

Japanese software company that developed an educational toy to help toddlers and pre-schoolers learn programming is looking for agents and distribution partners in the EU

Summary

Profile type	Company's country	POD reference
Business Offer	Japan	BOJP20221114001
Profile status	Type of partnership	Targeted countries
PUBLISHED	Commercial agreement Supplier agreement	• World
Contact Person	Term of validity	Last update
Mark Rijntjes	14 Nov 2022 14 Nov 2023	14 Nov 2022

General Information

Short summary

A Japanese company has designed an educational toy that aids young children in grasping skills related to programming. The toy has the form of a robot which is used to play a puzzle-like game which does not require any language skills. It uses universal signs, pictures, and sounds to convey programming concepts making it suitable for toddlers and pre-school children. The company is looking to expand to the EU and wishes to engage in commercial agency and distribution services agreements.

Full description

This Japanese company specialized in software development was founded in Yokohama in 1997. In 2016, the company launched a project that would allow young children to become accustomed to programming concepts at an early age.

The product consists of two core elements, a robot and accompanying panels. The game is laid out like a puzzle, and children play the game by connecting and arranging the panels into courses. The robot will follow the course from its starting panel, and if every panel is laid out correctly (following a logic akin to programming) will reach its goal. The toy has CE marking and fulfills all relevant safety standards laid out in the EU Toy Safety Directive.

The toy itself requires four AAA alkaline batteries to operate, but requires no further accessories such as internet

connections and external hardware. The panels contain magnets allowing children to easily connect panels, due to a total of eight magnets in each panel (two on each side). The toy requires no prior knowledge of programming, and is accessible for anyone regardless of language. Instructions are provided in such a way that children can figure out the game themselves without external guidance.

In order to create a successful course and have the robot reach its goal, children need to use programming logic such as system design, program design, execution, and debugging. The Japanese company believes that teaching these concepts at a young age is vital to improve the logical reasoning and problem-solving skills of children. Ideally, the product will motivate more children to have an interest in programming. The toy has been used in various classroom environments globally, and demonstrations by the Japanese company has led to a consistent number of sales both domestically and abroad. The toy has won various awards for its design and creativity, both in Japan and abroad.

The company is currently planning further expansion in the EU, and to reach this goal they are looking for potential partners in the form of distribution services and commercial agency agreements. They hope to partner with a company that is either a distributor of educational toys in the case of distribution services, or in the case of an agent at least has a network capable of reaching educational institutions and relevant government agencies.

The Japanese company can provide the partner with demonstration samples. Instructions for the toy such as potential curricula and example exercises are provided in English. Translations to local languages can be provided by the Japanese company. The Japanese company is willing to give the EU partner an exclusive distribution agreement if there is a good match.

Advantages and innovations

The educational toy made by the Japanese company has the following advantages when compared to prevailing products:

- The product has the necessary safety standards to be used by children from a very young age (from as young as 7 months) as stipulated by the EU Toy Safety Directive including EN-71, EN 62115, and RoHS.
- These safety standards include food safety standards making it safe for children to lick, which is rare among toys of this kind.
- The toy has proven benefits as an educational method to improve programming skills in young children.
- The high accessibility of the toy (not requiring language skills and external guidance) makes it easier to introduce this toy and use it for educational purposes than competing products.
- The toy requires no external hardware, such as smartphones, tablets, or an internet connection (apart from alkaline batteries to power the robot).

The company has had international success in the United States and Germany after a successful online crowdfunding campaign.

Technical specification or expertise sought

Stage of development

Sustainable Development goals

- **Not relevant**

IPR Status

No IPR applied

Partner Sought

Expected role of the partner

The Japanese company is looking for a partner in the EU that is ideally a distributor or agent specialized in educational toys with relevant market knowledge and connections. They expect the partner to approach educational institutions and relevant government agencies to promote the sales and usage of the product. The partner is not required to have prior knowledge of programming, but should be able to promote the benefits of the educational toy (which is aimed at children with no prior programming skills). The partner should also provide regular reports on the local market and communicate proactively with the Japanese company.

The company believes that it will be challenging to communicate the benefits of the product through online marketplaces. Therefore, they prefer a partner that can promote the product to physical retail fronts, such as toy stores and specialty shops. In addition to experience in the toy industry, ideally the partner would also support the Japanese company in accessing new markets and introduce the toy to prospective end-users. A partner specialized in developing and realising educational projects would be an ideal match.

Type of partnership

Commercial agreement**Supplier agreement**

Type and size of the partner

• Big company**• University****• SME 11-49****• SME 50 - 249****• R&D Institution****• SME <=10**

Dissemination

Technology keywords

Market keywords

• 07001003 - Toys and electronic games

Targeted countries

• World

Sector groups involved

Media

Images



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