01 / DECISION BRIEF

A ¥5,500 launch needs a visible advantage.

Public-source observations checked 20 Nov 2026. The business brief is illustrative; named companies are research subjects, not VCS clients.

DECISION

Do not position a new 500 ml bottle on “premium quality” alone. Validate a specific product advantage and the delivered margin before committing to Japan inventory.

The brief

The founder or export manager of an established overseas drinkware brand is preparing a Japanese launch. The brand already has a finished product, but needs to decide whether its intended retail price is credible against local alternatives.

Illustrative brief	Decision to make
500 ml insulated bottle; proposed ¥5,500 including domestic delivery. No existing Japanese sales are assumed.	Keep the intended price, redesign the offer, or delay the launch.
No tested differentiation, cost sheet or distributor quote supplied.	Establish the evidence required before approving stock.

25%
premium to KINTO delivered

5 brands
purposive comparison set

¥550
delivery changes the price gap

Read: offer evidence p2; delivered-price comparison p3; product position p4; margin stress test p5; decision gates p6; source record p7. The figures describe offers, not sales or willingness to pay.

01 / EXHIBIT 01 / OBSERVED OFFERS

Compare the right product and price type.

Brand / exact offer	Listed price, incl. tax	Role in this comparison
KINTO Travel Tumbler, 500 ml [S1]	¥3,850	Regular design-led offer; main selected product price.
RIVERS Stem, 500 ml [S2]	¥3,300	Lightweight alternative; variant stock unconfirmed.
THERMOS JNL-S500, Snow White, 500 ml [S3]	¥2,750	Discontinued, limited-stock offer. Keep in the short-term set.
Hydro Flask Standard Mouth, 621 ml [S4]	¥5,280	Regular imported-brand reference; 24.2% more capacity.
Hydro Flask same family, selected sale colours [S5]	¥3,696	30% reduction from ¥5,280. Not a new market price for every colour.
Tiger MCT-K050, 500 ml [S7]	¥6,600 MSRP	Manufacturer reference only; excluded from checkout ranking.

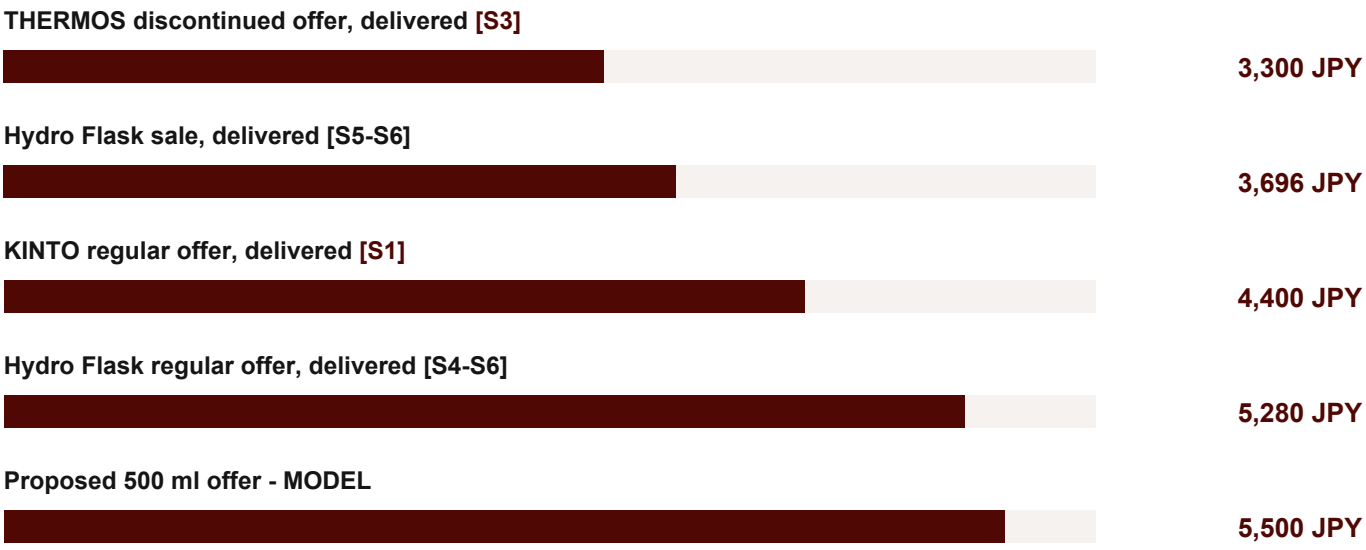
What this set can answer

The selection deliberately includes a design brand, a lightweight specialist, a mass-market offer, an imported brand and a manufacturer-price reference. It tests the proposed positioning against different buying alternatives. It does not estimate the category average.

No coupon, membership reduction, engraving or gift wrap is included. Prices belong to the exact pages listed. No purchase or physical product test was performed.

01 / EXHIBIT 02 / BUYER OUTLAY

Delivery changes the relevant comparison.



Comparison	Calculation	Meaning
Against KINTO	5,500 / 4,400 - 1 = 25.0%	A substantial delivered premium needs a reason.
Against Hydro Flask regular	5,500 / 5,280 - 1 = 4.2%	Near its price, but with less capacity and no assumed brand recognition.
If the new brand adds ¥550 delivery	6,050 / 4,400 - 1 = 37.5%	Separately charged delivery weakens the entry offer.

Calculated baskets: KINTO 3,850 + 550; THERMOS 2,750 + 550. Both Hydro Flask prices exceed its published ¥3,300 free-shipping threshold. RIVERS and Tiger are omitted because a comparable confirmed delivered offer was not established.

01 / PRODUCT POSITION

Choose a reason to buy that can be demonstrated.

Observed competitive cue	Implication for the proposed brand
RIVERS publishes 200 g for a 500 ml bottle [S2].	“Lightweight” requires a measured comparison. A 300 g product cannot credibly own this claim.
THERMOS describes full dishwasher compatibility and lists replacement parts [S3].	Cleaning and repair are concrete purchase questions. Show instructions and a real parts route.
KINTO lists 310 g and a 500 ml format [S1].	A similar design and specification make a large premium harder to explain.
Hydro Flask offers a 621 ml option [S4].	Equal price does not mean equal utility. Assess packed size, grip and use occasion alongside capacity.

Recommended initial range

Use one hero bottle and a small colour selection for validation. This is an inventory-control recommendation, not evidence that Japanese buyers prefer fewer colours. More sizes should follow evidence of a distinct use case, not a desire to make the catalogue look established.

The testable proposition

Select one advantage that survives a side-by-side demonstration: easier cleaning, lower packed weight, a more usable opening or a documented replacement-part service. If no such advantage exists, revise the price or the product before paying for broad exposure.

Thermal claims are not ranked here. Published tests use different conditions, and this research did not test physical samples.

01 / EXHIBIT 03 / COMMERCIAL MODEL

A cheaper offer can remove the launch margin.

MODEL: 100 orders per month, one bottle per order. Net goods revenue is modeled as tax-inclusive price / 1.10. Landed unit cost ¥1,800; fulfilment and delivery ¥700; expected returns/service allowance ¥150. These are scenario inputs, not supplier quotes. A 4% payment-cost allowance is applied to the customer payment.

Per order	¥5,500 offer	¥4,950 offer
Modeled net goods revenue	¥5,000	¥4,500
Landed + fulfilment + service	¥2,650	¥2,650
Payment allowance: 4% of gross	¥220	¥198
Contribution before acquisition / fixed costs	**¥2,130**	**¥1,652**
Less required contribution of ¥1,000	**¥1,130 CAC ceiling**	**¥652 CAC ceiling**

A ¥550 consumer discount removes ¥478 of modeled contribution. To produce the same pre-acquisition contribution as 100 orders at ¥5,500, the lower price needs about 129 orders (213,000 / 1,652), before any change in acquisition cost.

The sensitivity that matters

If landed cost is ¥400 higher, the acquisition ceilings fall to ¥730 and ¥252. This changes the decision more than a small adjustment to the payment rate. Replace the cost inputs with actual freight, import, warehouse and service quotes before approving an offer.

CAC = customer acquisition cost per completed new-customer order. This is a contribution model, not net profit or tax advice. It assumes a 10% goods-tax reserve and excludes recoverable input tax; the actual entity and tax position require confirmation.

01 / MANAGEMENT ACTION

Approve a controlled test, with stop conditions.

Gate / owner	Evidence required	Decision rule
1. Product / product lead	Measured weight, cleaning demonstration, usage restrictions, packaging and replacement policy.	Stop if the chosen advantage cannot be substantiated.
2. Economics / founder	SKU-level landed costs, warehouse quote, returns allowance and payment schedule.	Do not import commercial stock if conservative unit contribution cannot fund the test.
3. Customer / research lead	Structured comparison with target users; paid pilot once operationally ready.	Separate stated preference from completed orders.
4. Commercial / export lead	Observed paid acquisition, refunds and reasons for rejection by offer.	Continue only against the contribution target set before launch.

Suggested experiment

Compare ¥5,500 with delivery included against a genuinely different, economically viable offer. Use the same audience, landing-page quality and measurement window. Record actual paid orders and contribution, not just click-through rate. Any sample size should be chosen from traffic and expected conversion; ten enthusiastic interviews do not establish market demand.

What would change this recommendation

A defensible product advantage, lower confirmed landed costs or evidence of existing demand from Japanese buyers could justify the intended price. Conversely, a new competitor promotion may change the immediate test conditions without changing the long-term positioning.

Client inputs needed: full SKU specifications, current export sales by market, gross margin, minimum production quantity, fulfilment capability and intended customer. This sample does not assess product-import compliance.

01 / SOURCE RECORD

Evidence you can inspect and reproduce.

[S1] KINTO Japan: Travel Tumbler 500 ml

Current main product offer, selected Sand White version, specification and delivery terms. The customization panel retains a different price; the main offer is used.

kinto.co.jp/products/20941

[S2] RIVERS: Vacuum Flask Stem

Published 500 ml price and weight. Page extraction includes both stock and sold-out text; variant availability is unconfirmed.

store.rivers.co.jp/products/stem

[S3] THERMOS: JNL-S500 SN-WH

Specific discontinued Snow White offer, tax-inclusive price, delivery, dishwasher and parts information.

www.shopthermos.jp/shop/g/g300066781BC0/

[S4] Hydro Flask Japan: 21 oz Standard Mouth

Regular 621 ml offer. Capacity differs from the modeled 500 ml product.

www.hydroflask.co.jp/shopdetail/000000000003/

[S5] Hydro Flask Japan: selected sale colours

Separate sale page: White, Black and Goji; published discount and sale return restriction.

www.hydroflask.co.jp/shopdetail/000000000157/

[S6] Hydro Flask Japan: shopping guide

Domestic shipping threshold. Basket totals are calculated from published terms, not completed checkouts.

www.hydroflask.co.jp/info.html

[S7] Tiger: MCT-K035/K050/K060

Manufacturer recommended price for MCT-K050. MSRP is separated from purchasable offers.

www.tiger-corporation.com/ja/jpn/product/vacuum-insulated-products/mct-k/

Method: purposive official-source comparison; JPY prices, consumer tax included where stated. Public pages were checked on 20 Nov 2026. Dynamic stock and checkout totals were not independently confirmed. Recommendations and all private-cost inputs are VCS analysis / illustrative modeling. Prepared by Vladimirov Maksim. powermaxta@gmail.com.