



*A professional is a person
who has amassed many failures*

Kazuyo Katsuma

Twenty years after launching the community "Field of Mugi," a site to support women who work while raising their children, how does Kazuyo Katsuma, who has served as a role model for working mothers in Japan while raising three children of her own, view the modern work style?

Diversity of human resources increases productivity.

Katsuma passed the certified public accountant examination when she was 19 and gave birth to her eldest daughter at the age of 21. When Katsuma was working at a foreign-affiliated company, she set up "Field of Mugi" at the age of 27 years old.

"Working mothers were rare and I had no one to ask for advice at the time, so I created 'Field of Mugi' as a place where women experiencing the same troubles could exchange information. Put in modern terms, it was one of the first SNS."

"Field of Mugi" attracted attention, and Katsuma was selected as one of the Wall Street Journal's "50 Women to Watch". She was also the youngest winner of the Grand Prize of the Japan's "Avon Awards to Women".

"It has been 20 years. Although progress is slow compared to overseas, the number of men who wish to be involved in child-raising and for their partners to work, as well as the number of managers sympathetic to such wishes is increasing, and the environment surrounding Japanese working mothers is steadily improving. For example, there is empirical research demonstrating that workplaces with women in managerial positions have high profitability, and the reason for this is diversity. These days, the speed at which the environment is changing is remarkable, which is difficult to keep pace with by taking a uniform approach to work. Combining the diverse abilities of women, younger people, foreigners, sexual minorities, disabled people, and the like makes companies more resilient when faced with

environmental changes and increases productivity. It is important for Japanese management to acknowledge what benefits that diversity can bring about."

But diversity that requires women to follow the same working style as men is meaningless. "Working mothers desperately want to go home early, so they think seriously about establishing a work style for themselves that requires no overtime. When a 'zero-overtime work style' led by such women is proposed, the corporate climate changes. The company's focus shifts from reducing working hours to eliminating overtime. In a recent example, a systems company garnered attention by paying bonuses according to the amount of overtime reduced."

A customer-centered evaluation system.

To reduce overtime, you have to reduce workload. It is necessary to let go of low profit work and increase the amount of high profit work. That is, to improve productivity. Although this is very self-evident, there are still only a few companies that are working on this on a company-wide basis. The evaluation system is largely responsible for this.

"At JP Morgan we were assessed by productivity, not the number of hours we worked. The key here is that productivity is measured by customer evaluation and sales, not by one's reputation within the company. That's why JP Morgan asks clients to give feedback down to the level of the individual name of the person in charge, and gives feedback on the work of administrative departments, such as the general affairs department, every time. In other words,

you are evaluated by the person you provided the service to and you evaluate the person who received the service. A lot of time is spent on these personnel evaluations."

So how can we change the old evaluation system currently in place? "Companies that have changed the evaluation system top-down are producing results. If you just encourage change and do not change the system, it will not go well."

Even if the system cannot be changed immediately, Katsuma says that working with a sense of ownership will lead to career advancement, such as by requesting a transfer or actively promoting ones strengths.

"It is natural to fail. A professional is a person who has amassed many failures. Since we make so many mistakes ourselves, we should share information and try to gather wisdom. Last year, the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace was passed. I believe the Japanese people's way of working will have changed significantly in five years' time."



Kazuyo Katsuma

Born in Tokyo in 1968. Graduated from Keio University Faculty of Business and Commerce, and acquired a Finance MBA from Waseda University. Earned the qualification of junior accountant at the age of 19, the youngest at that time. Went independent after working at Arthur Andersen, McKinsey, and JP Morgan. Currently active as director of Audit & Analysis Co. Member of the Council for Gender Equality of the Cabinet Office; member of the Council for Social Infrastructure of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport; and a Chuo University Business School Visiting Professor. She speaks on a wide range of topics, including the declining birthrate issue, young people's employment issues, work-life balance, and improving individual productivity by utilizing IT. She receives a high level of support, especially from among young people.