

Keidanren *Women's Executive Network*

Leadership Mentor Program

Leaders Shall Be Driven by Passion
and Venture into Unknown Worlds



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Leadership Mentor Program Vol.4

December 1, 2016 Keidanren Kaikan, Otemachi, Tokyo

Changes to our diet brought about by the food industry

Following the Meiji Restoration, Japan learned from other countries about efficiency, rationality, nutrition, latest studies such as scientific evidence, technologies and cultures. Since then, the food industry including Ajinomoto has contributed to people's activities in society by making use of the reasonable and wide-ranging foods of Japan and overseas, bringing excitement to food and offering rich nutrition while reducing the heavy workload involved in food preparation from the past.

Working style reform at Ajinomoto

Ajinomoto strives to become a company where diverse talents play active roles irrespective of sex, nationality and values, aiming to become a genuine global specialty company. To this end, we believed that we needed to have working styles that were up to global standards, and at the same time, achieve diverse lifestyles and help each employee interact more with their families and society through shortened work hours and other efforts.

To realize working style reform, we are: (1) shortening working hours and adjusting work hours to start and end earlier; (2) reforming meetings; and (3) promoting Work@A. Starting in April 2017, working hours will be shortened by 20 minutes and will start at 8:15 to 16:30 ahead, enabling employees to spend their late afternoons and evenings in enriching ways. We also plan to introduce significant meeting reforms, including making meetings paperless and more efficient. Work@A refers to Ajinomoto's initiative to offer flexible working styles with regard to place and time. We have gradually introduced

"Anywhere Offices" and are exploring unrestricted working styles, such as flexible work arrangements that have no core hours, paid holidays that employees can take in units of hours, as well as a remote conferencing system.

I hope that our efforts will have positive ripple effects on society.

Leadership required of women executives

What does it take to become a leader? This is spirit entailed with intelligence and passion, courage to take responsibility for your actions, insight in uncertain situations, and ability to make decisions to take concrete actions. Only when these abilities are in place can great enthusiasm be aroused, leading to results. It is essential that leaders always have strong determination.

Many women may have concerns about becoming leaders. They decide not to become leaders as there are no women role models or they lack experience, and instead escape to a safe world. To succeed as leaders, people need the resolve to change themselves and venture into unknown worlds.

Many people are ordinary people in and of themselves. Together as an organization, however, they become extraordinary people. People belong to organizations because they alone are weak. It is precisely because work is divided among people that they can make maximum use of their organizations to participate actively in the workforce.

The address was followed by a lively Q&A session regarding approaches to work style reform as well as management and leadership. Vice Chair Ito offered broad advice and encouragement to women executives.

Mentor Profile

Masatoshi Ito

Vice Chair of the Board of Councillors, Keidanren

Chairman of the Board, Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

Joined Ajinomoto Co., Ltd in 1971. Appointed to the Member of the Board in 1999. Appointed to the Representative Director, President, Ajinomoto Frozen Foods Co., Inc. in 2003, and Representative Director, Member of the Board & Corporate Senior Vice President in 2006. Appointed to the Representative Director, President & Chief Executive Officer, Ajinomoto Co., Inc. in 2009. Presently, the Representative Director, Chairman of the Board.

Eat Well, Live Well.
AJINOMOTO.

