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THE OTSUKA WHATS & WHOS

Otsuka
people creating
new products
for better health
worldwide

“Otsuka Diversity Forum” Going Strong



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Otsuka Women Speakers

International and Local Senior Otsuka Female Executives Speak at Diversity Forum

Over two decades ago, Otsuka Chairman Akihiko Otsuka implemented trainings to help promote female executives. Because of that vision, Otsuka Pharmaceutical now has 45 women whose positions are higher than division chiefs and five who are operating officers.

At this year's Otsuka Diversity Forum held at Awaji Yumebutai International Conference Center (Hyogo Pref.), senior Otsuka female executives were invited to speak to 130 young and budding employees with diverse backgrounds about their own trials and tribulations and how they overcame their obstacles.

One faced cancer head on and with the support of her family and her determination, she overcame cancer, received her Ph.D. and is now the Director of Global Clinical Development; another moved to a foreign country in the middle of her Ph.D. program to lead a region with the lowest performance. But with passion, prioritization and sheer perseverance she succeeded in leading her region to becoming number one after three years and also finished her Ph.D.

An HR executive knew from when she was in college that she wanted to continue working as a researcher. She was able to do so because her mother and mother-in-law wanted her to succeed because they had wanted their own identity outside of the house. And one in middle management

said she faced obstacles that once had overwhelmed her as a Medical Representative. She was asked to be responsible for a University Hospital with 500 physicians across 40 divisions. But with her husband's support and her determination in breaking the barriers, she persevered by doing things no one else has done before therefore successfully managing her beat.

The goal for such a forum is to expose employees to other women's plights in trying to get ahead and learn from their experiences as women executives in a male dominated field.

In his opening speech at the forum, Otsuka Pharmaceutical's President, Representative Director, Taro Iwamoto, Ph.D., said, "As president, what I have aimed at for the past five years to promote what we call "creativity from this corner to that corner," and not to copy other pharmaceutical companies.

The most important part of this concept is to employ people who continually innovate. Our company employs competitive staff in Asia and in the West for our overseas operations. There are much less gender barriers and our key elements of evaluation is innovation." Dr. Iwamoto stated that the company goal is to increase the ratio of female executives to 50% by 2020.



Taro Iwamoto, Ph.D., Otsuka Pharmaceutical President and Representative Director



Young male leaders were also invited to take part in the panel discussion. They shared what they are looking for in their team members but the consensus was that it's not the gender that matters, but their staff's passion and determination in succeeding in creating new products.

Chieko Asakawa, IBM Fellow, was the Guest Speaker: Innovation Through Diversity

IBM Fellow Chieko Asakawa shared her journey of ups and downs to the audience.

Ms. Asakawa's original dream was to become an Olympian as she was an active athlete in her school. But when she lost her vision in an accident in her junior high years, it didn't derail her from living her life to its full potential and beyond. She loved outdoor activities and wanted to continue to do track, roller skate and scuba dive. That's when she realized accessibility is needed for innovation that would allow her to keep her freedom. That began her accessibility research and development for the past two decades.



IBM Fellow Chieko Asakawa demonstrating how blind people can use smart phones by creating sounds when they touch the screens

She said she may have lost her vision, but her hearing senses became more heightened allowing her to listen to spoken words that are three times faster than normal. She used her disadvantages to her advantage and pushed for technologies that would assist heightening other senses that may have been lost to some.

As for family life, Ms. Asakawa said when her two daughters were younger, they wanted their mother to be home more but that they now appreciate how much their mother has done to move forward the technology for the disabled. She said she still has lots of dreams to fulfill, like traveling to Africa and even learn about food and wine. To her, a disability does not mean an obstacle, but can a spring board for something greater.



130 attendees were invited to the Otsuka Diversity Forum held in Awaji Island, near Tokushima



*(left) Taro Iwamoto, Ph.D., President, and Representative Director:
"Women and young people are 'agents of change'"*