



## Valuing fundamental principles

Hinano Masuda, a JSF auction manager at Japan Securities Finance Co., speaks to Carmella Haswell on the importance of nurturing global perspectives, the impact her role has in the market, and capturing the interest of overseas investors

### Can you tell me about your journey into the securities finance industry?

I joined Japan Securities Finance Co. in 2017. What initially attracted me to the company was its high public nature, being the only securities finance company in Japan that financially supports the standardised margin transactions (SMT). Additionally, the environment of a small yet elite team where personal growth is highly encouraged, and the appealing personalities of the employees and executives I met during the interviews, were significant factors in my decision to join.

Upon entering the company, I spent approximately three years in the settlement management department, engaging in settlement operations for Japanese government bonds, Japanese stocks, and commercial paper, where I learned the fundamentals of operations. Subsequently, for about one and a half to two years, I was responsible for loans for margin transactions (LMT) and engaged in Japanese securities borrowing and lending (SBL) trades. Currently, I have returned to the department of LMT, where I am in charge of margin transactions via JSF auction.

Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to experience various roles that underpin the stability of the market, which has enabled me to steadily expand my expertise and broaden my perspective.

### **As a young professional, what aspects of your role or the industry do you find most exciting?**

In my role overseeing JSF auction operations, I find it incredibly fulfilling to make real-time decisions while assessing the supply and demand balance in the market. The impact that comes with this responsibility is significant, but it also provides a great sense of accomplishment. My decisions often have a direct impact on the market and individual investors, and I encounter the importance and excitement of the job everyday as I build relationships with auction participants.

One particularly memorable experience was attending the Canadian Securities Lending Association (CASLA) conference held in Toronto in May 2025. Many local investors and stakeholders were not yet familiar with Japan's SMT or LMT. When I introduced the background and methods of these systems, it sparked meaningful engagement and interest from stakeholders.

I believe this could be a stepping stone for raising the interest of overseas investors in the Japanese market. LMT are a unique system in Japan and may initially seem challenging to approach, but by leveraging them, there are potentials to borrow Japanese stocks, including special names (i.e. issues eligible for loan and stock loan), at lower costs.

### **Many companies offer various training and development opportunities for their employees. How has your company supported your growth?**

Our company currently implements a mentorship programme where a senior member offers regular one-on-one mentoring sessions to a junior colleague. Traditionally, we used to hire new graduates in accordance with Japanese recruitment practices, with very few mid-career hires. However, in recent years, due to the need to engage in new business ventures and strengthen our organisation, we have actively pursued various forms of recruitment. Having such shifts, we introduced the mentorship programme to support employee retention.

In June, I took on the role of mentor for mid-career hires. Since then, I have been engaging with them regularly to address their concerns, offer guidance on their tasks and adjustment to the working environment, and provide support as needed. This initiative not only promotes cross-departmental connections but also offers me valuable insights and learning opportunities.

In today's increasingly interconnected financial world, nurturing global perspectives among younger employees has been an integral part of our talent development strategy. We offer a diverse range of immersive learning opportunities, including participation in distinguished international conferences such as the Pan Asia Securities Lending Association (PASLA) and the International Securities Lending Association (ISLA), hosting global interns, and working with personnel with diverse cultural and professional backgrounds.

Beyond enhancing language proficiency and technical expertise, these programmes nurture deep understandings of diverse perspectives and the agility to adapt in dynamic environments. For example, in August of this year, we had an internship MBA student from Bangladesh, providing opportunities for younger employees to lead critical tasks such as making strategic presentation narratives, addressing complex inquiries, and facilitating cross-cultural communications. These experiences not only strengthened their sense of responsibility but also enhanced their confidence and engagement.

By building this mindset, we aim to empower ourselves to bridge domestic and international markets through collaboration, innovative problem-solving, and effective communication. This approach not only strengthens relationships with global partners but also drives sustainable growth by identifying new opportunities and addressing diverse market needs.

### **What misconceptions about working in the financial industry have you encountered, and how do you address these challenges?**

There are often misconceptions about the financial industry being cold and rigid, or that young staff mostly handle subordinate tasks with little discretion. However, having worked in this field, I have found that communication is surprisingly crucial, and numerous opportunities for cross-departmental collaboration and dialogue

do exist, making it a very human-centred working environment. Additionally, I have been fortunate to be entrusted with projects and interactions with clients, allowing me to experience responsible positions even as a young professional.

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To counter these common misconceptions, I make a conscientious effort to communicate how the work in finance contributes to the stability of both society and the market during my interactions with external parties.

### **Looking ahead, where do you see yourself in the next five years in terms of your career goals and aspirations?**

The JSF auctions I am currently responsible for are highly dynamic, as they involve direct daily engagement with market supply and demand, and I find my role absolutely rewarding. Over the medium to long term, I aim to build on my experience and deepen my expertise in areas such as fixed income and equity repo, focusing on global market dynamics.

I am particularly interested in opportunities to improve liquidity across financial instruments and support market stability by leveraging international trading practices. Through deepening my expertise, I aspire to strengthen the link between Japanese and global markets and contribute to the further growth of JSF.

### **What advice do you have for other young professionals aspiring to pursue a career in your industry?**

A lot of young professionals might perceive the financial industry as too complex and hesitate to enter. However, I believe that by valuing fundamental principles such as accuracy, attentiveness, and integrity, you can steadily build trust in this field.

When I first joined the company, I had neither specialised knowledge nor experience, and I was overwhelmed with a big sense of anxiety. However, through my daily tasks, I learned a great deal from my clients and felt that I developed professionally through constructive dialogues with them.

There were times when I received valuable advice, and other times when I faced stern words, but each interaction laid the foundation of reliability and confidence that support who I am today. As I accumulated such experiences, my perspective gradually broadened, and I began to see my own thoughts and strengths.

It is not necessary to be perfect from the start. Instead, focus on meeting the expectations of others sincerely and facing the tasks earnestly. I believe that trust and opportunities for growth will naturally flow in your way. ■

## **Hinano Masuda**

Hinano Masuda is a JSF auction manager at Japan Securities Finance Co. who has rich experiences in settlement operations for government bonds, stocks, and commercial paper, as well as in loans for margin transactions and securities borrowing and lending. With over three years of experience in the field of LMT, she is currently dedicated to raising awareness about LMT and SMT.

She commits to the public role of system operation, working closely with stakeholders to foster the development of the Japanese stock market. She is also a Formula One enthusiast who visits Suzuka Circuit annually to support the races on-site.