



Believe appoints Kazunari Imai as Chairman & Strategic Business Relations Senior Executive Director of Believe Japan



*From left to right – Erika Ogawa-Arai, Believe Japan's Managing Director, Believe's President for APAC
Sylvain Delange, Believe Japan's Chairman & Strategic Business Relations Senior Executive Director
Kazunari Imai*

Paris, October 16, 2025 – Believe, one of the world's leading digital music companies, announces today the appointment of Kazunari Imai's, highly respected and leading industry figure, in the newly created role of Chairman & Strategic Business Relations Senior Executive Director of Believe Japan.

Reporting to Erika Ogawa, Believe Japan's Managing Director, and to Sylvain Delange, Believe's President for APAC, Kazunari Imai will co-lead the definition and execution of Believe Japan's business scale strategy to drive growth across its Label & Artist Solutions. He will also identify large-scale M&A and strategic joint-venture opportunities to reinforce Believe's position and impact in the Japanese music industry.

Sylvain Delange, President for APAC, Believe, said: *"As Believe continues to build up its position in Japan and deploy its artist development strategy at its center local artists and labels, we are reinforcing our long-term commitment to the local ecosystem, and contribute to exposing Japanese artists internationally. I am delighted that Kazunari Imai has accepted to join our ranks. With his decades of executive leadership, deep industry expertise, and broad network, no one is better placed than him to embody that ambition and help drive the next phase of Believe's growth in Japan."*

Since it began operating in the country in October 2023, Believe has continuously invested into building an outstanding expert team and the right infrastructure to best serve local artists and labels at each stage of their careers. The nomination of Kazunari Imai comes as Believe enjoys significant successes locally, following the launch in February 2024 of its Artist Services with the creation of PLAYCODE, Believe's first hip-hop focused imprint in Japan, and the signing of a landmark comprehensive partnership with Teichiku Entertainment in March 2025.

Erika Ogawa, Managing Director, Believe Japan, continued: *"Japan is currently the world's second largest music market, and, as it continues to digitalize, one in which Believe is deeply invested. Kazunari Imai's seniority and expertise will play a pivotal role in shaping and accelerating our long-term growth roadmap in Japan. I am honored to co-lead this next chapter together, drawing on his unique experience and perspective to further elevate Believe Japan. Japan holds extraordinary soft power through its music, pop culture, and the unique cultural experiences it brings to the world. Japanese music and culture have the potential to deliver a truly transformational impact on digital, and with Believe's global digital expertise, amplification strategy, and executional capabilities, the new local leadership team is committed to unlocking this opportunity in a way that is distinctive to Believe, with a local-first approach."*

Kazunari Imai, Chairman & Strategic Business Relations Senior Executive Director, Believe Japan, added: *"I am honored to join Believe Japan in this newly created role and to put my extensive experience across all fields of the Japanese music business at the service of its mission to develop local artists and labels. Japan is one of the world's leading music markets, yet its digital sector still holds significant room for growth. By bringing global expertise that has supported the expansion and strengthening of digital music markets worldwide, particularly across Asia and now into Japan, we find strong alignment with the vision outlined by Japanese industry bodies and stakeholders. We are confident that now is the moment to jointly lead the digital transformation of Japan's music industry."*

In a career spanning 40 years, Kazunari Imai has previously served as Director of Victor Entertainment Inc. and Representative Director of JVC NETWORKS, Inc., as well as Promoter at the prestigious rock label SPEEDSTAR RECORDS/TAISHITA label. Between 2020 and 2023, he was Executive Officer and Executive Director Music Marketing Div. of Pony Canyon Inc. he became CEO and President of "KiSML.Inc", a new music consulting agency to expand Japanese music to the world he created in 2023. Kazunari Imai brings a strong background in J-POP and Rock, coupled with a proven track record of operating successful labels in Japan.

This nomination comes as Believe Japan further strengthened its local team to supercharge its ability to successfully develop artists and labels at all stages of their careers.

About Believe

Believe is a global artist development company. We empower local artists, labels and publishers to grow their audiences at each stage of their careers with expertise, respect, fairness and transparency.

Operating in 50+ countries, with more than 2,000 employees, Believe offers a full range of services including audience development, publishing, marketing and distribution, with a tailor-made approach to fit any artist, label or publisher.

Believe champions independence and innovation through a unique model that combines local expertise with a global tech platform, delivering exclusive solutions for artists to promote and monetize their music thanks to strategic partnerships with leading global digital service providers.

With a leading portfolio of brands that includes Nuclear Blast, naïve, TuneCore, Groove Attack, Sentic, AllPoints and Byond, Believe artists generated more than 800 billion streams worldwide in 2024 across all genres, and were recognized with more than 70 leading industry awards.

Believe is a simplified joint-stock company under French law. Learn more at www.believe.com

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