



# Seiji Inagaki

Keidanren Women's Executive Network

## Leadership Mentor Program

### The Essence of Leadership for Driving Transformation



December 10, 2025

#### Keidanren Women's Executive Network

### Leadership Mentor Program Vol.34

December 10, 2025 Keidanren Kaikan, Otemachi, Tokyo

#### Leadership is a Journey

Leadership is not something that comes with titles or positions. It is a journey that develops as you confront challenges and take action. You must live as an autonomous individual, free from organizational logic, using your time and current position to focus on customers and society, and thinking about what you can accomplish through your organization. At the same time, as the saying goes, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." You need to trust those who will walk with you and to continue taking on challenges and learning. The journey is never smooth, but by taking that first step with conviction, you will always discover new perspectives. And that step becomes the force that opens up the future.

#### The Difference between Managers and Leaders

While managers are responsible for organizational stability and continuity, leaders are agents of creation and transformation. In today's rapidly changing environment, organizations that cling to past success risk losing flexibility and diminishing their competitiveness. An attitude that adheres rigidly to conventional methods and tries to push through on sheer willpower can be a contributing factor to corporate scandals and harassment in Japanese companies. Leaders must have the ability to transcend existing frameworks and create new value without fearing change. It is essential to have a perspective that responds to societal needs, not just to follow organizational logic. Leaders who drive transformation must sometimes be unafraid of friction and have the resolve to bring fresh winds into the organization.

#### Career Turning Points and Guiding Principles

To demonstrate leadership, it is important to face yourself and clarify your guiding principles. By having a mission statement to return to when you feel lost and articulating your values, you can maintain an unwavering foundation even in difficult situations. In the middle stage of my career, when I took on the role of coordinating between departments, I faced opposition like "We tried that before and it failed" and "No one will agree to that," and I experienced rock bottom. It was then that I learned to write guiding principles in my planner. Some things I wrote down were: "Always express my own opinions," "Listen carefully to others' opinions," "Always give my all," "Be bright and energetic," and "Live in the present with the next generation in mind." By continuously practicing these principles, although there was friction, the number of people who empathized and supported me grew, creating a foundation for gaining allies. Such principles become your support in overcoming adversity and loneliness.

#### Reclaiming Time and Envisioning the Future

To demonstrate leadership, it is essential to reassess how you use your time. There are many situations where you cannot allocate time to what is truly important while being chased by urgent tasks. By consciously creating space and ensuring time for dialogue outside the company and for reflection, you come up with discontinuous strategies and new ideas. The ability to devise ways to reclaim time and envision the future is a quality required of leaders who guide transformation.

#### Mentor Profile

### Seiji Inagaki

Vice Chair of the Board of Councillors, Keidanren  
Director, Chair of the Board, Dai-ichi Life Holdings, Inc. (DLHD)

- Apr. 1986 Joined The Dai-ichi Mutual Life Insurance Company
- Apr. 2012 Executive Officer, The Dai-ichi Life Insurance Company, Limited
- Apr. 2015 Managing Executive Officer(DLIC)
- Jun. 2016 Director, Managing Executive Officer(DLIC)
- Oct. 2016 Director, Managing Executive Officer, The Dai-ichi Life Holdings, Inc.
- Apr. 2017 Representative Director, President (DLHD)
- Apr. 2023 Representative Director, Chair of the Board(DLHD)
- May.2023 Vice Chair of the Board of Councillors, Keidanren (current)
- Jun. 2023 Director, Chair of the Board (DLHD) (current)

