

Japan's top drugmaker appoints first foreign boss

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Japan's top drugmaker said Saturday it had picked a GlaxoSmithKline executive as its next president in a rare example of overseas head-hunting by a major Japanese firm.

The board of directors at Takeda Pharmaceutical, which has been active in foreign acquisitions in recent years, approved 47-year-old French Christophe Weber, as [chief operating officer](#) and candidate as the next chief executive.

He will be the first non-Japanese chief in 230 years of history at the company based in western Japan's Osaka.

Weber will join Takeda to take the role of chief operating officer by April 2014 and is expected to become president upon approval at a general meeting of shareholders in June, Takeda said in a statement.

Current president and chief executive Yasuchika Hasegawa is expected to become chairman and chief executive.

"We have extremely high expectations for Mr Weber's contributions to further enhance and accelerate the implementation of Takeda's global strategy," Hasegawa said in the statement.

Weber, educated at the University of Lyon, has held various positions at GSK in Europe, United States and the Asia-Pacific region.

Takeda operates in more than 70 countries after its 2011 acquisition of major Swiss rival Nycomed for \$14 billion.

There are only a handful of foreign chiefs at leading Japanese companies. Carlos Ghosn, the [chief executive](#) of French auto group Renault who also heads Nissan Motor, is one of the most prominent.

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