

# J-win:

PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S SUCCESS THROUGH DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

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Yukako Uchinaga, board chair, J-Win

**I**N the rising tide of globalization, the importance of “diversity management” is attracting attention as one of the means by which Japanese companies are expected to further strengthen corporate competitiveness. Yukako Uchinaga, board chair of J-Win, a nonprofit organization, believes that boosting careers for women in companies is the first step toward diversity management.

J-Win has two major missions. One is to support the D&I (Diversity & Inclusion) implementation of client companies, and the other is to foster female leaders.

Uchinaga has climbed up the corporate ladder and earned some remarkable titles within leading Japanese companies herself. With Uchinaga representing the group as board chair, J-Win provides unique guidance to help foster female leaders.

“In order for women to further advance their careers within the workplace,” Uchinaga says, “we need to raise awareness among women and make some structural

transformations at the same time. We have to change the way women think about their careers and make sure that they can clearly envision the goal of becoming company executives in the future. Even if they have the opportunity, it doesn’t make any difference unless they have a strong will to become leaders themselves and aim at higher positions.”

The members of “Woman to the Top!”, a series of J-Win activities aimed to develop female leaders, are either female executives or candidates for such positions chosen by member companies. For a two-year period, these members, each representing a different work field, form small groups, set goals and operate regular meetings and breakout sessions all on their own. At off-site camps held in Japan, more than 250 members get together to participate in open and honest dialogue with one another. In the overseas training sessions, they

interact with some of the top female executives from all over the world, with support from Catalyst, an NPO for working women in the U.S., and a sister organization of J-win.

Uchinaga says Japan has few role models for women, and it’s important that women who aim at achieving the top positions have a chance to meet various types of female executives and learn from them. At the “Round Table” mentoring sessions, Uchinaga herself gives pep talks to the members and encourages previous graduates with advice.

Seven years have passed since J-Win started its NPO activities. It’s been only five years since “Woman to the Top!” brought its first graduates into the world, yet some of them have already become company board members.

J-Win activities will provide better working environments within Japanese companies for more women to succeed, and with more women striving to reach the top, Japanese companies can look forward to gaining further competitive advantages. **7**



Focus discussion taking place at the J-Win annual camp