

Jan 22, 2025
30% Club Japan



Activity Report

First Joint Program by 30% Club Japan University Group and TOPIX President's Committee:

Conversations with Top Management: Building a Business Career in the Global Era Co-hosted by 30% Club Japan and Showa Women's University

On November 27, 2024, Showa Women's University Faculty of Global Business and 30% Club Japan co-hosted a symposium in the first session and breakout sessions in the second session under the theme of "Conversations with Top Management: Building a Business Career in the Global Era," which was attended by students from Showa Women's University and 30% Club Japan member universities.



How to Nurture the Female Leaders

The symposium featured a panel discussion between university and company top executives titled “Developing Female Executives from the Perspective of Experience, Awareness, and Work Environment.”

The symposium was attended by the following members of the 30% Club Japan: from the right, Mariko Bando, Chancellor of Showa Women's University; Yoshiaki Terumichi, President of Sophia University; Teruo Fujii, President of the University of Tokyo; Yoichi Miyamoto, Chairman of the Board and Representative Director of Shimizu Corporation; Keiko Tashiro, Director and Deputy President of Daiwa Securities Group Inc. Tsukahara Tsukiko, CEO of Kaleidist and an Advisory Board member of the 30% Club Japan, served as a moderator.

At the beginning of the symposium, each panelist shared their experiences on the path to becoming top management. It was highlighted that an opportunity in early career stage to manage the different opinions of various stakeholders in the organization helped to hone their management skills. The leaders firmly stated that women today have the same opportunities as men to gain experience and be promoted.

Next, in the discussion on the fundamental issues standing in the way of better career development for women, it was emphasized that it is essential to change the deeply rooted gender role stereotypes and unconscious biases at both the individual and organizational levels.

Along with this, it was discussed that it is necessary to change the structural issues of the social norms surrounding career paths, not only by following the route of getting a job right after graduating from university, but also by having a flexibility to start a business, go back to graduate school for further studies, or move to an NPO or a company, depending on the next stage of one's career.

Finally, it was proposed that universities and companies should collaborate from the perspective of future female talent development. Suggestions from the university side included going beyond short-term internships to implement cooperative education systems that leverage university learning and foster long-term talent development with companies, as well as industry-academia joint

development of new educational programs and platforms.



Additionally, with female employees in organizations in mind, it was emphasized that companies need to nurture women from the perspectives of the three “keys”; expectations (*kitai*), trainings (*kitaeru*), and opportunities (*kikai*). There was also a call for women’s leadership to raise their hands, gain confidence, and contribute to the company.

As part of the “integrated approach” emphasized by the 30% Club Japan, meaningful discussions were held on the significance of collaboration between universities and companies to promote women's participation in the decision-making levels of society.

Dialogue Between Executives and Students

In the second part, the session was divided into three small groups to provide students the opportunity to interact directly with top management. The subgroup topics were: 1) Leadership Development and Unconscious Bias, 2) Is Women’s Participation a Means or an End? Are Numerical Targets Necessary? and 3) Corporate Expectations of Higher Education. The panelists from the first session visited each subgroup in pairs and commented on the students’ questions and answers.

In the first subcommittee, Kana Shirakawa, Senior Executive Managing Director, Corporate Executive Officer and CHO of Daiwa Securities Group Inc. and Sayuri Daimon, Visiting Professor at Showa Women's University, were moderators. In the second subcommittee, Ikuko Harada, Head of Employee Relations Department at NEC Corporation, and Kaori Hayashi, Executive Vice President of the University of Tokyo, moderated. In the third subcommittee, Maho Nishioka, General Manager of DE&I Promotion Dept. , Corporate Planning Div. at Shimizu Corporation, and Akiko Imai, Dean, Professor at the Faculty of Global Business of Showa Women's University, took the role of moderators.

Following the first part of the symposium, the students actively discussed various issues and opinions from their perspective, such as how women can continue their careers even after life events, the background of unconscious bias experienced by women both as students and professionals, the barriers of current public education with low diversity, and how to define oneself and find one's unique individuality in the job search. It was a valuable opportunity for university students to hear from the top leaders of companies and universities, as well as senior female executives who are active in the field, and to understand what adults truly expect from students, which was encouraging and inspiring.