and finding love to catch our target's attention. We will be working with influencers on Instagram, with them sharing Instagram posts and Instastories. Our goal is to acquire the most popular influencers in 2019 in Japan, for example South Korean singer and actress @skuukzky and popular K-Pop boy band singer @optimushwang.³⁷

3.2.3 Television

We have decided to place our ads around favourite Japanese dating shows and romantic TV dramas, such as Terrace House or REA(L)OVE). Terrace House is a Japanese TV reality which follows three women and three men living together, dating and getting to know each other. It has become international hit on Netflix and on Fuji Television so it is worth investing the market space. REA(L)OVE is considered to be more a scandalous TV

³⁷ TOP 20 JAPANESE INFLUENCERS ON INSTAGRAM 2018 [online]. Japan Buzz. 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.japanbuzz.info/top-20-japanese-influencers-on-instagram-2018/>

series than Terrace House with its drama and ‘raunchiness’, but because of its popularity among our target audiences, we will launch TV ads around it too. That way, we are hoping to get the attention of our target group who watches these shows and who is interested in dating.

3.2.4 Timing

The campaign will start approximately one week before Valentine’s day which is celebrated in quite a unique way in Japan. The main difference is that there is a strong tradition of women giving chocolates to men, which shows that the roles are actually reversed and women bear the pressure of giving gifts.³⁸ This favor is returned exactly one month later on March 14th - on a day known as White Day in Japan.³⁹ On White Day, men are supposed to give return gifts to women who gifted them chocolates on Valentine’s Day but with one simple difference – more often the color of the chocolate is white.⁴⁰ This is the reason why we decided to launch our campaign in this particular month.

Our simple timing strategy reacts to these two love days. Our videos will be launched weekly in 4 waves as a four-part series:

- 1) Launch of the 1st video a few days before Valentine’s Day;
- 2) Launch of the 2nd video a few days after Valentine’s Day;
- 3) Launch of the 3rd video;
- 4) Launch of the 4th video a few days before White Day.

In the meantime between each videos we want to use short video ads and images on Instastories, YouTube and Facebook as a countdown to next episode. We will be using questions to keep attention of our target group and to enable them to become a part of our story. After the launch of all videos, we will put shorter video ads and visuals on all the previously mentioned channels for 3 months and we will work with influencers who will share their love-stories and experiences with Bumble. After the launch campaign is finished, we will assess its results and plan a follow-up strategy.

³⁸ VALENTINE’S DAY & WHITE DAY IN JAPAN. ONLY IN JAPAN [online]. Retrieved from: <https://us.jnto.go.jp/blog/valentines-day-white-day-in-japan/>

³⁹ How Japan Created White Day, East Asia’s Alternate Valentine’s Day. Forbes [online]. March 13, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adelsteinjake/2018/03/13/how-japan-created-white-day-east-asias-alternate-valentines-day/#69e63aef348b>

⁴⁰ What is White Day in Japan? Celebrate Japanese White Day!. Japanesepod101.com [online]. February 27, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.japanesepod101.com/blog/2019/02/27/white-day/>

Summary

In our cultural research we found out that the Japanese society and dating in particular has its many specifics. All social interactions have to correspond with proper behaviour based on social status. Japanese society is one of the most masculine societies in the world, however, the role of women is changing and they are gaining more and more independence. For this reason, we believe that our so-called “feminist” app could be very successful among Japanese women who want to feel empowered.

Another important finding is that Japanese people are workaholics. Therefore, they don't have a lot of time to date. For this lack of time, they have developed many different dating traditions over the years, such as group blind dates called “goukons”. However, Japanese people focus more and more on their careers and in the last few years the amount of people who are single has increased immensely. We are convinced that those career-driven people who don't even have the time to go to “goukons” could highly benefit from the use of online dating apps. That is also why we believe this is the right time for Bumble to enter the Japanese market.

Since our product is an online app, we are focusing mainly on digital marketing. That way we will be able to easily and directly promote the download of the app. Since Japanese people appreciate good storytelling in advertising, we have decided to focus the campaign around a story of a young woman and man who meet through Bumble. This story will be brought to life through videos and visuals based on the videos. For the videos, we are using the anime or manga style which is typical for Japanese culture and very popular among their people. Through the story we want to speak to the target group, explain the app to them and interested them in downloading and using the app.

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