



## Yoichi Miyamoto

Keidanren Women's Executive Network

## Leadership Mentor Program

The Top-down Promotion of Roles for Women with Responsibilities in Social Infrastructure Development

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## Leadership Mentor Program Vol.8

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## Some Facts about the Construction Industry

Modern social infrastructure maintains the quality of our daily life and also helps us prepare for times of disaster. The construction industry has the vital role of building, maintaining, and updating those elements of social infrastructure that will ensure the public with improved well-being and affluence now and into the years ahead. One of the fundamental features of the construction industry is the project delivery contract. Construction contractors enter into contracts when only plans exist, and deliver the structures in tangible form upon completion. A building is something intended to serve human habitation and livelihoods, and as such, must be built with consideration for the needs, safety, and security of its intended inhabitants. Until this "masterwork"—since we always aim to construct a masterful piece of work, this is what we call it—is completed and delivered to the client, it is entirely the responsibility of the contractor.

Another feature of the construction industry is that it has long been male-dominated and presented difficulties for the participation of women. Although this industry was once labeled demanding, dirty, and dangerous, we now aim for a more favorable image of more rest, more pay and more prospects, to promote participation by women. Shimizu Corporation began recruiting women for management track positions in 2008; last year, women accounted for one-fourth of all new hires at Shimizu. We have also made headway in changing male attitudes and helping female employees with their work-life balance. A third feature is that construction is inherently an industry engaged in the craftsmanship of real, physical assets despite its classification as a non-manufacturing trade. In its earliest days, founder Shimizu highly valued the spirit of the independent carpenters providing life-cycle support for buildings, and has over the years built the foundation for its business on the trust its customers have placed in our integrated approach to after-sales service.

## Efforts in Management

Shimizu's business philosophy is rooted in the doctrines put forward by Eiichi Shibusawa, a leading figure in the development of Japan's modern corporate society, who expounds in his *The Analects of Confucius* and *The Abacus*, that social mores and economic activity must be integral. Our new corporate slogan, "Today's work, Tomorrow's heritage," incorporates this ideal. The message is to do one's best work now to build a lasting heritage that future generations will thoroughly value. In that context, we have put emphasis on returning to the basics of professional workmanship and are encouraging employees to involve themselves more with work in the field rather than spending all their time with office desk routines. Furthermore, as a craftsmanship-focused drive to meet the future head-on, Shimizu develops cutting-edge technologies to pursue further challenges, such as building futuristic cities and harnessing marine resources.

## As Leaders

Construction is a trade that depends on its human resources. Accordingly, its leaders must be engaged in efforts to protect all employees and their families. No individual "human resource" is ever expendable. The most important thing is that employees maintain their motivation, and management has a mission to create an environment conducive to that. In order to talk directly with our employees, I make rounds to our branch offices for informal discussions, and engage in dialogue with employees from all age groups. The views that female employees shared on those occasions led to expanding our system of sick/injured child care leave; it is important to develop policies that are in touch with the needs of our employees. People in top management do not have any backup. They shoulder ultimate responsibility and need to have a sense of mission coupled with determination. At the same time, however, leaders cannot do everything by themselves. It is necessary to delegate, while keeping an eye on the delegated work. We have entered an age that will see corporations and the rest of society pursue an increasingly symbiotic relationship. As members of society, corporations have a duty to promote economic vitality but also to contribute toward social progress.

## Mentor Profile

## Yoichi Miyamoto

Vice Chair of the Board of Councillors, Keidanren  
Chairman of the Board and Representative Director, SHIMIZU Corporation

Yoichi Miyamoto joined SHIMIZU Corporation in 1971 after graduating from the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering at the University of Tokyo. Positions held include Executive Officer in 2003, Managing Officer in 2005, Senior Managing Officer in 2006, President and Representative Director in 2007. Since 2017 he has assumed his current position of Chairman of the Board and Representative Director of SHIMIZU Corporation. Mr. Miyamoto is currently Vice Chair of the Board of Councillors of Keidanren, Chairman of Committee on Urban Policy Housing Development and Japan-Iran Economic Cooperation Committee.

Today's Work, Tomorrow's Heritage

