

PROMOTING DIVERSITY

Recruitment of foreign nationals in Japan is on the rise. We look at the example of a global ICT company based in Minato, Tokyo.

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WITH economic globalization continually accelerating, many Japanese companies have focused on diversity management to utilize human resources

of diverse genders, ages and racial backgrounds as a management strategy to strengthen international competitiveness. More and more Japanese companies have been recruiting foreign nationals as part of the strategy.

For example, Lawson, a major convenience store chain, has established the post of an executive for diversity promotion and has strategically employed foreign nationals since 2008. These foreign nationals are playing leading roles in a range of areas, including product development and finance. Rakuten, a leading Japanese e-commerce company, changed its official in-house language from Japanese to English in July 2012 to promote the global development of group businesses, and had employees from seventy-two countries as of December 2016.

Fujitsu, which provides a wide range of products, services and solutions in the area of ICT, is another company that actively employs foreign nationals. Fujitsu began employing non-Japanese university gradu-



Fujitsu's main office building in Kawasaki, Kanagawa Prefecture

ates in 2006. Fujitsu aims to have foreign nationals comprise 10% of the company's new hires. Currently, within Fujitsu as a whole, excluding its consolidated companies, there are about 250 foreign nationals, or around 10% of all employees, who mainly engage in hardware development, SE and sales operations.

"With ongoing digitalization, the ICT business is changing, and diverse human resources are essential for taking on new challenges," says Mana Mikawa, who is in charge of employing non-Japanese university graduates in the Global Human Resources Unit, Recruiting Center. "We started to employ foreign nationals in order to change the company itself by increasing their numbers. For the last three years, we have officially



Mana Mikawa

employed foreign nationals after they have completed an internship program lasting about five weeks, which enables us to grasp the aptitudes of individual employees and assign them to the best positions.”

Fujitsu employs not only foreign students studying at Japa-



Akiko Kambayashi

nese universities but also overseas university students, regardless of their Japanese language ability. Fujitsu provides Japanese language training for foreign nationals before they officially start to work to help them undertake close communication with people both inside and outside the company after joining.

All photos: Yoshifusa Hashizume

“We provide foreign nationals with the opportunity to have in-depth discussions with the chiefs of the sections they belong to twice a year. We make it a rule to treat them with great care and attention and ask them about any problems they are having, including their future careers,” says Akiko Kambayashi of the Global Human Resources Unit, Recruiting Center. “On the other hand, more Japanese employees are becoming active in terms of acquiring English and are doing their jobs with a global perspective. I believe that the diversity strategy is having a steady impact.”

Marco Scifoni from Italy is a foreign national engaged in hardware development at Fujitsu. He joined the company in August 2013 and is working on the cooling design of optical transmission devices for constructing ICT networks, which are important social infrastructures.

“When I attended university in Italy, I participated in an internship program at a Japanese company for a year through a study program implemented through cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. This experience encouraged me to work for a Japanese company after graduating from university. I sought a career in Japan, and Fujitsu employed me,” says Scifoni. Scifoni says that he enjoys his work and feels a sense of great satisfaction as a result of working at Fujitsu.



Marco Scifoni

“Fujitsu has a very good corporate culture of just giving something a try if there is any possibility, even if you do not know whether you will make it or not,” says Scifoni. “Today, the volume of data communications has increased all over the world. There is even research that shows that the amount of energy consumption related to data communications has reached 1% to 2% of global energy consumption. Our mission is how to control that energy consumption. Our job has a major impact on the entire world, and I work actively on development.”

The employment of global human resources involves the possibility of making a significant contribution to solving global challenges as well. **U**