

Be the Best Team that our Customers Love!

Representative Director, President and CEO

Thomas Ko

Born in Hong Kong. Worked as a consultant for a management consulting firm and began his career at McDonald's in Hong Kong in 2010. Since then, he has worked in seven positions in six countries and regions, including the strategy and insight teams in Korea and Japan, as well as the United Kingdom, Portugal and Singapore, before assuming his current position in July 2024. His favorite menu item is the Double Cheese Burger.

What is a Strong Team?

Open minded, friendly, and always full of energy. That's how Thomas is described by all those who know him well. He "treats everyone equally," "promptly replies to emails," "is working on the go whenever possible, even in a car," "quickly decides what to eat and is a fast eater too"... People talk about Thomas like their buddy. In fact, the door to his office on the 40th floor of the Shinjuku office is always open. Little things like this give us a glimpse of what Thomas values as a leader.

From a young age, Thomas valued teamwork. It all started when he was playing soccer in his elementary and junior high school years.

"My team wasn't particularly strong, and I wasn't the most talented player," says Thomas with a laugh. The team didn't play half-hearted though. They took the game seriously and gave their best. As he immersed himself into team sport, he also fell in love with Japanese manga, particularly *Captain Tsubasa* and *Slum Dunk*. That's how he developed his strong love for Japan, but the thought of "a team with the best talented players is not necessarily the strongest team" deeply affected him. "I get it. A truly strong team is one that can leverage and enhance each other's strengths."

This lesson is still deeply rooted in Thomas. "I am also part of a team"; this mindset moves him to show respect and care to the McDonald's family.

At McDonald's, Everything Happens at the Restaurant Level

However, even Thomas, who values teamwork so highly, had his share of anxieties when he first knocked on the doors of McDonald's 15 years ago. He never had the experience of running a restaurant. As a team member, his top priority was to become familiar with restaurant operations and, above all, get to know restaurant managers and crew members and find out what they valued and how to motivate them to work day in and day out. Thomas has held seven positions in six different countries and regions, and in every region, he valued the "Go Gemba" approach. "Get to know well the challenges the restaurants face on a day-to-day basis. See first-hand the work of managers and crew members and recognize them face to face. Until today, I've always practiced these two simple yet important points, because at McDonald's, everything happens at the restaurant level. Only when I first became familiar with restaurant operations did I know I could be part of this team."

Thomas is also good at finding and implementing solutions once an issue is identified. In his previous employment as a management consultant, he assisted numerous companies in their management strategy planning and organizational transformation. The more he became familiar with the McDonald's business, the faster he was able to develop and execute actions effectively. In time, he also started to build stronger relationships with experienced Owner Operators. In time, he could say with confidence, "I have also become part of a team in a true sense." He discovered that the decision-making and problem-solving skills he developed as a consultant, the restaurant business experience he gained at McDonald's around the world, and the teamwork he had valued since childhood...all these were exactly what was needed in the McDonald's business.



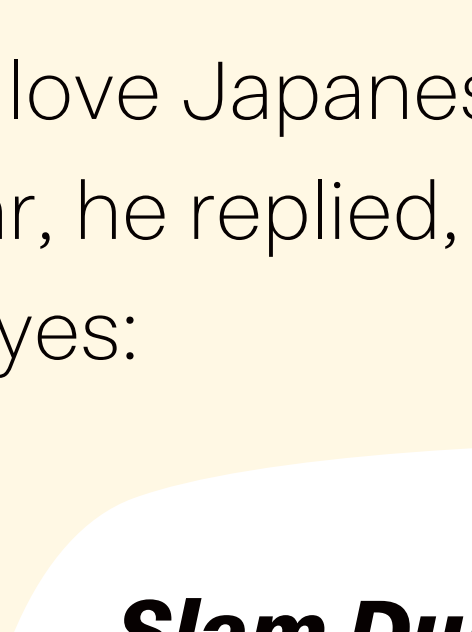
Together, Building an Even Better Team

Joining McDonald's Japan didn't change the things he values. Shortly before assuming his office in June 2024, he said at a town hall meeting, "We need to work cross-functionally if we want to succeed. Why? Because customers always see the McDonald's brand as a whole. Mutual collaboration is a prerequisite for a high-performing team." In addition, the word 'TOMONI' was introduced in 2025. His approach of placing value on teamwork and his passion to "become an even better team" are well reflected in these expressions.

So, how does Thomas envision the future of McDonald's Japan?

"What I respect the most about the managers and crew members in Japan is that they genuinely want to serve customers. McDonald's Japan has been putting this into practice for many years, which is why customers across Japan love the McDonald's brand; that's how I feel. My role, I truly believe, is to create an environment to further strengthen this advantage. Delivery, mobile order, drive-thru, and dine-in...think about it. Our connection with customers and restaurant operations are becoming more diverse and complex. A united team made up of individuals with diverse skills is essential to offer the same level of restaurant experience at all channels. Each leg of the three-legged stool, namely the Owner Operators, suppliers, and McDonald's must work closely to become a high-performing team. In becoming a high-performing team, I want our customers to love the McDonald's brand more and more."

The boy who used to admire the main characters of Japanese anime has become a team manager, not the main character. Who then, is the team's main character? Perhaps it is all of us, reading this article.

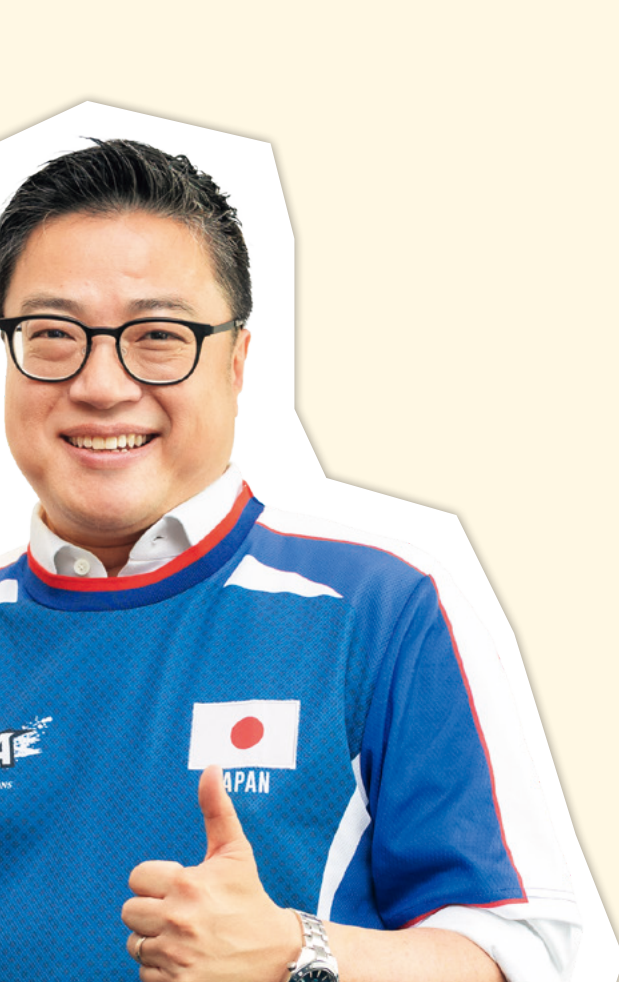


We asked Thomas' favorite!

"I love Japanese anime!" When we asked which in particular, he replied, "Good question" and answered with excited eyes:

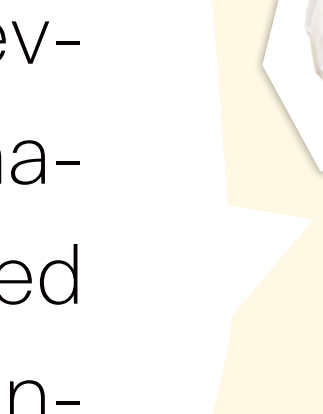
Slam Dunk

The older I get, the more I like this anime. It's all about the process and not just winning the game, and it also highlights the value of teamplay.



Captain Tsubasa

It's an all-time favorite of all soccer fans. I just love how Tsubasa and his team win no matter how challenging the game is.



Mobile Suit Gundam

This anime was on air every week during my primary years and I never missed it. I've also visited the Gundam Factory in Yokohama.

