

# Male leaders efforts to promote women's active role in Japan

## What is the Declaration on Action?

On March 28, 2014, a kick off meeting to create “a society in which women shine”, under the initiative of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, was held at the office of the Prime Minister in order to create a nationwide movement to support women who will and do shine in various fields.

In succession to this, male leaders who have already been involved in promoting an active role of women in their own organization were invited to discuss the role of male leaders in Japan.

In June 2014, 9 male leaders announced the **“Declaration on Action by A Group of Male Leaders Who Will Create a Society in which Women Shine”** comprising the three pillars “Taking actions and sending messages ourselves,” “Disrupting the status quo,” and “Developing networking”.

As of the end of July 2015, 27 male leaders endorsed the Declaration on Action.

This report compiles best practices by male leaders for promoting women's active role.



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A Group of Male Leaders Who will Create a Society in which Women Shine  
Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office

# Inspiration and impetus : What led you to embrace diversity as corporate strategy

**Sachin N. Shah, CEO, President, MetLife Japan**

From an early age, my mother has been a strong female role model for me. She worked extremely hard at her career while looking after our family. I learned early on that women with ambition and the will to succeed can achieve anything.

**Hiroaki Nakanishi, Chairman & CEO, Hitachi, Ltd.**

As I believe it is essential to get things done or decided by a team with diversity, executives should make every effort to create a suitable work environment.

**Takashi Okuma, President & CEO, Socioak Holdings Inc.**

My starting point was taking over the company founded by my physically challenged father under his policy of creating a company and society in which all people —irrespective of disability, gender, and age— can be respected.

**Hideaki Omiya, Chairman of the Board, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd.**

I hope to create an environment in which all people, regardless of gender, have an opportunity to achieve great success and set good examples that successive generations to follow.

**Hidetoshi Sakuma, President, The Chiba Bank, Ltd.**

I was born in a farm family where both males and females work and cooperate together. Therefore, when I give address to employees, I emphasize them the importance of bringing the Bank new value by fulfillment of diversified individuals' potential capability.

**Yasuchika Hasegawa, Director, Chairman of the Board, Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited**

Executives must change their mind so that talented people, regardless of gender and nationality, can fulfill their potential and take on a leadership role in promoting active participation of women.

**Daisuke Endo, Director, STRIDE Inc.**

My wife was unable to return to work after giving birth, even though both she and her company hoped her return, because she could not find a childcare facility. This made me find the importance of improving the environment for work-life balance.

**David R. Smith, President, Vision Care Company, Johnson & Johnson K.K.**

I found it as a big problem that the ratio of men and women in the top management of our company was the inverse of the ratio among our customers. Thus, I intentionally increased gender diversity in the company in order to gain a better understanding of our customers' needs.

**Hiroshi Aoi, President and Representative Director, MARUI GROUP CO., LTD.**

A high percentage of old male workers and large amounts of overtime have proven to be the greatest factors impeding business recovery. Therefore, I vowed to create an organization in which employees are not forced to work overtime and women and young people could play an important role.

**Harry A. Hill, President & CEO, OAK LAWN MARKETING, INC.**

A company should not set a dividing line between genders, races, etc., but must contribute to the creation of a better society that allows all its employees to maximize their potential.

**Yoshimitsu Kobayashi, Chairman, Mitsubishi Chemical Holdings Corporation**

Having personally seen female researchers, who were extremely brilliant upon joining the company, fail to reach their full potential because of difficulty in juggling both work and childcare, I began to realize that there might be a problem not just with the company, but with the entire social system.

**Kengo Sakurada, President & CEO, Sompo Japan Nipponkoa Holdings, Inc.**

Monoculturalism weakens global competitiveness, while multiculturalism enhances organizational sensitivity and flexibility. Thus, I became acutely aware that, for a company to be successful in global competition, women must take on decision-making roles in the company.

**Yoshinobu Tsutsui, President, Nippon Life Insurance Company**

The active participation of women is an important factor in the sustainable growth of a company. We must take decisive actions to advance diversity as a corporate strategy.

**Shuji Ito, President and COO, Calbee, Inc.**

Individual growth is essential for the growth of the company. I felt that promoting the active participation of women in the workplace would prove to be a tremendous help in enhancing the abilities of employees to take initiative.

**Hideo Kiji, President, INTER ACTION Corporation**

I realized that many women are active in the workplace in a broad range of positions overseas. Promoting the active role of women is particularly important for Japan.

**Yoshiaki Fujimori, President and CEO, LIXIL Group Corporation**

The creation of a diverse society with respect for differences and provides equal opportunities to all will contribute to competitive strength and innovation. As the first step, we, as those in management positions must encourage the success of women.

**Yasuharu Ishikawa, President and CEO, CROSS COMPANY Inc.**

Since a large number of our brands are designed for women, marketing and decision-making from a woman's perspective is indispensable.

**Yoshihisa Aono, President and CEO, Cybozu, Inc.**

We promote active participation of women as a business decision aimed at transforming our business practices and culture.

**Kei Takamaru, President, Hospitality ONE Company Limited**

We felt a framework should be developed in which nurses with high making performance could raise children while advancing their careers.

**Masao Omori, Mayor of Okayama city**

I had the sense that the future of our country would rely on utilizing the strength of women.

**Kazuyuki Tanaka, President & CEO, Hitachi Chemical Company, Ltd.**

When I returned to Japan after working in the United States, I realized that the proportion of women in management positions was extremely small and began to wonder what could be done to create a company in which women could play an important role.

**Yosuke Akiyoshi, President and CEO, LANCERS, Inc.**

I wanted to empower individuals by sending a message that there is a third way of working style in addition to the permanent and temporary employee.

# Promoting women's active participation of best practices

## 1 Contributions to Corporate Competitiveness

In Japan, **MetLife** has launched a new female-focused initiative called "Lucy's" to provide seminars, information and insurance products and services to meet the needs of Japanese women today.

**MARUI GROUP CO., LTD.** developed women-friendly pumps named "Rakuchin Kirei Pumps" jointly with its female buyers to address customer demands from a same-gender viewpoint. The curtain-rail window frame developed by **LIXIL Corporation** was also based on female sensibilities and received positive reviews, earning a 2014 Good Design Award. The contributions of women are not limited to product development. **Mitsubishi Chemical Holdings Corporation** appointed a woman as a group manager in the Corporate Strategy Office for general management of the group. It was their uniquely feminine ideas that contributed to initiating, informing, and promoting a new corporate concept based on new management indexes called "Management of Sustainability (MOS)".



["Rakuchin Kirei Pumps", MARUI GROUP CO., Ltd.]



["The curtain-rail window frame", LIXIL Corporation]

## 2 Contributions toward the Continuous Employment of Women

**CROSS COMPANY Inc.** introduced short-time regular employee system to allow women with time constraints to work as permanent employees with a working period of 4 or 6 hours per day. As a measure for assisting in women's early return to work after childcare leave, **Socioak Holdings Inc.** introduced a system for celebrating their return to work following childcare leave in which senior staff present the returner with a congratulatory bonus and message.

**MetLife Japan** established the Japan Women's Business Network (JWBN) to provide an opportunity for working mothers and child-rearing male employees to meet regularly in order to share their experiences and troubles and offer mutual support on how to balance childcare with work.



["Japan Women's Business Network (JWBN)", MetLife Japan]

## 3 Multifaceted Efforts to Reform the Way We Work

**The Chiba Bank, Ltd.** established "the Committee for promoting Business Efficiency and pushing forward Off-Work Hours" that conducted a review of the Bank's business process while taking in more than 1,300 improvement proposals from employees. **Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies in Japan** presented the merits of employees leaving work on time through such activities as a Leave-on-Time Fund in which the company sets aside 50 JPY per day when employees leave work within 20 minutes past quitting time, Happy Friday in which members of a team take turns leaving at 3 p.m. on one Friday each month, and Discovery Hour in which it is prohibited from setting up meetings at a designated time during the week. **Sompo Japan Nipponkoa Insurance Inc.** has implemented many innovations in working styles, including expanding shift work, introducing summer hours, and distributing a work handbook. In order to create a work environment that does not restrict time or place, **Hitachi, Ltd.** has set up satellite offices, simplified application and operation process system for working at home, and distributed mobile tools such as smartphones, allowing employees to select from various flexible working styles. **Hospitality ONE Company Limited** developed a direct attending/leaving homecare service employing electronic health records and iPads and constructed a system using Skype and chat tools so that nurses can balance work and childcare.

### 4 Encouraging Male Participation in Housework and Childcare

**Nippon Life Insurance Company** incorporates 100% Childcare Leave Acquisition Rate Among Male Employees into its management plan to increase awareness of men of childcare. As part of its efforts toward improving the acquisition rate of male childcare leave, **Sompo Japan Nipponkoa Insurance Inc.** sends e-mail, including a leaflet promoting male childcare leave and a congratulatory card, to male workers whose spouses have given birth and to the superiors of these male workers encouraging the workers to take childcare leave. **STRIDE Inc.** is working to nurture a business culture in which male workers are encouraged to take more responsibility in childcare by having its executive officers work at home periodically for purposes of childcare. **CROSS COMPANY Inc.** has introduced a day-off system in which male employees must take off one day per month for childcare and household matters when their children are under the age of ten. To ensure that workers do not take advantage of this day off for a different purpose, the company has devised various checks, such as requiring the spouse to sign a confirmation letter.



[“A congratulatory card”, Sompo Japan Nipponkoa Insurance Inc.]

### 5 Strengthening Cooperation through Horizontal Relationships

**Sompo Japan Nipponkoa Insurance Inc.** and **The Chiba Bank, Ltd.** held joint gatherings for their women employees, to foster their career consciousness, and have promoted the personnel exchanges of candidates for female leaders of the future. To incorporate initiatives from other companies, President Aono of **Cybozu, Inc.** gave a lecture on working methods, including male childcare leave, at a national convention of the LIXIL Women's Network, a network created by women at **LIXIL Corporation** Members of the Promote Diversity Committee at **MARUI GROUP CO., LTD.** which implements activities across the company aimed at promoting active roles for women in the workplace, invited female executives from **Calbee, Inc.** to give lectures on relevant practical approaches. In addition, **The Chiba Bank, Ltd.** launched "A group of Regional Bank Presidents to promote the creation of A Society in which Women Shine" which presidents of sixty-four regional banks take part in, and aims at promoting the success of women industry-wide.



[“A kick off meeting by a group of Regional Bank Presidents to promote the creation of A Society in which Women Shine”]

#### ■ Reference

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