MOE SCHACHT | JAPAN–GERMANY BUSINESS CONSULTING

SAMPLE REPORT

Japan Market Entry Report

Cycling-Specific Orthotic Insoles — Opportunities for German Manufacturers

Illustrative product: a performance cycling insole, "PedalFit" (placeholder name)

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This document is a free public sample based on a fictional illustrative product.

About This Report

This document is a free, publicly shared sample intended to show the structure of analysis behind a Moe Schacht market-entry report. It does not contain non-public information about any real company. Instead, it uses a fictional illustrative product: a cycling-specific orthotic insole referred to here as “PedalFit”, built around publicly available market, regulatory and trade-show information.

A commissioned report is customized around your actual product specifications, target segment, pricing, and competitive position, and is supplemented with first-hand research such as trade-show conversations, competitor teardown comparisons, and direct confirmation with Japanese regulatory contacts. Please read this sample as an illustration of structure and analytical approach rather than as market research for an existing brand.

About this sample

Illustrative product: a performance insole engineered for cycling biomechanics. Especially for pedalling efficiency, pressure distribution, and prevention of numbness/“hot foot” syndrome on long rides

Intended reader: a German SME in sports orthotics, medical devices, or performance footwear considering entry into Japan

Purpose: a first-pass view of the opportunity, regulatory landscape, and competitive context before committing resources to Japan

Executive Summary

- Japan's cycling market is entering a genuine growth phase: government-backed programmes such as “Good Cycle Japan” (launched February 2026) and the Third National Cycling Promotion Plan (extending dedicated cycling infrastructure toward roughly 12,000 km by 2030) are pushing cycling from a niche hobby toward mainstream commuting, tourism and wellness activity.
- Foot-orthotic and insole markets are structurally growing worldwide on the back of an ageing population, rising diabetes prevalence, and a shift toward preventive rather than reactive healthcare. And Japan mirrors this trend closely, with its own ageing demographic and strong walking culture cited as specific growth drivers for orthotic adoption.
- German orthotic and insole brands are not unknown quantities in Japan: Bauerfeind and Pedag are already sold through established Japanese distributors and specialty retailers, giving a German manufacturer a credible precedent to point to rather than a cold start.
- Entry complexity depends heavily on positioning: insoles marketed as general sports/comfort accessories can typically move through Japan's normal import and retail channels, while any product carrying medical or orthopaedic claims triggers Japan's medical device framework. These are foreign manufacturer registration with PMDA and, in many cases, a Japan-based marketing authorization holder.

— CYCLE MODE TOKYO, Japan's largest sports-cycling exhibition (Tokyo Big Sight, April 2026), is now co-located with a wellness-focused “Karada EXPO” hall. A rare, ready-made venue where a cycling-specific health product sits naturally at the intersection of both audiences.

— JETRO's Invest Japan Business Support Center (IBSC) offers dedicated, low-cost support for foreign companies setting up or expanding in Japan, including market entry guidance and regulatory orientation. It will be a practical first stop before committing to a distributor search.

1 Illustrative Product

This sample uses the following fictional product for illustration. A commissioned report would replace this section with your actual product specifications, proof points, and home-market track record.

Product (placeholder)	PedalFit
Description	A performance orthotic insole engineered specifically for cycling biomechanics: metatarsal support tuned for a fixed pedalling position, pressure redistribution to reduce numbness and “hot foot” on long rides, and a low-profile design compatible with clipless cycling shoes
Target users	Road and gravel cyclists, e-bike commuters seeking comfort on longer rides, triathletes, and cycling tourists
Home-market track record (assumed)	Established distribution through specialty cycling and orthopaedic retailers in the DACH region
Product classification (assumed)	Marketed as a performance sports accessory rather than a medical device, i.e. no therapeutic or diagnostic claims

2 The Japanese Market Environment

2.1 Cycling is shifting from niche to mainstream

Japan's cycling market has historically been dominated by utility and commuter bicycles, but recent policy and consumer trends point to a genuine shift toward sport and leisure cycling. The government's “Good Cycle Japan” initiative, launched in February 2026, brings together national and local government, companies and civic groups around cycling promotion, while the Third National Cycling Promotion Plan targets an expansion of dedicated cycling paths from roughly 9,800 km toward 12,000 km by 2030. Alongside this, e-bikes are consistently identified as the fastest-growing category within Japan's bicycle market, and cycling tourism is being actively promoted as part of Japan's broader inbound tourism strategy.

2.2 A structurally growing orthotic and insole market

Global foot-orthotic insole market estimates for 2026 cluster in the low-to-mid single-digit billions of US dollars, with most forecasts pointing to continued mid-single-digit to high-single-digit annual growth through the early 2030s, driven by population ageing, rising diabetes prevalence, and growing sports and fitness participation. Japan-specific analysis attributes local demand growth to the same underlying ageing trend, combined with a rising incidence of musculoskeletal and mobility-related conditions and a strong everyday walking culture in Japanese cities. All of which support broader adoption of biomechanical support products, including performance insoles for sport.

2.3 A natural meeting point: CYCLE MODE TOKYO + Karada EXPO

CYCLE MODE TOKYO, held at Tokyo Big Sight in April 2026, is Japan's largest sports-cycling exhibition, featuring completed bikes, components, apparel and e-bike/next-generation mobility exhibits alongside test-ride courses. Notably, the event is now co-located with “Karada EXPO,” a hall dedicated to physical and mental wellness. From training and skincare to body-composition measurement and recovery. For a product

positioned exactly at the intersection of cycling performance and foot health, this pairing is a rare, ready-made audience rather than something a market entrant would need to build from scratch.

3 Regulatory and Import Considerations

How a cycling insole is positioned has a material effect on how complex market entry will be. The two broad paths are outlined below; a commissioned report would confirm the correct path for your specific product wording and claims with a Japan-based regulatory contact.

Positioning	What it means in Japan	Practical implication
General sports / comfort accessory (no medical claims)	Generally treated as an ordinary consumer good rather than a medical device, and can typically move through standard import, distributor and retail channels	Fastest and lowest-cost route to market; the main requirements are commercial (distributor agreement, labelling, import logistics) rather than regulatory
Medical / orthopaedic device (therapeutic or corrective claims)	Falls under Japan's Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Act. Requires registration of the foreign manufacturing site with PMDA (jpn: 医療機器外国製造業者登録), and in most cases a Japan-based Marketing Authorization Holder (jpn: 選任製造販売業者) who takes on regulatory responsibility locally	Longer lead time and higher cost, but opens access to clinical, orthopaedic and podiatry distribution channels and supports reimbursement-adjacent positioning where relevant

For most cycling-specific performance insoles, the general-goods route is the realistic starting point, with the option to pursue medical-device registration later if the product line expands into orthopaedic or podiatry-prescribed territory.

4 Competitive Landscape and Precedent

This sample does not use any non-public competitor data; a commissioned report would include detailed pricing and feature benchmarking. The following reflects publicly observable precedent only.

— German orthotic and insole brands already have a foothold in Japan: Bauerfeind and Pedag are both distributed in Japan through established local partners and specialty foot-care and orthopaedic retailers, which means a new German entrant is not asking Japanese buyers and consumers to trust an unfamiliar country of origin.

— Existing distribution in Japan for German insole brands has tended to run through general orthopaedic and comfort-footwear channels rather than cycling-specific retail, suggesting that a cycling-focused positioning would currently face limited direct competition from German peers within that specific niche.

— Japanese and international sport-insole brands are active in the general performance insole space, so differentiation will likely need to rest on cycling-specific biomechanical design (pedalling position, clipless-shoe compatibility) rather than on generic comfort or arch-support claims alone.

5 Entry and Discovery Opportunities

CYCLE MODE TOKYO (Tokyo Big Sight)	Japan's largest sports-cycling exhibition, held April 2026, now co-located with the wellness-focused “Karada EXPO”. It is a natural venue for a cycling-health crossover product to reach both cycling retailers and wellness-oriented buyers in one visit
JETRO Invest Japan Business Support Center (IBSC)	Dedicated support for foreign companies entering or expanding in Japan, including market orientation, regulatory guidance, and introductions — a practical, low-cost first stop before a distributor search
Specialty cycling and orthopaedic retail	Independent cycling shops and foot-care specialty stores (the same channel type currently carrying Bauerfeind and Pedag) are a realistic initial distribution target ahead of larger sporting-goods chains

6 Recommended Approach (Illustrative)

— Decide early whether the Japan launch will carry any medical or orthopaedic claims, since this determines whether PMDA foreign manufacturer registration and a local Marketing Authorization Holder are required, or whether the standard consumer-goods import route applies

— Treat CYCLE MODE TOKYO as a relationship-building venue rather than a one-off showcase: identify distributor and specialty-retailer targets in advance and arrange meetings ahead of the show floor

— Localize product materials, packaging and e-commerce listings into Japanese, with particular attention to sizing guidance, since foot-size conventions and fit expectations differ from the DACH market

— Use the existing Bauerfeind/Pedag distribution precedent as a reference point in distributor conversations — it lowers the perceived risk for a Japanese partner considering a new German brand

— Consider an initial channel focus on specialty cycling and foot-care retailers before approaching larger sporting-goods chains, to build reference customers and reviews in a credible niche first

7 Next Steps

A commissioned version of this report would be built around your actual product, informed by direct outreach and confirmation of the points below.

— A detailed competitive benchmark against insoles currently sold in Japan, including pricing and feature comparison

— Confirmation of the correct regulatory pathway for your specific product claims, in direct contact with PMDA-facing advisors

— A shortlist of candidate distributors and specialty retailers, with outreach support

— Japanese-language sales and marketing materials, and support for outreach emails or online meetings with prospective partners

Contact

For questions or to schedule a consultation, please get in touch by email.

contact@moeschacht.de

Sources

This report draws on the following publicly available sources (all accessed September 2026). A commissioned report would add further primary research and direct regulatory confirmation.

- CYCLE MODE TOKYO 2026 — event overview and exhibition details (Cycle Mode Executive Committee) https://www.cyclemode.net/exhibition/overview/
- Good Cycle Japan policy initiative and Third National Cycling Promotion Plan coverage (Research Nester, Japan Bicycle Market Report) https://newscast.jp/news/7617621
- Japan bicycle market size and growth forecasts (Fortune Business Insights / atpress.ne.jp market summaries) https://www.atpress.ne.jp/news/7141799
- Foot orthotic insoles market size and growth drivers (GlobalInfoResearch (gii.co.jp) market report summary) https://www.gii.co.jp/report/moi1906182-foot-orthotic-insoles-market-share-analysis.html
- Japan foot orthotic insoles market — ageing population and mobility-related demand drivers (Spherical Insights, Japan Foot Orthotic Insoles Market) https://www.sphericalinsights.com/jp/reports/japan-foot-orthotic-insoles-market
- Bauerfeind Japan distribution and product information (Bauerfeind Japan authorized retailers (p-supply.co.jp, ashidoraku.com)) https://bauerfeind.p-supply.co.jp/about/
- Pedag (Germany) insole distribution in Japan (Isaacs Shokai Co., Ltd., authorized Japan distributor) https://www.isaacs.co.jp
- Foreign medical device manufacturer registration requirements (Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA)) https://www.pmda.go.jp/review-services/drug-reviews/about-reviews/devices/0059.html
- Invest Japan Business Support Center (IBSC) — support for foreign companies (Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)) https://www.jetro.go.jp/invest/jetros_support/ibsc/

Note: the illustrative product "PedalFit" and its assumed home-market track record are fictional and used for explanatory purposes only; they do not represent non-public information about any real company.