

# AKIKO KAWAI

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### **Sakura-cha Meet**

A Japanese non-profit organization of “tea diplomacy,” which promotes peace and harmony by sharing tea  
*Founder and President*

**Kyoto, Japan**

**8/2018 – Present**

### **Penn Schoen Berland**

A premier communications and polling firm

*Political Consultant, International Political Team [via IICR Corporation, Tokyo, Japan]*

Accounts management of their Japanese political clients

Developed the first Mongolian political account for the firm

Helped Do House, Japanese marketing company, to open their subsidiary in NYC

Helped local governments to promote their traditional culture/products abroad, especially in the United States

*Political Associate, International Political Team*

Developed the first Japanese political account for the firm

- Provided counsel to the party leadership

- Conducted a study that dealt with message testing, competitive positioning, brand architecture and audience segmentation

Conducted a wide range of polling and marketing research for political clients in South America, EU, Middle East, Africa, and Asia as well as Fortune 500 corporations such as BP, Microsoft, and McDonald

**Washington D.C., the United States**

**1/2016 – Present**

### **The George Washington University**

*Visiting Scholar (non-paid affiliation), The Graduate School of Political Management*

Led a series of study focusing on political marketing in Japan

- Presented at the Global Political Marketing and Management conference 2015 in Wellington, New Zealand

- Presented at the Academy of Marketing Conference 2015 in Limerick, Ireland (selected by Murata Foundation)

Assisted for Professor Mark Kennedy, Director, Political Management

- Arranged his Tokyo trips to develop a new program including all speeches and meetings (10/2014, 5/2015, and 6/2016)

*Research Assistant for Professor Lara Brown, Program Director, Political Management*

**1/2014 – 8/2014**

**Washington D.C., the United States**

**10/2014 – 12/2016**

### **Do House**

*Leave of absence for study abroad*

*Founder and Chief Researcher, Political Marketing Section*

Initiated and started this new department

- Developed a 3-person team, including the former leader of an LDP think tank; and a current lobbyist, to work with political candidates and parties on their marketing needs

*Research Project Leader, Qualitative Research Section*

**10/2008 – 9/2011**

Plan and direct about 30 consumer insight research projects (including focus group interviews, home-use tests, personal interviews, community marketing research, and Internet research) per year for clients in sports clothing/equipment, food, education and pharmaceuticals, including Toyota, Kao, Adidas, Benesse, and Pfizer

- Conceived, planned and initiated new business area: marketing research projects for politicians and political groups, creating an entirely new market for Do House; completed projects for the following clients:

- Member of the Democratic Party of Japan running in a summer 2011 election

- Candidate for Aichi Prefecture’s Governor’s Election in 2011

- Member of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in the 2010 Lower House Election in Osaka in 2010

- Member of the LDP running in a House of Representatives Election in Tokyo in 2009

- Managed multiple consumer insight research projects, including:

- Completed focus group interviews and home-use tests on Seven & i Group (7-11 owner) privately branded food products: insight helped client beat sales target by 40% (2010)

- Completed 1-year project to help Kao develop new Life Course Marketing Model that segments female consumers by age and other factors (2010)

- Helped Tokyo Gas decide what kind of marketing events to deploy in order to better appeal to consumers through conducting focus group interviews with consumers; helped them achieve their sales target (2010)

- Conducted focus group interviews on Benesse’s new elementary school student after-school education program; insight helped them increase new student rate highest-ever level in 2009; 30% higher than 2008

- Increased profits of conducted research projects by 20% in 2010 by identifying cost reduction opportunities

- Ranked #2 of 58 employees in 2010 and #5 of 56 in 2009 based on individual contribution to the company

*Trainee, Qualitative Research Section*

**4/2008 – 9/2008**

## EDUCATION

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**The George Washington University****Washington D.C., the United States*****Masters in the Graduate School of Political Management*****8/2012 – 8/2014**

- Planned and held events in Tokyo with GWU/GSPM Executive Director, Mark Kennedy (9/2013, 1/2014)
  - “Lobby in Washington, D.C.” at the LDP and Keidanren, the biggest business federation in Japan
  - “Marketing and Leadership – what businesses can learn from President Obama” at Globis M.B.A. University
  - Panel discussion on “the Upper House election in 2013 and youth engagement in Japan” at Meiji University
- Participated in 1 week study “Engaging Great Middle East and Africa” in Istanbul, Turkey (8/2013)
- Thesis: *The Professionalization on Campaigning in the United States and its Applicability to Japan*: conducted an online survey research to provide a non-partisan view of the role and influence of the Internet in the 2013 Upper House election in Japan as well as to compare that election to the 2012 Presidential election in the United States

**Meiji University****Tokyo, Japan*****Masters in Political Science and Economics*****3/2008**

- GPA: 3.90; Selected to join 2-year *Political Marketing Seminar*; a unique global seminar of only two students (one from Japan, one from Taiwan)
- Selected to join 2-year *Media Strategy in US Elections Seminar* at Saitama University; became the only non-Saitama U student member of the group
- Thesis: *Media and Communication Strategy in Elections in Japan*: spent 1-month in LDP’s Okinawa campaign headquarters during the 2007 election
- Presented speech on local revitalization at the LDP Iwaki Conference as student representative of Leader's Business School (formed by the LDP Party); also completed 2-month internship at the LDP during an election, and a 2-year part-time internship working for Shigeo Kitagawa (member of the House of Representatives)

***Bachelors of Art in French Literature*****3/2005**

- Thesis: *The Maturation of Françoise Sagan* (degree concentration was French Art)
- Wrote and presented thesis (*Comparative Analysis of the Political Parties in Japan*) and video documentary on *Men’s Self Esteem* as 1-year member of Journalist Training Course held at the University of Tokyo and sponsored by Japan’s Ministry of Education (4/2004 – 3/2005)
- Selected to join 30-member Travelers Club organizing trips to Australia, Germany, Switzerland (member for 4-years)

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**VOLUNTEER**

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- Holding tea ceremony events during the National Cherry Blossom Festival both in 2017 and 2018 working with Kyoto prefectural government: including embassy of Japan, embassy of French, Finish embassy, GWU Textile Museum, GSPM Alumni Association, and prominent restaurants in DC (3/2017 – 4/2018)
- Volunteered on the Terry McAuliffe campaign for Virginia Governor in 2013 for two month (9/2013 – 11/2013)
- Volunteered at the Great East Japan Earthquake (7/2011)

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**ADDITIONAL**

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- Founded *Political Marketing Conference*: grew membership to 40; plan and organize monthly events (2011 – present)
- Member of Aoyama School of Leadership Training (2011 – present)
- Dedicated Musician: playing violin for over 20 years and perform at annual events at local community center
- Spent 1 year preparing for graduate school and studying French for 3-months in France (hold 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade proficiency)