



Why we need female outside directors (Summary)

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1. Empowerment of women is now a requirement

In 2003, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s Cabinet Office set a goal of increasing the presence of women in corporate leadership positions to 30% by 2020, but it has been ignored by the industrial community. Our country’s gender equality position has continued to lag behind the rest of the globe, has often been called into question by other countries, and has been rated 104th in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum.

On the other hand, from 2012 to 2015, 141 companies have been ranked in the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry’s Diversity Management Selection 100. Diversity management is an immediate requirement for corporations in the face of our human resource shortage.

2. Current status of women’s empowerment

The term “women’s empowerment” is accounted differently in various sectors. In manufacturing and construction, women make up only about 10% of the workforce, while in the life insurance industry, many women are employed and are improving their competitive skills. Many companies have made half-hearted efforts to address Abe's goal, organizing surveys and staff meetings, but have made little or no real progress.

There are also negative views of empowerment: “Why do we need preferential treatment for women only?” Those who are satisfied with current work styles are confused and frustrated by change. Empowerment efforts will be unsustainable unless all employees, even marginal staff, are clearly and specifically aware of their benefit to the company.

3. Women’s empowerment as corporate governance

In the face of our aging society, sixty percent of female workers retire when expecting their first child, and corporate Japan has yet to find a solution to this problem. Securing a quality workforce is essential for a company's success. The unnecessary loss of competent workers and the cost of training replacements are counterproductive.

We must recognize that markets, industries and companies are changing and take measures to avert business decline. Workers must be made to realize that their company will go out of business or they will lose their jobs if they cling to the old, conventional styles and values.

From the standpoint of stable corporate administration and growth, the strategy of all-male

management should be abandoned. Today, many foreign investors are reluctant to invest in companies without female directors, as this lack is considered to be evidence of poor governance. The Lehman Brothers collapse and the EU's economic crisis have forced the world to reassess the consequence of business decisions made disproportionately by white male management while women account for half of the population. Despite resistance, more European countries are implementing quota systems.

4. From the perspective of harassment prevention

If a man sees a female colleague as an equal, he will naturally avoid sexually-oriented comments or behavior that could undermine their mutual trust. Such incidents involve great risk and could critically affect his promotion or career. Raising awareness of gender harassment, which can presage sexual and power harassment, and creating a work environment for maximum performance equally for men and women will benefit companies.

5. Growth through innovation by women

Innovation by women can create new values for companies. Women who have not realized their full potential are a great source of unconventional viewpoints. Companies who know this have been profiting from new products assimilating women's ideas. And now even the construction and automotive industries are actively developing new homes and cars incorporating female perspectives.

Cuore C³ organizes business proposal training sessions for women. After the repetitive exercise of analyzing needs, pursuing hypotheses and assessing the results, some participants say that they have learned how companies make profits and how to create business plans. By applying this method, they can now assess their daily tasks from management viewpoints.

If women truly enjoy their work and build confidence by improving performance, they will become a source of profit and growth. When they are capable of creating new strategies for real changes in their companies, they will become business leaders and directors.

6. Immediate need for development and appointment of female outside directors

Japan's Corporate Governance Code, to be implemented in June 2015, requires companies to appoint two or more independent outside directors. Many companies are trying to assign at least one female director and searching for qualified candidates.

Cuore C³ is launching its DIW Club to support development of female leaders for management positions and executive officers. Although the main responsibility of outside directors is governance advisement, we are aiming for the long-term cultivation of female leaders capable of making management decisions based on their business experience.

7. Appointing female directors to enhance diversity management

Cultivating an underutilized female workforce and incorporating women's perspectives into management decisions will stimulate corporate administration, clarify business challenges and enhance growth strategies. Companies capable of implementing diversity management will drive growth in Japan.

The keys are:

- Raising critical awareness that the company will go out of business and jobs will be lost if

women are not empowered

- Eliminating harassment issues and creating a performance-oriented, gender-free work environment
- Creating new corporate values through gender-free product development

Acceptance of diverse values and promotion of friendly competition are critical to individual growth. Inclusion of female directors and enhancement of management diversity raise employee awareness and foster healthy corporate culture for growth.

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Career:

Joined Cuore C³ in 2003 and has been working as a counselor and trainer. Before Cuore C³, she was an employee of the Machida municipal government and Sony Corporation, and a counselor at a Tokyo public junior high school.

Fields of specialization:

Prevention of sexual and power harassment. Mental health, communication, women's empowerment, and training of harassment consultants.

Qualifications:

Industrial counselor: Japan Industrial Counselors Association

Career consultant: Japan Industrial Counselors Association

Trainer for Seiken-shiki Sentence Completion Test (SCT)

Member of Japanese Association of Industrial Counseling

Books:

Joshi to buka no fukai mizo – pawa harasumento kanzen rikai (Co-author, Kinokuniya Company Ltd.),

Anna pawahara konna pawahara (Author, National Federation of Labour Standards Association)

Pawa harasumento (Co-author, Nikkei Publishing Inc.)

Lectures and training:

Sony Corporation, Sony Bank Inc., Warner Entertainment Japan Inc., Kadokawa Corporation, Suntory Holdings Ltd., The Yomiuri Shimbun, Tokyo Gas Co. Ltd, The Kansai Electric Power Company Inc., IHI Corporation, East Japan Railway Company, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd., Yamato Transport Co., Ltd., Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK), The Norinchukin Bank, Kochi Prefecture, Toyo Engineering Corporation, SCSK Corporation, Daiichi Sankyo Co., Ltd., BNP Paribas, Astellas Pharma Inc., The Boston Consulting Group, Olympus Corporation, YKK Corporation, Terumo Corporation, Eisai Co., Ltd., and many others.

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