



# Invaluable support for family entertainment giant moving into Asia.

Attractions operator Merlin Entertainments benefits from TMF Group local knowledge and expertise in Japan.

## About Merlin Entertainments

Merlin Entertainments is one of the world's largest entertainment companies, running more than 140 attractions in 24 countries across four continents, attracting 67 million visitors annually. These range from attractions such as SEA LIFE, Madame Tussauds and The London Eye, to iconic theme park resorts like LEGOLAND®, Gardaland Resort and Alton Towers Resort.

Merlin Entertainments aims to deliver unique and memorable experiences to visitors across its growing international estate. The company continues to diversify its portfolio, by geography, brand and customer, ensuring a balance of indoor and outdoor attractions and international and domestic visitation.



### Jurisdictions where we serve them:

Japan

#### Industry

Family entertainment

#### Services provided

Global entity management

## How we solve it?



### The challenge

For Merlin Entertainments, Asia is a market with great growth potential, as it has been under-served in terms of high-quality visitor attractions. The company was looking to establish itself in Japan in around 2010, and realised it would need some assistance. More importantly, it needed advice from specialists who understood the challenges faced by foreign investors and who could give it practical solutions for day-to-day issues when doing business in Japan.

One such issue came up early in discussions between Merlin Entertainments and TMF Group. The company had heard that staffing can be a challenge in Japan. It was talking to TMF Group about writing employee rules when it heard – for the first time – that contracts had to stipulate that the employee should travel to work in the most economical way possible, because the employer has to cover commuting costs.



### The solution

When Merlin Entertainments was first getting up and running in Japan, TMF Group provided payroll, accounting and tax compliance services, as well as a resident director. Now Merlin Entertainments has a number of attractions in Japan, and has expanded its team in the country, so has taken several of these functions in house.

One of the key roles of TMF Group in Japan has been to look after the Merlin Entertainments company seal. This is important, because in Japan the company seal gives the holder virtually unlimited rights; Merlin needs to be sure that the seal is being kept safely and trust that it is only affixed to documents once appropriately authorised. The authorisation process needs to be very robust.

*"We were looking for somebody who had experience of helping foreign investors enter Japan, able to give us some pointers about potential issues to watch out for. When we met the TMF Group team, we thought, 'Here is a company that could really help us'. The team has been very helpful in giving us a truly independent, objective view."*

#### Christine Dure-Smith

Strategic Finance Director,  
Merlin Magic Making, Merlin Entertainments plc

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