

# Driving DEI in Management

## DEI #3 EVENT REPORT



28 February 2024  
Volvo Studio Tokyo



MAERSK

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Ridgelinez



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# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) event series explores factors that impede or empower DEI initiatives, focusing on women in management roles.

We aim to **illuminate obstacles**, **highlight enablers**, and provide **actionable insights** that companies and individuals can use to enhance DEI practices.

The series focuses on supporting and increasing the number of women in management positions in Japan. However, the identified challenges, enablers, and strategies can be applied to many DEI issues and opportunities.

Our first event identified barriers blocking the advancement of women in the Japanese managerial sphere. The goal was to understand the elements stifling female leaders.

Our second event showcased the triumphs of women in management, analysing key factors underpinning their success.

This third event focused on success stories and ways that individuals, teams, divisions and companies can create the best conditions for women to succeed as managers.

The event was split into two sections:

- A series of four **presentations by leaders** focused on personal stories and what factors support the success of women managers in their respective companies.
- An **interactive group session** focused on identifying specific areas, actions and initiatives that can help support women to seek and succeed in management roles.

# EVENT PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

This event was initiated and sponsored by Maersk Japan's DEI Committee. It was organised by Global Perspectives in collaboration with the Swedish, Danish and Norwegian Chambers of Commerce, and hosted by Volvo Car Japan.

We were honoured and delighted to have Naomi Fudo, Managing Director of Volvo Car Japan, open the event by sharing her own leadership story.

We then enjoyed presentations from a diverse group of managers with deep experience and expertise on DEI-related topics:

- **Toru Nishiyama**, Managing Director & President, North-East Asia, at A.P. Moller–Maersk Korea & Japan
- **Miho Takiguchi**, I&D, Organisation Development Lead, AstraZeneca
- **Momo Miyazaki**, Enterprise Solutions Account Executive, Meltwater
- **Yuko Seki**, Partner and Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Ridgelinez

The workshop was designed and facilitated by Tove Kinooka from Global Perspectives, with support from Maersk, Volvo Car Japan, SCCJ, DCCJ, NCCJ, and Global Perspectives' Gavin Dixon, Marc Prosser, Amelia Kinooka and Chisa Takada. Catering was provided by IKEA and The Peninsula hotel Tokyo, and was much appreciated by all!

We sincerely thank everyone who contributed their time, energy, and ideas to make this event happen, and all who participated on the day.



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# WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT

## Japan: The Big Picture

### Key data points and facts

World Economic Forum 2023 global gender gap rankings paint a stark picture. Japan fell nine places compared to 2022 and ranks 125th out of 146 countries. Further findings show that Japan was:

- 123rd in Economic participation and opportunity
- 138th in Political Empowerment
- 75th for wage equality

### What is the situation in Japan today?

Japan's female labour participation rate surpasses many countries. However, female managerial representation remains low. Cabinet Office research found that only 11.4% of executives in Japan's prime market-listed companies were women in 2022. A 2023 study of almost 28,000 companies across Japan found that only 9.8% of managers were female.

In contrast, Japanese women continue to score among the highest in the world where educational achievement is concerned. In other words, Japan has abundant talented, well-educated women who are heavily underrepresented in leadership roles across society.

Despite a decade of "Womenomics," the proportion of women managers remains largely stationary. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has echoed the aspirations of his predecessors, stating that women should occupy at least 30% of executive positions in companies listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange Prime Market by 2030. Yet, there is little to no clear progress toward this goal. It raises the question of what barriers exist and how can we better mobilise society and companies to encourage, support and increase the number of female leaders.

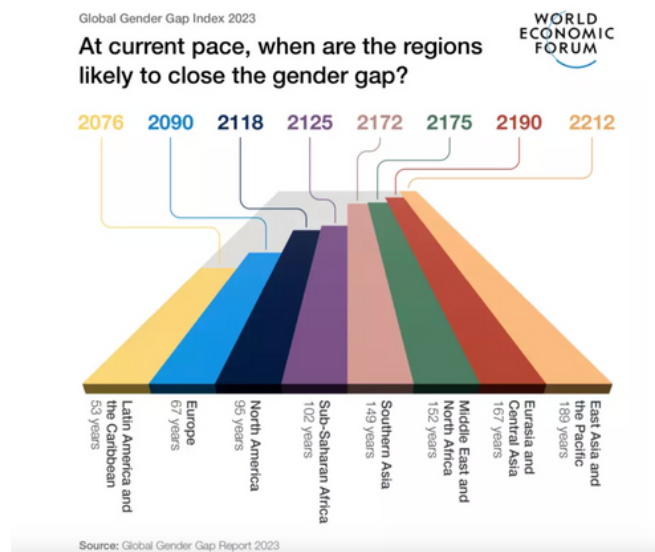
# WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT (cont.)

One issue is a huge pay gap, averaging 22.1% across all industries and positions. An Adecco Group survey in early 2022 highlighted a blend of cultural and organisational factors deterring women from seeking or accepting promotions; sentiments echoed in our DEI event workshop discussions. They include Japan's patriarchal structures, with women expected to oversee the household and childcare. Long, inflexible work hours and lack of effective institutional support also contribute.

For a full list of barriers, we refer to the first report in this series.

## Inspiration from Scandinavia

Contrastingly, Scandinavian nations and their companies consistently rank high in equality indexes, including the 2023 World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report. Compared to Japan, Scandinavian countries appear to have fewer obstacles and more robust support mechanisms fostering female leadership.



The difference suggests systemic barriers inhibit Japanese women's progression to management roles, compounded by potential failings in initiatives and support structures.

Building on the input and findings from the first two DEI events, the third event in the series focused on ways to learn from specific managers and companies' approaches to supporting and developing female managers.

The insights were further examined in group settings and discussed by the event's almost 70 participants. The goal was to create a series of actionable insights and recommendations that can serve as inspiration and guidelines for companies' efforts to support and develop female managers in Japan.

# SUCCESS STORIES

This section presents core learnings and points from each of the four presenters. Each section presents an overview and includes central themes, strategies, and insights from both the individual presenter and their respective companies.

The presentations represent personal insights and should be viewed as a partial image of some of the DEI-related experiences, learnings, actions, and initiatives taken by the respective presenter or their companies. Presenters' insights and views in this section have been condensed and edited for brevity and clarity.

## Toru Nishiyama

Managing Director & President,  
North-East Asia,  
A.P. Moller – Maersk Korea & Japan



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Maersk's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is a moral imperative and a strategic enabler of success. The company has a comprehensive portfolio of DEI initiatives. Focus points include increasing the number of women in management, shattering the proverbial glass ceiling and fostering a culture of inclusivity at all levels of leadership.

DEI principles should be part of personal work ethics, team dynamics, and organisational processes, notably in hiring and mentorship practices. The company's endeavours in Japan and South Korea illustrate its systemic approach, balancing internal initiatives with external collaborations to advance equality across functions and regions.

Nishiyama-san mentioned that his and his company's efforts to foster inclusive leadership are anchored in factors such as:

- Leadership commitment to embrace and champion DEI goals, including making it a personal mission.
- Inclusive hiring practices that set diversity requirements for candidate slates, including mandated inclusion of female candidates for leadership roles.
- Mentorship and development that sees senior leaders investing in the development and mentorship of female talent.
- Cultural shift that underlines diversity as a catalyst for superior business outcomes.
- Creating a new normal where diverse advancement is not considered an unusual event.

# SUCCESS STORIES (cont.)

## Miho Takiguchi

I&D,  
Organisation Development Lead,  
AstraZeneca



AstraZeneca's stated aim is to take action to drive sustainability for the health of people, society and the planet by enhancing human health, societal well-being, and planetary sustainability.

Currently in AstraZeneca women constitute 49% of senior management in its global managerial landscape. In Japan, the ratio of bucho (director) and above is around 30% - roughly equivalent to the number of women in the organisation.

There is a noticeable upward trend in female representation within the company. This shift is most evident in the leadership team in Japan, where around 50% are women. Significantly, women are not only increasing in number but are also occupying roles in traditionally male-dominated domains like R&D and manufacturing.

The company's approach to DEI (called I&D, or Inclusion & Diversity, in AstraZeneca) has evolved from a primary focus on gender to encompass a broader spectrum of diversity and recognise the value of a diverse workforce in driving innovation and business success.

Takiguchi-san has experience working across different industries, countries, and companies. She has observed that a mix of factors contribute to encouraging and supporting women managers, including:

- Leadership-driven DEI that is not confined to HR and underscores that diversity and inclusion are integral to business outcomes.
- Cultural and generational sensitivity that acknowledges and addresses nuances, such as the Japanese tendency to avoid standing out - good for keeping harmony, but not so good for a "Speak My Mind culture".
- Encouraging full self-expression and creating a workplace where employees feel safe to express their ideas and emotions.
- Investing in development and building and developing female leadership from within while also being open to bringing in external female talent.



# SUCCESS STORIES (cont.)



## **Momo Miyazaki**

Enterprise Solutions Account Executive,  
Meltwater

The company looks to its Norwegian roots where its corporate culture and values are concerned. They are focused on four foundational Norwegian tenets: muro (fun), enere (number one – or being singular or unique), and respekt (respect), culminating in the acronym MER (more – or being more).

The company works on creating an environment where employees feel valued, secure, and inspired to reach beyond their comfort zones and encourages continuous growth and openness across all age groups, backgrounds, and professional levels.

In alignment with its core values, the company places significant emphasis on diversity and inclusion (D&I), with a particular focus on bridging the gender gap in the tech industry. Males constitute 70% of the tech workforce, and a proactive company culture includes acknowledging and seeking to actively address the unique challenges faced by women in this sphere.

Core learnings from personal and company levels where encouraging and supporting women managers include:

- Cultivating a culture that encourages a positive and innovative work environment.
- Commitment to DEI that seeks to balance gender representation in tech.
- Empowering female leadership and sharing success stories and challenges from female leaders across different career stages to inspire and guide others.
- Ethical integrity where the company, managers and individual workers strive to uphold ethical standards, even if it can lead to forgoing potential business opportunities.
- Leveraging personal narratives and the power of storytelling and personal experiences to inspire, educate, and drive change.

# SUCCESS STORIES (cont.)

## Ridgelinez



### Yuko Seki

Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer,  
Ridgelinez

Founded in 2020 within the Fujitsu group Group, Ridgelinez is a Tokyo-based professional firm, supporting and helping to accelerate transformation within Japanese corporations. A diverse team of 500 consulting professionals provide expertise strategy, operations, and technology, underscoring a belief that multifaceted perspectives are crucial for cultural and operational transformation.

Despite a predominantly traditional Japanese leadership structure, where senior leadership is dominated by men, the company is committed to embracing and enhancing diversity, led by the CEO's active advocacy.

Seki-san's personal and professional experiences have identified the key success factors for companies looking to advance the development of female managers:

- Strategic change management that clearly defines diversity as a strategic goal and value driver, including CEO-sponsored DEI initiatives and DEI metrics tied to executive compensation.
- Generating and highlighting executive sponsorship and support, especially from male leaders, to open doors for emerging talent.
- Recognising and leveraging the unique strengths and perspectives women bring to the table, such as the ability to help foster more inclusive decision-making and effective organisational culture.
- Understanding and leveraging the value and input of female peers and managers, including in creating "safe spaces" for sharing challenges, experiences and getting advice.

# GROUP WORK OUTPUT

After the presentations the event participants were split into groups. Each group was assigned a particular focus area and was asked to examine **what** could be done in that area, as well as **how** it could be done. The aim was to generate actionable insights and recommendations that teams, departments and companies can implement to help support and develop female managers.

## We explored six different areas:

1. Hiring
2. Onboarding
3. People development
4. Organisational development
5. Policies
6. Advocacy



In the following pages we present a summary of the findings and recommendations for action for each area.

# 1) HIRING

## WHAT can be done

Creating an inclusive hiring process is essential in encouraging and supporting female managers within any organisation. To encourage and support the ascent of more female managers, it's crucial that this process is rooted in inclusivity and equity. This involves not only attracting a diverse pool of candidates but also ensuring that assessment and selection processes are free from bias. For example, installing processes that eliminate (or reduce as much as is possible) unconscious bias from the hiring process ensures a fair and equitable environment for all candidates, allowing companies to truly hire the best talent based on merit and fit rather than unconscious stereotypes or personal preferences.

## HOW it can be done

- Engage with diverse professional networks and forums to learn about different perspectives and discover your own biases.
- Utilise social media and specialised job boards focused on diversity.
- Implement consistent sets of questions for all candidates.
- Develop a comprehensive interview guide aligned with essential competencies and ensure that all hiring managers are supported in - and held accountable for - implementing it.
- Implement blind screening processes by anonymizing resumes and applications to focus solely on qualifications – do not ask for photos, first names or other gender-identifying indications on applications.
- Use open, neutral language in job applications to encourage a broad range of applicants.
- Make use of available tools to analyse and remove biased language from job postings, and seek diverse opinions & feedback on wording from within your organisation.

## 2) ONBOARDING

### **WHAT can be done**

A well-structured onboarding process is crucial for integrating new hires into the company culture and setting them up for success. For female managers, an inclusive onboarding experience can significantly influence their trajectory within the organisation. It's about providing the right resources, support, and connections from day one.

### **HOW it can be done**

- Customize onboarding experiences to meet individual needs, recognising that each person brings unique skills and perspectives.
- Include milestones and goals that align employees' career aspirations and the company's objectives, encouraging them to explore meaningful career development opportunities.
- Pair new female employees and managers with mentors and sponsors who can provide guidance, support, and advocacy within the organisation.
- Incorporate DEI training that highlights the company's commitment to inclusivity, providing new hires with insights into and connections to internal networks and resources.
- Ensure onboarding sessions are interactive and incorporate real-life scenarios to facilitate understanding and engagement – and avoid lectures!
- Implement regular check-ins and feedback loops to monitor and understand new employees' and managers' experiences and needs, and identify any concerns before they become an issue.

# 3) PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT

## WHAT can be done

Targeted efforts in people development play a pivotal role in encouraging and supporting female managers. This involves not only identifying and nurturing potential but also ensuring equitable access to developmental opportunities, mentorship, and networking.

## HOW it can be done

- Tailored development plans focusing on individual career aspirations, strengths, and areas for growth.
- Mentorship programs that pair emerging female talent with experienced leaders within the organisation.
- Leadership training programs (for men and women) that include content on the unique challenges and barriers that women might face in leadership.
- Networking events and forums that provide a platform for sharing experiences, knowledge, and opportunities.
- Partnering with external organisations and networks focused on women's leadership, corporate culture development, and professional development.
- Recognise and accommodate different career trajectories, including those that might involve breaks or part-time periods at different life stages.

# 4) ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## WHAT can be done

Creating structures, policies, and a culture that collectively supports and elevates women into leadership roles is crucial for success. This means going beyond individual development to embed these values into the very fabric of the organisation, ensuring that systems, policies, and the culture at large are aligned with the goal of advancing female leadership.

## HOW it can be done

- Inclusive leadership training for all current and aspiring leaders, emphasising the importance and positive business impact of diversity and inclusion in team dynamics and decision-making.
- Audit of organisational policies, such as promotion criteria, flexible working arrangements, equal parental leave, and anti-discrimination guidelines, to ensure they are equitable and identify gaps / areas for improvement.
- Support implementation of diversity and inclusion policies by ensuring that all managers are fully aware of these policies and are held accountable for upholding them – using a 360-degree feedback system can be helpful here.
- Councils or committees dedicated to diversity and inclusion, with representation from various levels and departments.
- Clearly defined pathways for career advancement within the organisation, ensuring they are accessible to and understood by all employees.
- Promote initiatives and events that foster understanding and support among employees, such as discussion forums, allyship workshops, and diversity celebrations.
- Share success stories to ensure there are visible role models to inspire employees and see what is possible.

# 5) POLICIES

## **WHAT** can be done

Robust policies that actively promote gender equality and inclusivity encourage and support female leadership. Policies must be crafted and enforced that specifically address gender equality, provide support structures, and actively dismantle barriers to women's advancement.

## **HOW** it can be done

- Regular pay equity audits to identify and rectify any gender-related disparities in compensation.
- Transparent compensation policies that ensure equal pay for equal work, including clear criteria for raises, bonuses, and promotions.
- Comprehensive anti-discrimination and harassment policies and confidential reporting channels, including zero-tolerance for gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment.
- Parental leave policies for both mothers and fathers to encourage shared caregiving responsibilities.
- Flexible working arrangements, such as telecommuting, flexible hours, and part-time opportunities, to support employees with caregiving responsibilities.
- Equitable access to professional development opportunities, mentorship, and sponsorship programs.
- Equitable access to overseas assignments that take into account and accommodate parental and/or caregiving responsibilities.



# 6) ADVOCACY

## WHAT can be done

Advocacy beyond your own organisation can actively support and promote policies and practices that facilitate the rise of women to leadership positions. This includes advocating for governmental policies that support women in leadership roles and engaging with broader industry and community efforts to promote gender diversity in leadership.

## HOW it can be done

- Use your organisation's network (such as Chambers of Commerce and industry forums) to share what your organisation is doing, and advocate for what still needs to change at governmental policy level to support further change.
- Get involved in campaigns or initiatives that raise awareness about the importance of gender diversity in leadership.
- Encourage top executives and leaders within the organisation to publicly commit to gender diversity goals and to regularly communicate progress and challenges in this area.
- Engage with external consultants, organisations, industry groups, and forums dedicated to advancing diversity and women in leadership. This can include partnerships, sponsorships, collaboration with educational institutions, and active participation in events and initiatives.
- Share best practices, learnings, and success stories with the wider community to inspire and inform broader efforts towards gender diversity in leadership.
- Engage both men and women in your network to foster a culture of allyship and collective responsibility for advancing gender diversity in leadership.

# NEXT STEPS

The above content captures many ideas and suggestions for action that, if implemented, have the potential to make a significant positive impact.

**The key is moving from ideas into action**, and below we have some suggestions for how you could start to do that...

**Use this report** to start / support deeper discussion on Women in Management in your organisation; you could share it on an internal network and ask for comments and suggestions or hold a “lunch & learn” meeting with colleagues to reflect on the situation in your own workplace and what actions you could take.

Use the “what / how to” sections above as **a starting point for a checklist**: does your organisation have / do these things? If not, what would be one step you could take to initiate action?

**Reach out to some of the people you met** at the DEI #3 event and meet up (virtually or in person) to share your key takeaways and learnings with each other.

**Speak to your Chamber of Commerce** and initiate a follow-up discussion to explore collaboration ideas, and get involved in their networks or initiatives (such as DEI committees and mentoring programs)

**Reach out to us** (Global Perspectives) or your trusted training provider to explore options for organisational culture change and/or DEI leadership development.

**Share your success stories** with your network – including us! As we saw at the event, visible role models (individuals and organisations) and real case studies are a powerful source of learning and inspiration.

# ABOUT US



At Global Perspectives our purpose is to create positive social impact through the development of inclusive global leadership capability and organisational culture transformation.

Our mission is to transform the way organisations work, from how people communicate, collaborate and lead, through to understanding the impact the organisation has on the environment and communities it works with and touches.

We work with major organizations across a wide range of industries and geographic regions with clients such as Rakuten, PwC, Olympus, Tokio Marine Holdings, Mercedes, Zespri, and Astellas Pharmaceuticals.

We combine decades of organisational and leadership development experience with a passion for and formal certifications in:

- Organisational Change
- *Insights Discovery* psychometric assessment
- Business Cultural Training
- Business Sustainability Management
- Leadership Agility
- Team Coaching



## Contact

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Our sister organisation, [enteleco](https://www.entelecoconsulting.com/), focuses on the people side of **sustainability transformation**, helping you align your organisational culture with your sustainability strategy and ambitions.

For more information please see our website or get in touch for a chat.

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Unleashing the power of  
your people to create a  
sustainable future

# EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK

1

## GLOBAL LEADERSHIP TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Leadership Team Transformation Journey for senior leadership team at a large Japan-headquartered med-tech company following major changes as the organisation transitions to a fully global structure and integrates a recently-acquired start-up. 9 members (German, Japanese, American, British, Dutch)  
Focus on creating high-performing team culture where members trust each other deeply and effectively communicate and collaborate to deliver on ambitious targets.



2

## CULTURE CHANGE PROGRAM

Organisational culture change program for Japan subsidiary of a global luxury automotive company.

Focus on supporting the leadership team (German & Japanese) to define a clear vision that is aligned with the global organisation but relevant to the Japanese market and stakeholders. Created engagement across levels and functions by facilitating joint workshops between leadership and staff to build understanding of different values, expectations, and workstyle preferences.

