Driving DEI in Management

DEI #2
EVENT REPORT

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GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES K.K.

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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 triumphs of women in management, analysing key factors underpinning their success. The event also provided a platform to explore how individuals, teams, and organisations can replicate and support these success-enabling factors.

The event was split into two parts:

- A fireside chat-style panel discussion exploring personal success stories and key success factors for diverse managers and how specific companies work to support DEI and women in management (panel discussion).

- An interactive group session identifying actions and initiatives to support and develop key factors for women to seek and succeed in management roles (workshop).

EVENT PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

This event was initiated and sponsored by Maersk. It was organised by Global Perspectives in collaboration with the Swedish Chamber of Commerce and the Danish Chamber of Commerce, and hosted by the Embassy of Sweden in Japan.

The panel discussion featured successful leaders with deep experience and expertise on DEI-related topics:

- **Noriko Okazaki**, Director, East Japan Block, Diabetes Business Unit, Novo Nordisk
- **Tomomi Katayama**, Head, Global Supply Chain Management, Centre of Excellence, Olympus
- **Shigefumi Yamaura**, CSR / Sustainability Coordinator, H&M
- **Siweon Carrie Park** (moderator), Director of Customer Experience for Northeast Asia, Maersk

The workshop was designed and facilitated by Tove Kinooka from Global Perspectives, with support from Yumeko Kato at Maersk, Martin Koos at SCCJ, Josefine Lund Præstekjær at DCCJ, and Global Perspectives' Gavin Dixon and Marc Prosser.

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

WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT

The Big Picture

Key data points and facts

World Economic Forum 2022 global rankings show that Japan is:

- Among the nations ranked 1st in educational attainment for women
- 116th in the Global Gender Gap Index
- 121st in Economic participation and opportunity
- 139th in Political Empowerment
- 76th for wage equality

What is the situation in Japan today?

Japan's female labour participation rate surpasses many countries, including the USA. However, its female managerial representation is bottom among OECD nations — less than 15%. The data exposes a puzzling contrast: an abundance of talented, well-educated Japanese women that are heavily underrepresented in leadership roles.

Despite a decade of "Womenomics", the proportion of women managers remains stationary. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida recently echoed the aspirations of his predecessors: 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 the goal.

It raises the question, what barriers exist, and how can we better mobilise society and companies to nurture more female leaders?

Women at the executive level
The number of female executives has not changed from 2013

Number of Female Executives (By 10 Thousands)
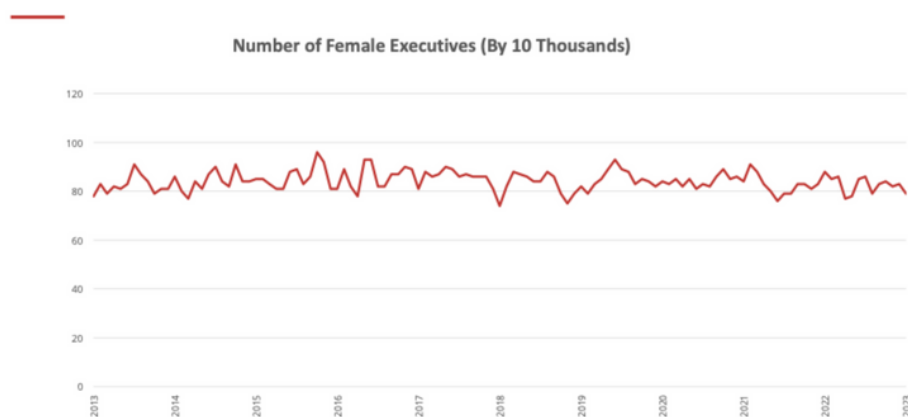
Source: Statistics Bureau of Japan
https://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/roudou/lngindex.html

6

carter group
Japan Market Resource Network

WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT (cont.)

So what's going on?

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 first event's 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 2022 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 that systemic barriers inhibit Japanese women's progression to management roles, compounded by potential failings in initiatives and support structures.

Our second event examined successful strategies and approaches adopted by female leaders and Scandinavian companies active in Japan and Japanese companies championing female leadership. By identifying and analysing critical success factors, we aspire to formulate guidelines, insights, and recommendations about how to replicate these successes elsewhere.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Overview

The fireside chat-style panel discussion revolved around personal experiences and successes. However, it should be noted that all participants work at companies with solid track records for increasing diversity in management. The conversation illuminated both individual aspects of success and company structures and initiatives that have supported the participants' success in management roles.

Some of the company results include:

- **Maersk:** Has increased the number of female managers in its Japan and South Korea team (Northeast Area leadership team) from one out of twelve to four out of twelve.
- **Novo Nordisk:** Has increased the percentage of female managers from 13% to 20% in less than two years.
- **H&M:** 75% of employees in H&M Group are female and 75% of management positions of the group are also female (as of November 30, 2022).
- **Olympus:** The ratio of female assistant managers and section heads who are candidates for managerial positions is 14.0%, and the overall ratio of female employees is 20.1%, both of which are higher than in the previous fiscal year (as of April 2022).

PANEL DISCUSSION POINTS

During the event, panel participants identified several key areas to their success as managers and leaders. They also touched on organisational qualities critical to DEI performance.

The following main areas emerged during the conversation:

Leadership Stories

Siweon Carrie Park

Noriko Okazaki

Tomomi Katayama

Shigefumi Yamaura

Starting your management journey

- Overcoming initial reticence is a crucial first step on the management journey. The initial reaction is often surprise when the opportunity of a management role is offered.
- Supervisor support can be key to navigating the "why me?" doubt that prospective leaders may feel. They are also essential to creating a "safe-to-fail-and-grow" culture.
- Women may especially need encouragement and support from managers. Clear indications of trust in their ability to handle the new role and responsibilities are also important.
- Communicating that you do not have to be 100% perfect contributes to success and growth.
- Leadership and management skills can be cultivated in whichever position you have, and especially inexperienced managers can make good use of these past experiences.

Internal company support

- Empowering and delegating managers inspire their subordinates. Creating a nurturing environment for all employees, including new managers, is crucial.
- Training and coaching are vital for developing leadership qualities. Continual improvement is the goal. Practical experience and hands-on experience often trump academic learning.
- Companies play a significant role in supporting women leaders' career progression.
- Clear expectations and understanding of personal needs, such as leaving early to pick up children, contribute to a healthy work-life balance.
- Considering geographical, cultural, and personal factors is essential for effective support. The needs and opportunities vary, for example, between working mothers and student workers.
- Creating a culture or space enabling anyone to lead without jeopardising their life or family quality due to unreasonable work hours or similar issues is key.

Inspiration and role models

- Inspiration may be found outside of Japan. For example, experiences from working in Scandinavia or for foreign companies in Japan can inspire managers to challenge the status quo in areas such as work-life balance.
- Several conversation participants experienced Danish work culture, where work-life balance is prioritised differently. As a result, companies schedule meetings between 10 am and 4 pm to enable parents to bring and fetch their children from kindergarten or school.
- Senior female managers can be pivotal in inspiring other managers, especially in the earlier stages of their management careers.
- Companies can work proactively to make senior female managers more visible and approachable to next-generation managers to hear their stories and learn from their experiences in casual and formal settings.

Communication

- A core challenge, especially for more inexperienced leaders, is expressing what they need. Expressing a need for help, for example, can be difficult.
- Finding ways of creating a safe environment where all team members, including the manager, feel able to express ideas and needs without fear of judgment is crucial for success and growth.
- As a manager, listening to and communicating with your team is central to the job. Communication and active listening enable managers and teams to be successful.
- Clear communication about a team's objectives, KPIs, deadlines, structures, etc., help create success.

Learning how to lead

- Experiences and learnings from all aspects of your life apply to management and can help guide your growth as a leader.
- Teamwork can lead to bigger accomplishments than any one member can achieve on their own. This requires a clear, shared goal and direction created by the manager and the team.
- Especially in the early stages of a management career, superiors that support you and help provide experience on how to lead are important for growth.
- Part of being a manager is being a role model. You are part of the process and part of the culture setting for the team – and someone who can break any negative cultural standards.

Team dynamics

- Rely on your team members to empower them. Tell members you need them and clearly express what you want them to achieve and do.
- As a leader, you should act per what you say. Leading as a role model makes it easier for team members to trust you.
- Managers must, at some point, disappoint team members. Navigating conflicts and keeping engagement high is a challenge, but one you can learn to handle.
- Managers are crucial to encouraging team members' diversity and doing their best in any role, which will support their career advancement. The message is that everyone should have space to be – and express - themselves.
- Listening with an open mind and awareness of the way different employees may think and express themselves differently helps create a strong foundation for team performance.

During the panel discussion, Global Perspectives' experts, panelists, and event participants from a broad range of industries and backgrounds collaborated on identifying areas or factors that can encourage the prevalence and success of female managers.

The second half of the event explored the nature of each of those factors, the drivers behind it, how it can be put into action.
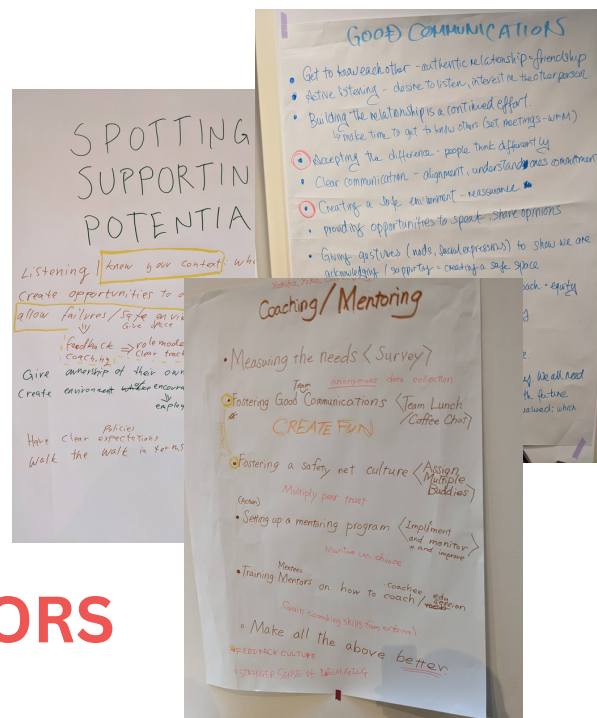
6 KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

The six areas identified were:
1. Trust
2. Communication
3. Spotting and supporting potential
4. Cultural factors
5. Coaching and mentoring
6. Clear expectations and boundaries

Each factor was explored in group conversations, with groups working on ways and structures to support it throughout organisations.

The report uses a framework for drivers, tools/strategies, and practices across companies, leaders, and individuals/teams to structure the recommendations and insights produced by around 80 DEI event participants.

1 - TRUST

	Company	Leaders	Individuals / Teams
Goals	Empower & encourage next-gen leaders	Empower & optimise team performance	Ability to express needs Feeling supported and trusted
Tools / Strategies	Organisational policies Equity policies for recruitment, promotion, and compensation Building a culture of trust in the company	Transparency Practice what you preach Clear feedback loops Demonstrating trust in female managers	Optimism Open communication Sharing how to increase trust Work on addressing unconscious biases
Practice	Open information-sharing Promoting psychological safety Launch or strengthen diversity and inclusion initiatives	Delegate with trust Active listening Avoid pursuing & demanding perfection Avoid micro management Gender equity advocacy	Act with self-confidence and trust in yourself, co-workers and the company Express need for help when you need it Team-building exercises

Trust in leadership influences how women perceive the possibilities and support for their advancement. At company and leader level, creating trustworthy policies and practices help create an environment where women can have confidence in their pathways to leadership. At the team level, trust among colleagues and in the team and its mission is pivotal. It promotes open communication, collaboration, and mutual support, thereby enhancing everyone's confidence and capabilities. At the individual level, trust fuels personal growth, resilience, and ambition.

2 - COMMUNICATION

	Company	Leaders	Individuals / Teams
Goals	Providing opportunities to build relations and share information help improve performance and attract and retain talent	Creating space for individual and teams to thrive and enhance performance through clear communication	Increase feeling of safety Free communication to express needs & wants, including regarding careers
Tools / Strategies	Diversified communications Transparent information sharing Communication policies	Be empathetic Support open communications Voice positive and constructive feedback Establish clear feedback channels	Active listening Develop interpersonal communication skills Learn to recognise your communication biases
Practice	Communication diversity policies Mediator policies for difficult situations	Building relationships Sense check communication to confirm understanding	Team events 2-way communication Voice positive and constructive feedback Be empathetic

Clear, inclusive, and transparent communication on a company level that includes policies, strategies, and goals helps all levels of the organisation understand and influence goals and career advancement. Leadership communication sets the tone for the organisation's culture. Leaders who openly endorse diversity and inclusion encourage female employees to envision themselves in management roles. Within teams, open and respectful communication facilitates knowledge sharing, innovation, and conflict resolution. On an individual level, practical communication skills empower women to express their ideas, negotiate, and advocate for themselves - essential capabilities for any manager.

3 - IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING POTENTIAL

	Company	Leaders	Individuals / Teams
Goals	Supporting, training and retaining talent Creating next generation of leaders	Encourage leaders Build framework for future successSupport team members' careers	Supporting team successCreating opportunities for career advancement
Tools / Strategies	Talent management systems DEI initiatives Support networks Organisational values Create a safe environment to grow	Trust culture Sponsorship & advocacy Leadership development Enabling failure as a learning factor	Peer recognition programs Personal development plans Continual learning and upskilling
Practice	Create opportunities to display skills Allow for failure Clear career advancement tracks Diversity hiring goals	Constructive feedback Active sponsorship and encouragement Provide ownership of progression to the individual	Engagement Learning programs Management training Collaborative projects that showcase leadership potential

Talent management and support systems help identify and support potential women managers. Leaders play a crucial role in advocating for and mentoring talented women, providing them opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities. Teams can support talent through collaborative projects and peer recognition programs. At the individual level, personal development plans and continuous learning initiatives enable recognition and cultivation of leadership talents.

4 - CULTURAL FACTORS

	Company	Leaders	Individuals / Teams
Goals	Build a work culture that is open and supportive of employees	Creating an open culture that supports team members and enables them to perform	Safety Freedom to 'be authentic' Support for work-life balance
Tools / Strategies	Policies that support diverse work styles Enable flexible work patterns	Role modelling DEI support Reward active participation	Reflecting on internal biases Active participation
Practice	Open, transparent work policies Training initiatives Addressing factors that might be blocking DEI initiatives	Walk the walk when it comes to work-life balance Reflecting on internal biases	Trust in the support structures Stepping out of your comfort zone Ask for help where and when needed

A positive, inclusive company culture is a driving force that propels female employees into management roles and bolsters their success and growth. At the company level, policies advocating gender equality, diversity, and inclusivity establish an environment conducive to women's advancement. Leaders that embody these values inspire trust and motivation among female employees. Teams that uphold these principles and foster an inclusive atmosphere essential for nurturing future leaders. On an individual level, the principles of inclusion and a supportive company culture can further reinforce confidence and desire to pursue management positions.

5 - COACHING / MENTORING

|	Company	Leaders	Individuals / Teams
Goals	To develop the company's leaders and managers	To develop skills and ability to function optimally as leaders	To grow abilities and step up into a management role
Tools / Strategies	Mentor networks Coaching structures Measuring the need through surveys Invest in training	Making use of mentors and coaches Mentoring sessions Promote programs Personal development plans	Peer mentoring Team coaching Personal development plans
Practice	Internal and external training sessions for managers and prospective managers Access to senior leaders as role models	Working actively with coaches Working as mentors for next-generation leaders	Seeking feedback Share positive experiences Collaborative learning Engage in informal learning

Coaching and mentorship frameworks serve as significant enablers for female employees to step into and excel in management roles. Formal coaching and mentorship programs signal the company's commitment to professional development and advancement. Leaders who actively participate as mentors and coaches inspire confidence and can offer guidance for women aspiring to management roles. Within teams, peer mentorship and collaborative learning provide an environment where female employees can grow their skills. At an individual level, active engagement in these programs allows women to expand their networks, receive constructive feedback, and develop their skills.

6 - CLEAR EXPECTATIONS AND BOUNDARIES

	Company	Leaders	Individuals / Teams
Goals	Clear policies and strategies that support DEI initiatives in a measurable way	Develop clear strategies that support employees and enable teams to deliver on Goals / KPIs	Transparent measurements and guidelines for performance and expectations
Tools / Strategies	L&D programs & workshops Guidelines Explore unconscious biases	Frequent touchpoints with your team 1:1 sessions Listening! Set expectations together	Provide feedback Collaborate to set boundaries & expectations Explore unconscious biases
Practice	Internal policies Rules / guidelines Evaluations with clear criteria External communications	Walk–the–talk Clear goal setting	Active participation Willingness to grow Show accountability Buying into it – find how it connects to you

Clear expectations and boundaries help female employees take on management roles. At the company level, well-defined job descriptions, performance metrics, and promotion criteria establish a fair, transparent playing field. Employees understand what is expected of them and how to progress. Leaders who model and communicate these expectations and boundaries provide a roadmap for aspiring female managers while creating a supportive environment that respects work-life balance. Clear roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols within teams reduce confusion and conflict, fostering a productive environment where female employees can shine. On an individual level, understanding and respecting these expectations and boundaries enables women to manage their time and responsibilities effectively.

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS
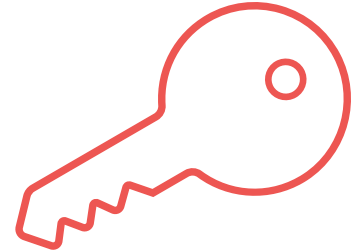
Key Takeaways

The panel discussion and subsequent workshop highlighted a series of central themes and challenges. Apart from the six core factors, many related areas were mentioned as contributors to increasing the number of women in management specifically – and with DEI initiatives more broadly.

The two events have underlined that role models, success stories, access to peers further along the career path, and mentors/coaches are essential factors in encouraging more women to pursue management and succeed in their roles.

For initiatives to work, there needs to be a broad buy-in that extends across the company. It starts with senior leadership but must include all company levels making a concerted effort to promote and build an inclusive culture.

To make them a success, companies, leaders, managers, and individual team members can do well to recognise the cultural and organisational context they are surrounded by. Addressing conscious biases and exploring unconscious biases across organisational levels may help.

Simultaneously, broader acceptance and support are needed, including from partners, families, and society. For example, men taking more paternity leave and a more active role in childcare and housework can have a massive positive impact on their partners.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

The panel discussion and workshop identified a wide range of areas where companies and other organisations can work proactively to increase the number of female managers. The success factors identified are complemented by suggestions for direct actions that can be implemented by leadership, managers and individual teams, and team members.

The key word here is action. In most cases, engaging with a third party as part of the process will likely provide better results. For example, to avoid accusations of bias, validate benchmarking data and approaches, playbook development, or to produce or validate success stories.

In summary, some possible next steps and projects include:

Follow-up events
Events are energizing and inspiring, and open up the conversation to a broader, more diverse group of stakeholders to enable peer learning. This event may be followed up with one or several more, exploring how global companies and their Japanese peers can collaborate directly on developing the foundation for more female managers.

Sharing success stories
Developing and sharing success stories - both internally and externally - that companies and individuals have achieved. These case studies can serve as inspiration and learning tools to attract and retain talent.

Data gathering and structuring
More clear data regarding issues facing companies and individuals is needed. Through collaborative efforts, organisations can identify gaps and work to explore them. Concrete data and more precise insights and understanding would form a stronger foundation for subsequent initiatives.

Possible next steps and projects (continued):

Benchmarking
A part of data gathering could be constructing anonymised benchmark data covering main parameters, such as the effect of initiatives, improvements of DEI results, female managers' impact on their teams and companies' performance, etc.
This data could be shared with participating organisations to clarify the effect of initiatives.

Playbook development
Developing an open-source playbook for developing, implementing, monitoring, and following up on DEI initiatives in general, or specifically on how to increase the number of female managers.

Mentoring/coaching - collaboration
Initiating a cross-company mentoring program to enable women working at global companies here in Japan to access mentoring and coaching outside of their own organisations.

Action priority matrices
The broad scope of the DEI events and reports can be overwhelming for individuals and companies alike. Finding ways to prioritise actions, for example, through the use of action priority matrix exercises across levels (company, leaders, teams/employees) can help identify top priorities. This can be done by specific companies that can then share their process, progress and learnings in future DEI events.

Potential collaboration partners

The more diverse the pool of participants is, the richer the learnings and outcomes will be. Some suggestions for collaboration partners for DEI initiatives are:
- Chambers of Commerce
- Large organisations (companies, universities, municipal governments, etc.)
- SMEs (small & medium-sized enterprises), NPOs, & entrepreneurs
- Next-gen leadership development organisations

REFERENCES / FURTHER READING

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DRIVING DEI IN MANAGEMENT IN THE JAPANESE MARKET

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EVENT REPORT

SCCJ   DCCJ

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Editor: Tove Kinooka

DEI #1
Nov 2022

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from this event, please email:

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SCCJ or DCCJ representative

ABOUT US

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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.

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