

Cases of companies that cooperated in hearing sessions to prepare the EPSG Report

Employment Policy Division, Employment Security Bureau

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan

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【Promotion of women's empowerment】



Ecolab G.K. (Promotion of women's empowerment)

Unique corporate initiatives

Business areas: A chemical manufacturer offering water, hygiene and infection prevention solutions

● Outline of initiatives

- For the purpose of promoting diversity, equity, and including (DE&I) including the promotion of women's empowerment, Ecolab takes multifaceted and multilayered initiatives from three major perspectives, namely, penetration as a corporate culture, improvement and introduction of measures and systems for DE&I, and transformation of awareness and behaviors of each employee.

● Characteristics of initiatives

- Ecolab formulates a vision, secures top management commitment, clarifies objectives and goals, implements measures and actions, and shares the progress and outcomes with all employees with the aim of realizing a strategic approach and visualization across the entire organization.
- The contents of DE&I are disclosed in the whole company so that it becomes a continuous and sustainable initiative.
- An environmental development for promotion of women's empowerment (flexible working style) and reform of working practices of men sales representatives (parental leave, improved work-life balance, etc.) are regarded as the two wheels of a car aiming at creating a workplace where any employee can be motivated and engaged to work regardless of gender.

● Details of hearing sessions and actual effects

- As a result of introducing a follow-up system and other systems to objectively evaluate the details of tasks of sales representatives and a workplace environment and to alleviate disadvantages due to gender differences (physical and muscular strength), the number of women sales representatives and women managers has increased steadily.
- The Ecolab Meister Program (*), which was introduced for the purpose of encouraging men sales representatives to take more parental leave, is also utilized as a measure for encouraging all sales employees to take more paid leave. The rate of parental leave taken by men employees is 100%. This system is highly appreciated by employees and adopted as a case study in the leadership model training produced by Ecolab Global Headquarters (US).
- Hearing sessions with women employees are held with the aim of correctly understanding "gender gap" felt by them, the context, and reasons as well as to obtain suggestions for improvement. The results are reflected in the development of diverse organization and initiatives for promotion of women's empowerment.
- By thoroughly raising internal awareness about various systems that promote flexible working styles, employees understand their significance and effectively utilize them, leading to improved time management in business and enhanced individual work-life balance.
- The company will continue to focus on DE&I and promoting women's empowerment, aiming to create highly engaged teams and a great place to work across the entire organization.

(*) Ecolab Meister Program: Ecolab concludes a service agreement with ex-Ecolab employees to provide support for sales and services when men sales representatives take parental leave. It also offers an option for flexible work style for employees re-employed after their retirement.



ダイバーシティ(DE&I)への取り組み
多様性が尊重される組織文化の醸成

- リーダーによるコミットメント
 - 目標と進捗の全社共有
- 教育・研修を通じた理解促進・意識改革
 - 全社員、管理職、全業務リーダーなど職別や階級に応じた研修ワークショップの開催
 - 相互理解、アライシップ、アンコンシャスバイアスなどDE&Iを促す気づきや学びの機会提供
- 従業員リソースグループ(ERG)の活動支援
 - 社員によるダイバーシティ、女性活躍推進の取り組み
- 柔軟な働き方を支える制度・施策
 - フレックス勤務、在宅勤務
 - 男性育児休業取得拡大に向けた取り組み

ECOLAB

Great Place to Work Certified for excellence 2024

(Material: Provided by Ecolab)

● Implications from a perspective of policy

- Japan is positioned in the 27th place (2024) in the ranking with good working conditions for women based on 10 indicators such as labor force participation rate and gender wage gap out of the major 29 OECD member countries. The position is very low compared to the highly ranked Nordic countries.
- In order to promote women's empowerment it is important to gain understanding of other employees and to establish a framework for cooperation in addition to improving the internal systems and benefits. The simultaneous promotion of DE&I and women's empowerment is expected to help employees recognize various "differences" such as gender, age, career, lifestyle, value, mental and physical functions, etc. Moreover, it is expected that, if there is any obstacle, support for eliminating it be provided and that this culture be deep rooted in the company.
- It is important to identify issues that cannot be recognized by numbers and deal with them by utilizing small-scale labor-management communications (hearing sessions for few women employees, etc.) in addition to the monitoring indicators such as the women manager ratio and the gender wage gap with the aim of eliminating unconscious assumption due to gender difference in the company and mommy track (*), thereby realizing the improvement of women's empowerment and women-friendly working style.
- (*) The 2023 White Paper on Gender Equality issued by the Cabinet Office defines mummy track as "a situation where women workers can continue to work but their career stays stagnant, because they cannot take full advantage of their capability."

Business areas: General trading company engaged in wide business areas such as energy, chemicals, infrastructure, automobiles, and consumer products

● Outline of initiatives

- Sojitz positions the promotion of women in the workplace as one of the most important goals under its human resources strategy. The company's dedicated diversity management organization works to advance various diversity promotion initiatives by the 2030s, such as increasing the number of female employees in decision-making roles and creating an equitable workplace in which talent allocation is based on an individual's capabilities for a role as opposed to gender-based preconceptions.
- Sojitz aims to increase the percentage of female employees to around 50% and the percentage of female section managers to around 50% during the 2030s. We have set a target of raising the percentage of female managers to around 20% by the final year of Medium-term Management Plan 2026. To achieve these goals, Sojitz is supporting female employees in acquiring experience to nurture talent across the leadership pipeline, closing the gender gap for work experience, and promoting employee retention and engagement by supporting women through major life events.

● Characteristics of initiatives

- Under the recognition that diverse human resources including women are an essential part for the medium-to-long term growth of Sojitz in a business environment where the speed of changes is accelerating, top management assumes responsibility for taking these initiatives by sending out messages on a continuous basis and playing a leading role in changing the mindset of employees including management-level employees.
- In view of strengthening a leadership pipeline, the proportion of women career track employees with domestic or overseas working experience (the ratio of women career track employees with domestic or overseas working experience to the total number of women employees before they reach a management-level position) is set as a human resource KPI for the purpose of accumulating experiences by offering growth opportunities outside the Headquarters, increasing motivation, and eliminating a gap in experiences between men and women employees. The company is working to accelerate the career advancement so that more women employees are assigned as trainees or sent overseas or other sites in Japan before they face major life events.
- In the Medium-term Management Plan, "Ratio of employees with secondment experience in Japan or overseas" is set as a KPI with the aim of increasing the proportion of employees who have accumulated valuable experiences in executing missions with responsibilities required for management-level employees and decision-making.

● Details of hearings and actual effects

- The top executive (President) has mentioned the importance and purpose of women's empowerment repeatedly in training sessions for management-level employees and deeply involves in this initiative as shown in the fact that the women participation indicator is included in the human resource KPIs.
- From FY2021, a mentorship program in which officers serve as mentors has been in place mainly for women career track employees around 30s. In the first half of FY2024, a round table was held under the leadership of a women executive officer to reach women employees motivated to take on a challenge and back up their career.
- Various internal systems have been introduced based on the company's Human Resource Strategy. All employees are able to receive explanations on an individual basis so that these systems are utilized effectively. Moreover, use cases of these systems are made available through the internal communication channels such as the intranet and internal signage.
- The management-level employees who have subordinates are also given opportunities for being familiarized with various systems through individual meetings/in-person training sessions and e-learning as well as opportunities for taking notice of their own unconscious bias and turning it into behavior change. Sojitz not only establish systems but also creates a company culture that encourages employees to utilize these systems more easily.
- The promotion of management focused on employees' health and the improved ratio of childcare leave taken are the basis for promoting women's empowerment. In addition, the company takes comprehensive measures for creating a rewarding working environment for all employees such as establishing positions that do not require transfer.



▲ Roundtable hosted by a women executive officer with the participation of the President aiming at backing up the challenge of women employees (Back left: Executive Officer Endo, Back right: President Uemura)

Photo: Provided by Sojitz Corporation

● Implications from a perspective of policy

- To promote women's empowerment, it is important to take initiatives for realizing flexible work styles such as enhanced measures for striking a balance between childcare/nursing care and work, better support for woman's health issues, and internal systems that allow all employees to choose a work style suited to individual circumstance. It is also necessary to take measures for helping management-level employees who supervise daily jobs to have better understanding of these systems and change the mindset so that the company is satisfied with not only establishing systems but also creating a company culture where they are utilized and operated effectively. The company's human capital-oriented leadership by senior management is of the same importance.
- It is important to increase options for career development in accordance with life events and offer growth opportunities for employees to broaden their mind and deepen experiences with the aim of building a leadership pipeline of women employees who take responsibility of management in the future.
- Furthermore, it is expected that continuous discussions be held between labor and management and internally to examine necessary measures for improvement together for the purpose of identifying practices that prevent women's empowerment in each industry.

Business area: Provision of “LunaLuna Office”, a Femtech (*) service utilizing online medical treatment for businesses that support the improvement of health issues of working women

(*) Femtech is a coined word combining women and Technology and refers to products and services that solve women's health issues with technologies.

● Outline of initiatives

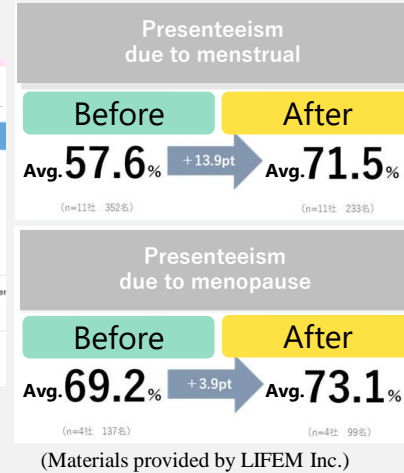
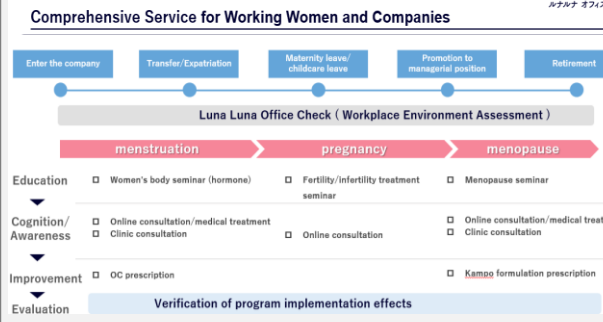
- To provide services for comprehensively covering and supporting the improvement of health issues in accordance with different life stages of women.

● Characteristics of initiatives

- Health issues in the front line can be visualized by conducting a “working environment assessment” in businesses that introduce the service.
- As part of educational activities, a seminar on knowledge about women body is held by doctors with the aim of improving health literacy of the whole company including men employees.
- Online examination/counseling is employed for those who suffer from health issues peculiar to women such as menstruation, menopausal, and pregnancy. By this way, women employees can consult a doctor (gynecologist) to receive support for improving their symptoms. It is possible to prescribe low-dosage pills and herbal medicines for symptoms related to menstruation and menopausal in doctor's judgment.
- The “verification of program introduction effects” is conducted by businesses that have introduced the service with the aim of verify data of patients before and after receiving medical examination and effect verification of work loss reduction.

● Details of hearings and actual effects

- According to a study commissioned by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), an economic impact can reach about 2 trillion yen annually by 2025 by solving different symptoms faced by many women utilizing Femtech. (*) METI, FY2020 Industrial Economic Research commissioned Project, “Survey Report on Effects of Changes in Work Style and Lifestyle on the Future of Japan and Issues”
- Since indicators such as “women's empowerment” and “health-oriented business management” have started to affect corporate value, there is more need for a business to address health issues peculiar to women as a management issue not as an individual issue.
- According to a survey conducted by LIFEM for businesses that have introduced its service, more than 90% of men employees are in favor of introducing measures focused on women employees and want to “deepen their understanding” on women's health issues. This indicates that men employees think positively about enhancement of systems for women employees.
- Remaining issues concerning support for women's health issue provided by businesses include, “many businesses do not understand the whole picture of their own health issues”, and “women's health issues have low priority in businesses in which the proportion of men employees is high”.
- Many of businesses that have introduced the LIFEM's service aim to realize health-oriented business management and use it to improve corporate value from stakeholders through outreach as part of initiatives for DE&I.



● Implications from a perspective of policy

- Health issues peculiar to women workers are expected to decrease their labor productivity and impede career development, affecting not only them but also corporate management.
- If businesses address health issues peculiar to women, they can improve corporate performance through productivity improvement, secure talented personnel on a long-term basis, and create innovation by having diverse personnel. Therefore, it is required for each business to actively develop a working environment adaptable to health conditions of each employee.
- Moreover, women's health issues vary from one person to another, and, in many cases, the reality cannot be recognized by others unless the person speaks up her issues. It is of importance to raise health literacy at workplace, gain understanding of other employees, and develop a working environment through raising awareness on advantages of developing a workplace environment taking women's health issues into consideration, specific cases, and basic knowledge about such issues as well as promoting the utilization of Femtech.

Business areas: Providing support for career development and outplacement, and staffing service for women who are more affected by life events

● Outline of initiatives

- Waris Co., Ltd. focuses on support for career development of women and engages in “agent business”, “reskilling business”, and “solution business”.
- The agent business aims to accompany the career shift of highly-skilled women, while the reskilling business provides an integrated program from learning to employment.
- The reskilling business provides an outplacement support program and a high-quality career counseling service mainly for women have a blank in their career. An integrated program from learning to employment is offered by providing support to matching with businesses.
- The solution business provides consultation services, trainings, and lectures for businesses that struggle with the reform of women working practices.

● Characteristics of initiatives

- All businesses have the vision of “support for career development of women” and aims to support women who are more affected by life events.
- More than 80% of subscribers are women. A wide variety of programs are offered such as support for outplacement, presentation of candidates for management-level employees and officers, matching between women freelancers and companies, and reskilling programs.
- The reskilling business is carried out with a focus on a difficulty faced by non-regular women employees in building their career in terms of diverse career paths and work styles.


● Details of hearings and actual effects

- Non-regular women employees tend to have low self-recognition, self-affirmation, and self-efficacy, because they have less opportunities for working at their own discretion, participating in corporate training programs, or receiving feedbacks on tasks in charge.
- The provision of career paths from non-regular employment to regular employment is expected to increase income of women employees and thereby contribute to reducing a gender gap in wages in the future.
- The reskilling program provides close-following support adapted to each one's circumstances so that non-regular women employees and women who have a long blank in their career can be employed as regular employees by forming a community of women who have the same concern, assigning dedicated career counselors who stay close to individual concerns, and providing information on companies willing to offer regular-employment.



Integrated program from learning to employment

We do not provide mere re-learning but various programs more likely to lead into employment opportunities (we do not guarantee that you will be fired)



Opportunities for acquiring skills with high market needs and finding a job through partnership

We partner with companies that provide quality educational programs focused on “digital technology” and “startup” with the aim of providing opportunities for acquiring skills finding a job.



Reskilling and employment support adapted to each one's circumstance

We support everyone who look for autonomous career development including non-regular employees, those who are out of work, freelancers, and those who look for side job.



(Materials: Offered by Waris Co., Ltd.)

● Implications from a perspective of policy

- In order for someone who has a blank in her career to overcome the blank and find a job, it is necessary to review past working experiences and experiences in housework and childcare obtained during the blank and put such experiences into word. Also, close-following support by more specialized career consultants is required. It is required for those who look for a job with better conditions in growing fields such as IT need to re-learn in anticipation of employment.
- It is also important to provide opportunities for finding solutions and measures for improvement with regard to difficulties in finding a job and efforts through developing an environment where participants can receive advice from career consultants, learning together with others who have the same goal, and providing team teaching where participants discuss their own effort.
- With labor shortages growing more serious, it is important for companies to strategically employ and foster those who have a blank in their career for the purpose of securing valuable assets. It is particularly important for companies not to negatively judge job applicants who have a blank in their career paying attention only to the blank but to appropriately evaluate experiences obtained before they left a job and the motivation to keep learning at the time of choosing prospective employees.
- It is required to deepen common understanding in the society about the benefits of employing those who have a blank in their career with the aim of encouraging companies to take an action by presenting positive cases in which people who had a blank in their career have been hired and nurtured and now play an important role.

【Regional revitalization】



Business areas: This research department of Japan Finance Corporation (government-run financial institution) researches various SMEs from micro businesses run only by owners or families to high-tech venture businesses that are about to go public and engages in highly specialized, original, and leading-edge research activities.

● Outline of initiatives

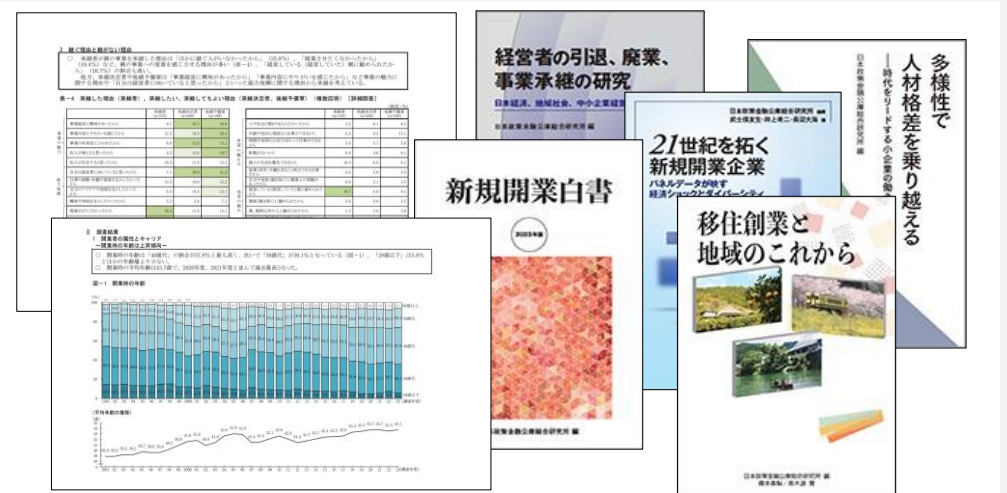
- The Japan Finance Corporation Research Institute continuously conducts surveys on business start-ups and business succession and surveys on the utilization of human resources in SMEs and regional revitalization to reveal the reality and proposes necessary support measures.

● Characteristics of initiatives

- The “Survey on Business Start-ups” has been conducted from FY1991. Moreover, the Research Institute conducts the “Panel Survey on Business Start-ups” aimed at tracking businesses for five years from their start (from FY2001), and the “Survey on Starting Businesses and Entrepreneurial Minds” (from FY2013) aimed at both those who have started a business and those who have not for the purpose of analyzing structural changes in start-ups based on time-series data.
- The “Internet Survey on Business Succession of SMEs” has been conducted every 4 years since FY2015 to identify trends of business succession of SMEs. The survey results of FY2015 were extensively covered by mass media, and the issue of business succession of SMEs attracted attention.
- The results of the survey are available in the press release and a report easy to understand for the general public published in monthly magazine “Monthly Report” and books.

● Details of hearing sessions and actual effects

- The progress in aging and declining population is a huge challenge especially in local areas, but the decreasing number of companies is also a challenge to be addressed to realize regional revitalization from the perspective of ensuring employments and preserving local economy.
- It is essential to promote start-up and business succession for the purpose of maintaining or increasing the number of companies. The Research Institute has conducted surveys on business start-ups and business succession and proposed support measures based on their results.
- Japan Finance Corporation is committed to financing start-ups and business succession. Moreover, it hosts the “High School Students Business Plan Grand Prix” aimed at promoting entrepreneurship and the “Business Succession Matching Support” to connect people who want to transfer their business, because there is no successor or for other reasons, to people who want to succeed the business for the purpose of start-up or entrance to new fields.
- Even if a business needs to be closed due to the absence of successor, it is possible to minimize the effect on local economy and employment by passing on customers, employees, and equipment to another company or a someone who plans to start a business.
- In order for local SMEs to secure human resources, it is important to offer work styles taking individual circumstances of employees into consideration by taking advantage of the characteristic of SMEs that can respond flexibly.



(Materials: Provided by Japan Finance Corporation Research Institute)

● Implications from a perspective of policy

- It is required particularly for local SMEs to promote the improvement of working conditions and the creation of more comfortable workplaces by utilizing various support measures such as the aid for work style reform promotion and the aid for securing of human resources.
- It is important to maintain the number of companies in local areas to preserve local economy, and it is necessary to maintain companies that support the local economy by continuing to operate and starting new businesses. In addition to offer the aids such as grant for businesses and grant for those who move to local areas, it is important to provide start-ups support through loans to start-ups, free counseling service concerning business succession provided by the Business Succession Support Center, and business succession matching support.
- Moreover, as circumstances of companies and workers and their issues differ from one area to another, different approaches should be adopted. It is important, therefore, to provide support for an issue of local employment in accordance with the local needs in coordination with national policies by promoting the utilization of the regional revitalization employment creation project aimed at supporting prefectures that secure attractive employment opportunities and develop human resources suited for corporate needs.

【Support for development and career development of employees】

Business area: Information and communications business (system integration)

● Outline of initiatives

- The company has established the ‘Job posting system’ that allows employees to occupy positions of their desire, regardless of age or position, with the aim of promoting a positive, open and challenging corporate culture. As a result, employees are more conscious about their own career, learning, and growth.
- The company also provides a career ownership diagnostic tool, Career Café, career coordinators and counsellors to help each employee realize their career desired.

● Characteristics of initiatives

- To realize its corporate purpose of ‘Make the world more sustainable by building trust in society through innovation’, the company implements the ‘Purpose-Driven management’, in which management leads and supports each employee to take ownership of his or her career and continue to grow on their own.
- The main focuses are on the well-being of employees and the support for autonomous career development of employees.
- The company provides its employees with FLX (Fujitsu Learning Experience) as a learning platform for fully utilizing the “Job Posting System“ and occupying a desired position. This platform enables employees to learn what they are interested in anytime anywhere.

● Details of hearings and actual effects

- About 20,000 employees participated in the “Job Posting System” in three years, out of which 7,500 were qualified and transferred to their desired positions (Total of 2020~2022). Moreover, according to a survey conducted on posting transferees under the system, their engagement has improved significantly (especially “motivation” and “equal opportunity”).
- A total of 17,591 employees have used the career ownership diagnostic tool (FY2022~first half of FY2023) with the aim of having a grasp of career ownership.
- About 30,000 employees access FLX on average each month.
- If career ownership increases, we might anticipate that employees’ mind goes outside such as job change. However, due to the Job Posting System, employees are first interested in career development within the company. Fujitsu is able to offer suitable positions for each employee in that case.

* Career ownership: Each employee is conscious about “what he/she wants to be” in the lifetime career and takes an initiative to realize it.

富士通のキャリア施策の考え方

● 目指すべき従業員と会社の関係性

自律 × 信頼

● キャリアオーナーシップをサポートする取り組み

キャリアオーナーシップ理解と浸透	学びの機会提供	挑戦の機会提供	自律的な働き方組織風土醸成
キャリアCafe キャリアを考える機会	Fujitsu Learning EXperience 多様な学びの選択肢	ポスティング制度拡大 新しい仕事への挑戦の機会	Work Life Shift 働き方の選択肢
キャリア相談 専門家とのキャリア相談	ex Practice 1on1対話として必要な考え方を習得するプログラム	Jobチャレ!! 様々な部署と異なる業務を一足飛びに経験する機会	1on1ミーティング 成長意欲のためのコミュニケーション
キャリアオーナーシップ診断 今の状態と行動のヒントを提示	リスキリング アップスキリング ビジネスの変化に対応するための学び	Assign Me 異動せずに、組織の業務を超え、スキルや経験を活かす機会	マネジメント変革 社員一人ひとりの成長を促すための仕組みづくり

(Materials: Provided by Fujitsu)

● Implications from a perspective of policy

- In this case, Fujitsu is working to improve employees’ career ownership and develop fulfilling HR development programs based on the recognition that placing the right people in the right positions and HR development are important for the realization of the corporate purpose and further growth.
- It is important to send out a strong message about the importance of learning and re-learning for employees and to provide necessary infrastructure, therefor in order for employees to be highly motivated for work and continue to learn the up-to-date knowledge and skills.
- It is necessary to work on the Job Posting System in order to raise awareness of employees on career ownership and apply it to their work. By providing comprehensive support for career development of employees including one-on-one interview, they can be motivated and face their work and re-learning to occupy a post they desire.
- The above mentioned initiatives are expected to encourage healthy internal competitions and lead into the improvement of corporate productivity and employee’s engagement. 11

【Human Resources Matching and Reskilling】



LinkedIn Japan (Human resources matching and reskilling)

Provision of service

Business areas: A social platform specialized in business is provided to support individual and organizational reforms especially in such fields as recruitment, human resources development, and engagement.

● Outline of initiatives

- A platform specialized in business is provided in which users can find job opportunities and professional connections by sharing professional careers and skills.

● Characteristics of initiatives

- The number of users of LinkedIn is 1 billion all over the world and 4 million in Japan (as of August 2022).
- This platform is specialized in business and professional networking and users can connect to industry professionals and business partners.
- Career development resources and training programs for acquiring skills are provided. They can also be utilized as corporate educational programs.
- Users can show their own professional career, skills, and experiences in detail through profiles and can strengthen a personal brand.
- Since many connections between companies and users are created through this platform, it is also utilized for recruiting activities of companies and job hunting of users.

● Details of hearing sessions and actual effects

- In some countries, LinkedIn is used by governmental agencies, and its educational contents are employed to identify trends of labor shortages by type of job and as refresher programs for citizens.
- In other countries, there are a wide range of users including first-line workers.
- Educational contents of LinkedIn are often introduced by IT companies, but more and more manufacturing companies introduce them in response to the recent trend of DX.
- The number of users who are new graduates and students is low in Japan. LinkedIn aims to increase the number of those users so that it is utilized as a platform for hiring of new graduates.
- Since the entry of profiles is assisted by AI, it is possible to receive proposals on diverse skills. Profiles are updated more frequently on their own initiative by improving usability.
- Since users can access corporate account pages and accounts of their employees, it is possible to get acquainted with the reality of the entire organization, contributing to the decrease in mismatch such as early turnover.



(Data: Provided by LinkedIn Japan)

● Implications from a perspective of policy

- LinkedIn has over 1 billion diverse users all around the world. Big data of users is utilized for analysis by overseas government agencies and companies.
- Moreover, users who intend to find a job or change their career can get acquainted with the current situations of various companies and their employees by viewing posts on LinkedIn. Therefore, it is possible to have a specific image of workplace before they are hired. Moreover, it is expected that users have a chance of reviewing their experiences and skills in the process of creating a profile.
- Companies engaged in recruiting activities have advantages that they can acquire information such as skills, professional careers, and preferences from profiles and directly approach users they plan to hire.
- From the perspective of local matching and local employment, it is expected that SMEs which are relatively unknown can acquire personnel by appealing their advantages through LinkedIn.
- Since profiles and skills are self-reported by users, it is important for companies to appropriately examine candidates through interviews and communications.

【Utilization of new technologies】



- ✓ Business areas: Presswork of metal parts such as electric parts, stationery parts, and automotive parts

【1. Reasons for introduction】

- Although the company received a new order of semiconductor parts required for manufacturing self-driving cars, etc., the client required it to produce parts with more precision because parts supplied are used in automatic assembling machines (if a part supplied has any minimal scratch, the machine detects it as failure in the automated assembly process).
- Therefore, before parts are supplied, the company inspected parts visually using microscopes after production. However, as the number of parts manufactured per month reaches 500,000, the visual inspection consumed an excessive amount of time and could affect other tasks.

【2. Method of introduction】

- The company produced a device that excludes defective parts (inappropriate parts for shipment) using machine learning-based image recognition in consultation with a consultant who is familiarized with data analysis.
- Specifically, the company prepared about 500 images of non-defective parts (appropriate parts for shipping) and defective parts, respectively, to build a model by AI tool provided by Google. This model is installed on the device developed by the company (parts move on a conveyor belt and a camera takes photos thereof) to eliminate defective parts.

【3. Reaction of employees at the time of introduction】

- The introduction of this device was an initiative on a trial basis by the manager. However, the company has committed to improving operational efficiency from the past. Some employees were cooperative in proposing ideas to produce the device.
- In addition, a corporate culture that improves operational efficiency has existed to allocate internal resources as much as possible to the development of new products and improvements based on clients' request. Therefore, when the device was completed, some employees welcomed because the burden of visual inspection would be alleviated.

【4. Effects of introduction】

- After the device was introduced, the number of parts that need to be inspected visually decreased by 95% (only 5% of parts that are judged to be defective by the device are inspected visually).
- The long visual inspection work used to cause mental burden, but the time saved by eliminating it allows employees to work in other production processes or engage in works for operational efficiency.
- Moreover, the know-how obtained by developing the device internally can be utilized to develop devices that inspect other parts.



✓ Business areas: Planning, management, and operation of corporate groups of retail, logistics, finance/payment, retail tech

【1. Reasons for introduction】

- The improvement of productivity of the distribution industry utilizing IT has been one of the corporate philosophies from the time when TRIAL Holdings, Inc. entered the retail business (around 1990). Therefore, its corporate culture is positive about the utilization of technologies.
- The labor shortage has become more serious especially after 2015. When a new store is opened, how to recruit employees has been an issue, although the company took measures such as accepting dispatched workers, sending support staff from other stores, and offering a higher hourly wage.

【2. Method of introduction】

- Various initiatives for promoting DX are in place. For example, the required number of employees in charge of cashiers has been decreased by developing and introducing semi-self-checkout machines, self-checkout machines, and self-checkout carts (shopping carts capable of reading a barcode when a customer puts a product in the shopping basket).
- Moreover, the required number of employees in charge of cashiers is visualized based on data analysis by introducing LSP (Labor Scheduling Program) for the purpose of improving efficiency.

【3. Reaction of employees at the time of introduction】

- Since TRIAL Holdings, Inc. has been positive about introducing IT in workplaces from the time when it entered the retail business and new systems have routinely been implemented on a trial basis, employees do not have specific problems (many employees comment that their burden has been alleviated).
- On the other hand, if a new system is not convenient, an opinion of dissatisfaction is heard sometimes from the field. In that case, the persons in charge of system development respond rapidly to make improvements on a trial-and-error basis.

【4. Effects of introduction】

- The required number of employees in charge of cashiers has been reduced. Moreover, because the required number of employees is now visualized by hour thanks to the introduction of LSP., it is possible to flexibly manage shifts in accordance with each employee's schedule by combining EPS with the own shift management system.
- In addition, it is possible for employees to start working more smoothly, because paper works required at the time of hiring can complete on an employee's smartphone by going paperless as part of the promotion of DX.



- ✓ Business areas: Administration of shopping center chain

【1. Reasons for introduction】

- Although initiatives for improving productivity through operational standardization have been taken with the aim of providing products at a lower price, employees had to go back and forth between a back-office to check information on PC and a sales floor to carry out tasks. Since each store has a huge space, the improvement of efficiency has arisen an issue.
- In addition, more experienced employees had to sacrifice their time to respond to questions of less experienced employees so that they had little time to focus on their own tasks, affecting efficiency.

【4. Effects of introduction】

- After the new device was introduced, less experienced employees are now able to engage in their tasks by checking it. As a result, a situation where they need to ask the help of more experienced employees has decreased significantly.
- Whether employees know the location of products on display has a strong impact on efficiency especially in the general food department engaged mainly in placing products. Therefore, the introduction of this device has brought about great success.
- Consequently, experienced employees can concentrate on their own tasks, improving efficiency of the whole company.

【2. Method of introduction】

- An operation app, which was checked on PC, was installed on smartphone-like devices to allow employees to check them on sales floors.
- These devices are equipped with many functions. For example, when a product's barcode is read, a location of shelf is read out. Even if an employee does not know a location of shelf, it is not necessary to ask a more experienced employee or to go back to the back office anymore.
- In addition, the task management app is equipped with a function of playing video manuals so that employees can have a look at videos immediately if there is anything unclear in tasks they are working on.



【3. Reaction of employees at the time of introduction】

- When the company started to hand out this device to its employees, some of them reacted negatively due to the necessity of learning how to use. However, once they are accustomed to this device, it has become indispensable, because employees can check a shelf location and other information immediately if they have any question.
- Moreover, some employees commented that it is inconvenient to go back and forth between the sales floor and the back office to print out labels indicating product's price, etc. The new device is equipped with a function of printing labels out by reading product's barcodes. Therefore, works required for writing out product's codes as well as data entry and printing at the back office have been simplified. The company is committed to make improvements reflecting opinions of employees.

TAKEYA RYOKAN Co., Ltd. (Utilization of new technologies)

✓ Business areas: Hotel operation business, accommodation counseling service, healthcare, food service, and tourism

【1. Reasons for introduction】

- Because a labor shortage is affecting the entire lodging business, many accommodations operate by lowering an occupancy ratio.
- It is difficult to recruit staff especially staff in charge of room cleaning, because the number of job applicants is low compared to the number of job offers.
- In addition, it became necessary to take the responsibility for room cleaning, because a contractor of room cleaning service withdrew. The company had to address both in-sourcing of room cleaning service and improvement of operational efficiency.

【4. Effects of introduction】

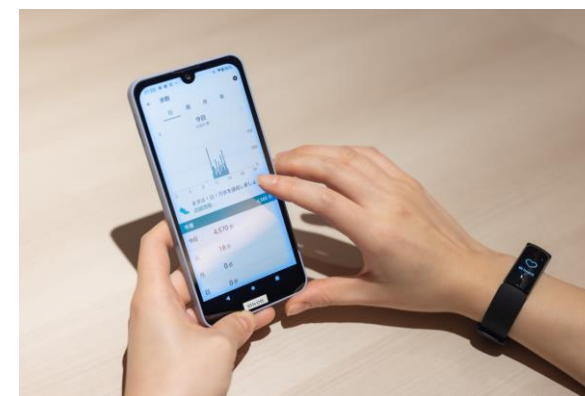
- The company succeeded in reducing about 20% of the time required to clean one room without sacrificing the customer satisfaction level judging from the relationship between the customer satisfaction level and labor input which constitute the KPIs.
- In addition, some of cleaning staff, many of whom are seniors, counted their steps during the work with their smartphone to streamline their tasks. They commented that “they can feel that the count of steps results in their own health. Moreover, conversations among cleaning staff give them a motivation”. These comments indicate that room cleaning services provide people in local communities with motivation in life through employment.

【2. Method of introduction】

- DX of cleaning has started with advice from experts in business efficiency improvement under a prefectural project.
- To be more specific, the company identified what type of error in cleaning lowers the customer satisfaction level and added it to the check items by analyzing reviews from customers (on the other hand, errors that do not affect the customer satisfaction level are simplified).
- The company stopped to place the same amenities in all rooms. Instead, it introduced a system allowing customers to choose amenities they need by analyzing the data of their use. By this way, it is possible to increase popular amenities, thereby improving the satisfaction level (in addition, man-hours required for placing amenities are saved).

【3. Reaction of employees at the time of introduction】

- The company tried not to give its employees an impression that DX is an easy way of cost saving by sending out a strong message that the profits are returned to them (in the form of wage, etc.).
- Specifically, a digital communication tool for having chats with employees and other tools were introduced. In addition, the company offered more opportunities such as get-together for promoting active engagement of employees who are in favor of DX. By giving emphasis on offline communications, an environment where the whole organization works on DX was developed.



Aflac Life Insurance Japan Ltd. (Utilization of new technologies)

✓ Business area: Life insurance

【1. Reasons for introduction】

- A war for talents against competitors and other industries is intensifying due to labor shortages, although the company desires to hire more sales representatives.
- On the other hand, it was necessary to give less experienced employees sufficient training, because life insurance products require them to learn ample knowledge about their characteristics.
- The improvement of sales skills required considerable efforts such as in-person training sessions and one-on-one coaching by supervisors.

【4. Effects of introduction】

- Even if sales representatives do not have much experience, they now have more opportunities for practicing the explanation of products using the software, giving them more confidence in front of their customers.
- Moreover, more experienced sales representatives need to practice sufficiently to explain new products. Practicing using this software is producing an effect.
- Sales representatives who have completed the training for new products including the use of software have better sales performance and show higher productivity than those who have not.
- In addition, it has become possible to save time and human resources assigned to training sessions and coaching and allocate them to other tasks.

【2. Method of introduction】

- Software was developed which is capable of simulating an explanation of new products to AI in imitation of customers.
- This software is equipped with a function of rating how much an explanation covers basic information on new product, an explanation speed, and if any habit of saying is found.
- Less experienced sales representatives can explain products with confidence by practicing repeatedly using this software.

【3. Reaction of employees at the time of introduction】

- When this software was introduced, there were negative comments that it is uncomfortable to talk to AI and negative reactions due to poor voice recognition quality.
- The software has been updated in response to these reactions, while the company tried to appeal a belief that it would contribute to the improvement of skills of sales representatives. As a result, the number of users has increased without causing a big friction.



Sakura CS Holdings Co., Ltd. (Utilization of new technologies)

- Business areas: Administration of group homes for the elderly and small multi-functional homes, serviced homes for the elderly, fee-based homes for the elderly, and nursing care/welfare schools, staffing service, system development, support for accepting and fostering foreign workers, and childcare support

1. Reasons for introduction

- The acceptance of foreign workers has been promoted in response to the difficulty in finding employees. However, it was difficult for foreigners who are not familiar with Japanese to create daily care records.
- Moreover, because it took not only foreign employees but also other employees 1 or 2 hours to create paper care records in addition to the provision of services, some staff had to work overtime. This work imposed a heavy burden other than the provision of services to users.

2. Method of introduction

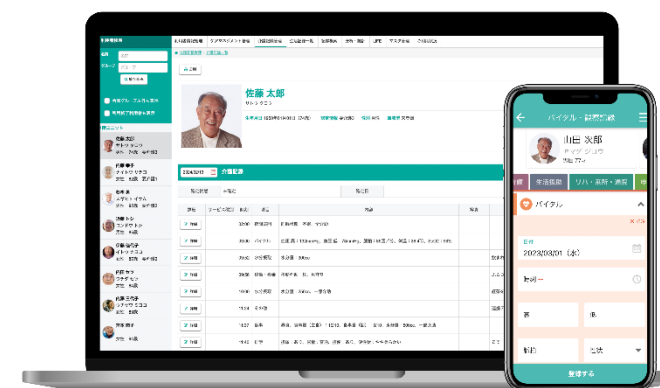
- A smartphone app for creating care records was self-developed by recruiting engineers. The burden for creating care records is kept minimum by adopting multi-choice answers for general information such as the names of service users and the time and date of services and minimizing special notes for descriptive answers (audio input is also allowed).
- In addition, the company aims to utilize data on care records collected by this app for improving future services such as user's behaviors by having AI learn this data.

3. Reaction of employees at the time of introduction

- Before this app was introduced, some staff showed a little bit of resistance, because they were emotionally attached to creating paper care records, and many of them were not familiarized with doing this work on smartphone.
- On the other hand, many staff have already used a smartphone and been familiarized with its operation. Thus, it didn't take much time for many staff to recognize the app's convenience at an early stage.

4. Effects of introduction

- There are now few cases where the staff have to create care records after their working hours, because the time required to create care records has been reduced significantly.
- Consequently, the staff can concentrate more on services for users, while the satisfaction level of staff's work has improved accordingly.
- Moreover, because the company has gained a good reputation of striving to improve productivity by introducing a new technology in the field of nursing care, the hiring of new graduates is going smoothly.



Panasonic Connect Co., Ltd. (Utilization of new technologies)

- Business areas: Development, manufacturing, and sales of devices and software for “supply chain”, “public services”, “life infrastructure”, and “entertainment,” as well as system integration, installation, maintenance and management, and provision of solutions including services

【1. Reasons for introduction】

- It was required to improve productivity of the whole company, because there are various tasks to be addressed in response to diversified requests from customers.
- Although in-depth measures for improving the efficiency of routine tasks have been taken through automation and outsourcing, the efficiency of non-routine tasks has not improved smoothly, remaining some issues to be addressed.
- A question was made if the company’s productivity can improve by using generative AI whose technological innovation is progressing remarkably.

【2. Method of introduction】

- An AI-assisted service utilizing generative-AI software was introduced for all employees.
- This service is provided through a user-friendly interface for tasks of employees and customized in a way that company’s internal information entered by employees is not leaked to outsiders.

【3. Reaction of employees at the time of introduction】

- Although simple use cases were presented, the service was introduced by without specifying which tasks it should be used for, leaving the method of use to the discretion of the employees.
- After six months passed since its introduction, a seminar on characteristics of data learnt by generative AI was held to help employees refer to a way of writing prompts which are more likely to receive accurate answers. However, how to use is left to each employee’s discretion.

【4. Effects of introduction】

- This system is used for a wide range of purposes. It is capable of not only simple searches but also creating meeting summaries, drafting MC scripts, analyzing open-ended responses in surveys, and even coding programs. Consequently, employees use the generated answers only after conducting fact-checks. By utilizing AI as an assistant, work efficiency has been significantly improved.
- In addition, there is an advantage that all employees can feel and understand the characteristics of generative AI whose technology is progressing remarkably these days as users.



●ConnectAI Demonstration screen

