

Achieving Work-Life Balance

Alongside with having a system allowing all employees to work in a way that suits their life stage, we are also striving to establish a work environment where such systems can easily be used.



AEON Yume-mirai Nursery School (AEON MALL Iwaki Onahama)

Leveraging our diverse workforce as a corporate strength

Diversity promotion is very significant to our AEON MALL business. To reflect our fundamental philosophy "Customer First" at our malls where a variety of customers frequent, it is desirable to have a diverse range of workforce as the active exchange of opinions from different perspectives will lead to creative ideas. The number of female managers increased from 115 (13.2%) at the end of FY2016 to 155 (17.4%) at the end of FY2019, and there has been a noticeable increase of female employees who are strongly motivated to take on the challenge of higher-level positions. We were named "Nadeshiko Brand" which the Ministry of Economy, Trade and In-

dustry and the Tokyo Stock Exchange jointly select from among outstanding listed companies that promote women's empowerment in the workplace. Such accolades from external sources have contributed to enhancing our corporate brand value as well as to attracting excellent talents to our company. Regardless of gender, we have flexible options so that our employees can work comfortably even when their life stage changes, such as childcare and nursing care, and we are working to lay a foundation for career development by creating a professional environment that makes these systems more accessible.



Masahiko Okamoto
Director
Executive General Manager,
Administration Division

Expansion of "AEON Yume-mirai Nursery School"

As of the end of February 2020, there are 30 AEON Yume-mirai (Dreams for the Future) Nursery Schools nationwide in the AEON group, which support employees with small children. 20 of them are operated within AEON MALL's commercial facilities, and are open to employees of AEON group companies, staff of specialty stores as well as local residents. The nursery schools are open 24 hours every day of the year, in principle, according to the business hours of each mall. The nursery

school system helps facilitate an environment where specialty stores can employ staff who need childcare while at work and encourage them to continue working on a long term basis. By holding events that can only be done at a nursery inside a mall such as "Sport day" unaffected by the weather in AEON Hall, or events that amplify the region's characteristics, we are providing opportunities for children to develop both mentally and physically.

Voices from male employees who have taken childcare leave

AEON MALL has various systems in place to support the balance between childbirth, childcare and work, and is working to create a workplace environment where it is easy to use these systems. Here are some voices from male employees who have taken childcare leave.

Effective use in combination with other vacations

As my third child was born in July 2019 when I was a member of the Shutoken Business Department, I took childcare leave to look after my two older children. Although I initially planned to take only 5 days off using regular holidays and annual long vacation, I combined those with childcare leave after considering the recommendation from Personnel Department. After the birth of the baby, I was strongly impressed by the kindness of our neighbors, the help of the grandparents, and the way our older kids were so happy and excited to have a younger brother. I learned many institutional benefits that I did not know before, such as exemption from social insurance premiums if I take childcare leave at the end of month, so I would like to actively share such information with the junior staff in the future. As an initiative for our company collectively, I hope that longer childcare leave for male employees will become the norm.

Shuntaro Azuma
General Manager
AEON MALL Kahoku



Advance preparations are important at work and at home

With the birth of my eldest daughter, I took childcare leave for 42 days from November 2019. It was an important time for me to interact with my children and become closer to my wife. Before taking childcare leave, I had many discussions with my supervisor and colleagues about the organization and work during my absence. In order to encourage the use of childcare leave in the future, I think it is important to not only exercise one's rights but also to consider the state of the company and gain the understanding from people around you during the leave period. Because I was approached by some members of the company telling me "Take it easy!", I sometimes felt that they did not really comprehend what I was doing at home during my childcare leave. Even at home, my wife made me realize that it is important for us parents to talk about our roles during my childcare leave beforehand. I hope that male employees taking childcare leave will become common corporate practice for this is an important period in which the bonds between parents and children, husband and wife, and family members become stronger.

Hiroyuki Suematsu
Manager, Finance Group, Finance Department,
Finance & Accounting Management Department



Valuable experience with many new discoveries

As my wife and I live away from our parents' homes, I took 14 days off including childcare leave when our second child was born. Our workplace atmosphere that emphasizes work-life balance has been a source of encouragement for my decision. At the start of my leave, I realized that my wife not only cares for our baby, but also has obligations that I usually do not notice, for example, arranging family celebrations and taking care of paperwork. During this period, I gained many experiences that will be useful for my future work, such as understanding the hardships of flexible employees (part-timers) who work while being parents, as well as learning what families raising kids look for in a mall. I would like to create an atmosphere in each workplace to make it easier for more employees to use this system and ask our company to support this movement.

Toshiya Suzuki
Operation Manager
AEON MALL Kobe Minami



Lively leave system

AEON MALL is encouraging employees to value time spent with their family by introducing "Lively leave system" for employees to be able to take a maximum of 2-day leaves per year due to family care, childcare, anniversary, birthday, school or community event, homecoming and other purposes.

Providing a Comfortable Professional Environment

We will promote the appointment of local staff to executive positions at our overseas malls, and pursue an environment where employees of our company and the staff of specialty stores can work comfortably on a long term basis.



Overseas malls creating opportunities to thrive

Since opening our first overseas mall in Beijing in 2008, we have opened a total of 21 malls in China and 9 malls in Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia. The basic policy with our overseas malls is to have our local recruits with understanding of our philosophy be in charge of management. In every country, we are actively promoting local staff to executive positions while focusing on workforce development. In China, there are 7 malls that have local staff who are responsible for the malls as General Managers.



Promoting renovation projects as an executive officer of the mall



Zhang Man
General Manager
AEON MALL Wuhan Jinyintan
(Hubei, China)

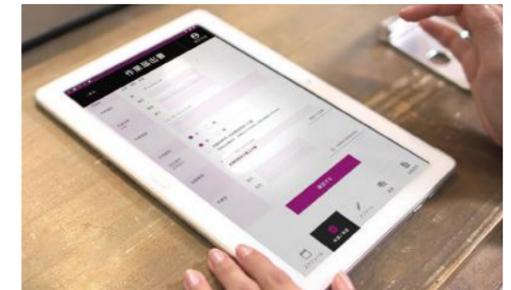
I joined the company in 2014 after working for another Japanese organization. Through trainings and other occasions at the beginning, I was able to absorb our "Customer First" philosophy. Building on what I learned, I have been working to create a better mall as a manager, for example, by planning and holding events tailored to customer characteristics, and enhancing disaster prevention facilities in the building to improve the safety of the mall. Although my opinions differed from my Japanese supervisor at times, we exchanged ideas and worked together to create facilities that would satisfy our customers.

In recognition of these efforts, I was appointed General Manager in charge of the mall in 2017. I believe that the strength of local staff is that they can operate with a deep understanding of customers' habits and consumption trends. We are currently undergoing a large-scale renovation for floor expansion, aiming to create a mall that will be even more supported by customers. There are policies in place at our company to help local employees to grow and develop their careers. In the future, I would like to take on the challenge of becoming General Manager of a new mall.

Our initiatives for specialty stores

Adopting digital technology to improve efficiency

We have begun the adoption of "AEON MALL Works", a tablet for business use, to reduce the workload of specialty stores' staff and save labor. This tablet allows the staff of specialty stores to reduce the time it takes to visit the mall office by submitting periodic paperwork using the tablet. The device also allows them to send out questionnaires and notifications from the mall, and hold training sessions for the staff at any time. It is equipped with features such as user-friendly interface, translator function, and a security measure that turns off the power when taken outside the mall. This device has been put to use in 79 malls across Japan.



Creating a comfortable work environment for specialty store employees

As labor shortages are a social issue, we see it as one of our responsibilities as a developer to improve ES (employee satisfaction) by improving our work environment where employees for specialty stores that open in AEON MALL's commercial facilities can play an active part for a long time. Among ES improvement measures on which each mall is working, we give awards to excellent case examples as the "Best Practice" and expand them horizontally.

Example of Best Practice

AEON MALL Shijonawate (Osaka Prefecture)

In order to motivate the staff of specialty stores, AEON MALL Shijonawate has been making efforts since 2017 to let customers leave their "compliments" on message cards. This fiscal year, we expanded the break room for the staff, conducted health checkups, and held employee social gatherings twice a year, all of which have been well received by the staff of specialty stores.



Aiming to improve customer service skills

With the aim of raising awareness of customer service, we hold the "Customer service role playing contest" in which the staff of specialty stores compete using the techniques they have cultivated on a daily basis, not only in Japan but overseas as well. The 4th national contest in China was held with approximately 50,000 eligible contestants working at around 3,700 stores across a total of 19 malls. We are also accelerating our efforts by holding the contest in Cambodia, Vietnam and Indonesia.



Customer service role playing contest (Vietnam)