

Advertising, News, The Work  
Mark Darbyshire | Mar 1, 2018

# Nikko Asset Management debuts first global corporate brand campaign

Before stepping onto a global stage, one of Asia's largest asset managers had to distill a list of brand attributes—and find an agency willing to create the work in Japan.



Before Stefanie Drews and her team could begin to take on the challenge of the first global corporate brand advertising campaign for Nikko Asset Management, she first had to define the firm's unifying brand attributes.

Nikko AM president and CEO Takumi Shibata had made it clear since taking the helm several years before that the firm should go from a local business model to a fully integrated global one. He decided that the firm's internal stakeholders and its clients were

best placed to identify its defining attributes, providing a clear direction for this first stage of the project.

Drews is the joint global head of product and marketing at the Tokyo-based Nikko AM, one of Asia's largest asset managers. Operating across the globe, the firm has nearly US\$200 billion in total assets under management. Confronting Drews was the reality that many of the firm's international offices were acquisitions from disparate backgrounds, where recognition of the Nikko AM name was sometimes very limited. In the home market of Japan, it has retail and institutional businesses.

Her team set about enlisting each of Nikko AM's business streams and the clients they serve in a bottom-up drive to work out the attributes that best describe the firm. "We made sure that everyone was engaged in this." The team distilled down the attributes until it found three that everyone agreed on. The first was Progressive Solutions that Nikko AM aligns to the goals of investors. The second was Performance, as the firm's primary focus is on delivering real value for clients. The third was Global Citizen with Asian DNA, as the firm leverages its diverse makeup to help clients navigate dynamic investment markets.

**"All those who contributed in-house to identifying our key attributes are those who work closely with our clients every single day. A topdown campaign would have been easier, but it simply wouldn't have been credible."**

*—Stefanie Drews, Nikko AM*



"With these cohesive brand attributes in place," said Drews, "we could move to the next stage, which was a global campaign. It was quite a learning curve for us because our campaigns had always been local. But we now wanted a globally consistent campaign that we could also localize to the needs of stakeholders in each of our markets." Depending on regions, brand messages to external audiences state "Solutions" or "Innovation", followed by the foregrounds and background images of different markets in which Nikko AM operates and has investment capabilities. Drews noted that the Japan institutional focused advertisement, for example, includes an image of Denmark because of the firm's success in the Danish covered bonds space.

"In putting the campaign together, we wanted to work with an agency that is truly Tokyo based, with people who are fluent in both English and Japanese," said Drews. "The agency needed to 'get' both the global and Japanese angles for our campaign." Oliver Ormrod, Nikko AM's International Communications Group manager, added, "We spoke with a lot of global agencies but their

Japanese staffers focused fully on implementation. They proposed to have partners overseas do all the creative work, but we wanted to drive the process from our Tokyo head office.”

Drews noted, “Most candidates did not work out because they simply did not understand this need. Ultimately, only Tokyo’s Ad-comm Group demonstrated that it could bring an international print and digital campaign into and out of Japan. We also really appreciated that it was so willing to engage creatively. We didn’t quite know what we wanted. We just knew where we wanted to be. Ad-comm was able to put together something that simply and effectively presented all countries relevant to our business and reflected our brand attributes.”

With the agency in place, Drews tasked Joshua Sato, a strategist for the product and marketing division, to put together a print and digital media plan in conjunction with all offices. The focus was on pursuing a highly targeted advertising approach. In the United States, for example, ads are going in Pensions & Investments. EMEA publications include Citywire and Fund Europe. In Japan, outlets include Nenkin Joho for print and the print and online editions of Nikkei Asian Review. “Following the campaign our next step is to measure how much our brand awareness has grown globally. We will look to also assess the impact of our brand and campaign by using a range of analytics primarily from our digital advertising.”

Drews noted: “One great outcome was that we obtained very solid buy-in throughout the whole process. All those who contributed in-house to identifying our key attributes are those who work closely with our clients every single day. A top-down campaign would have been easier, but it simply wouldn’t have been credible.”

*Source: Campaign Asia-Pacific*