



2010 APEC Women Leaders Network Meeting

Workshop: Women's Lifelong Career Development: Education and Vocational Skills Training

# The Challenges of Women's Career Development in the Company

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# Sony Japan's How to Promote Women's Active Role in Workplace: Historical Background and Challenges

Under a corporate culture that values performance and respects individuality, women employees have flourished at Sony at a rather early stage compared to the rest of corporate Japan

1970s

- First female section chief appointed
- Voluntary training session held for the first wave of female managers
- First female employee posted overseas

1980s

- Challenge issued for female employees to take the assistant manager's exam
- Female employee overseas postings and international business trips become commonplace

1990s

- Expansion of internal programs, including childcare support programs
- Compliance with the revised Equal Opportunities Act

Since 2000

- First female board member and executive officer
- Compliance with the Act for Measures to Support Next Generation Lifelong Learning Opportunities  
(Received the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare's Award in Corporate Excellence as a Family Friendly Company)

Employees consist primarily of engineers  
↓  
Low ratio of women workers and managers

Challenge is how to promote Women's active role especially in Design & Development

Sony Japan was comparatively slower in promoting women employees compared to other Sony Group companies

# Sony Japan's How to Promote Women's Active Role in Workplace: Initiatives Since 2005

秘 Confidential

JULY 2005: Launched the **Diversity Initiative for Value Innovation (DIVI)** as a company-wide project

The mission of DIVI@Sony is to reexamine our corporate culture from the perspective of **diversity** as well as identify and propose solutions to challenges in order to make Sony a more creative, innovative and vibrant company.

Through the project, we are actively working to create an environment where each and every employee can independently utilize their unique individuality and exercise their talents.

As the first step, we are focusing efforts in particular on **gender**.



FEB. 2008: Established the **Diversity Development Department** to strengthen our diversity promotion structure through a specialized internal organization

# Important Subjects of Career Development for women

- Work Style
  - Flexible working time to be compatible with family issues
  - Work-Life Balance
- Company culture to accept diversity
  - Break away from Stereo-type role expectation by gender
  - Diversity & Inclusion
- Career Development
  - Recognize gender difference
  - Role model & Networking

# Policies Addressing the 3 Key Challenges of Supporting Women in the Workplace [Career Development]

- For women employees
  - Round table discussions for women employees
  - Mentoring
  - Career seminars
  - Leadership training courses, skills development training courses
  - Participation in various initiatives and activities
    - DIVI Project
    - Panelists or speakers at events
    - Cross-industrial associations / networking meetings
- Supervisor training programs on women's career development

# Critical for Mutual Efforts to Understand the Differences between Man and Woman

- Male superiors tend to be overly sensitive toward women's needs and end up assigning watered down tasks.
  - When women employees are balancing work with childcare
  - Do not want to cause female junior staff to fail or cry
- Stereotype that women dislike change, are hesitant to face challenges, and are content with the current status quo.
  - With time a limited commodity,
    - Limited opportunities in personal development (society, interest in other fields).
    - Fear failure. Believe they cannot do certain tasks by themselves, or avoid doing these tasks by themselves.
  - “I won't work any harder than this!”
    - Reject promotions. Try to avoid jobs / tasks that carry responsibilities.
  - As a result, have narrow outlook and limited experiences.
- Quality and breadth of conversation varies during male-male, male-female and female-female interactions

# To support Career Development for Women Leaders

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- Work-Life Balance
  - Support to overcome the period of being compatible with family issues
- Life-long Career Development
  - Older women became, less role models & networking
- Active & positive mind for own career development
  - Tendency to contented herself with current position, and hesitate to challenge.
  - Be ready to challenge Leader's position empowered by role models and networking