Career development support: Advancing self-directed career development

Approach to self-directed career development

The Ajinomoto Group helps employees plan and realize their own career development path because it believes maximizing employee career fulfillment is vital to sustainable corporate growth. The Group offers a range of training and career support programs to support individual professional growth.

HR initiatives to support the development of all employees

The Ajinomoto Group conducts cross-regional, division-specific training, grade-specific training and various other training programs.

Ajinomoto Co., Inc. operates a three-level training program designed to help employees build their ideal careers and complement specific stages and goals of employee growth. The three training layers include grade-specific training programs (new employee training, follow-up training, new manager training, etc.), elective programs (critical thinking, e-learning/correspondence courses, management school), and global and group programs (nurturing next-generation business leaders, advanced specialists and potential specific department leaders, external programs).

HR development programs at Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

Grade-specific training programs
- Learning the standard abilities needed for each role/year
  - Training for managers
  - Training for non-managers

Elective programs
- Further improvement of core abilities and business skills
  - Group training: Online training
  - Correspondence education, e-learning programs, and career support programs

Division-specific training examples
- Compliance and legal training
- Occupational safety and health education
- Environmental education
- Quality assurance training
- Sales training
- Marketing training
- Intellectual property and trademark training

Global and group programs
- Faithfully following the Ajinomoto Group Way, having a broader perspective, and exerting skills
  - Development program for global leaders (The Ajinomoto Group Academy)
  - Development program for regional leaders
  - External programs

Career training at every stage

As personal values and work style preferences continue to diversify, Ajinomoto Co., Inc. seeks to help employees recognize their strengths, values, and other qualities, develop their own vision and goals, and take voluntary action to grow and achieve them. Inspired to become the best place to work and encourage self-directed employee growth, the Company seeks to provide increasing opportunities for employees to explore career development both inside and outside the Group. Since fiscal 2015, its comprehensive career training program has offered these opportunities at key life stages. The program also includes training for new hires and seminars for newly appointed managers.

Career Design Handbook distributed to all employees
Comprehensive career support structure

- **Support for senior colleagues**
  - Mentor training

- **Support for supervisors**
  - Middle management training
  - Elective training

- **Career development support / Health and productivity management**
  - 30s Specialization formation
  - 40s Career path mapping
  - 50s Transition to life career development

- **Individualized counseling**
  - Support for senior colleagues
    - Mentor training
  - Individualized counseling

- **Self-directed career development**
  - Entry Basic training
  - 30s Specialization formation
  - 40s Career path mapping
  - 50s Transition to life career development

- **Employee (individual) support**
  - Skills development support
    - Group training
    - Online courses
  - Career counseling
    - Life counseling
  - Career development consultation
    - Development worksheet guide (since Oct. 2015)
  - Recruiting system
  - Career autonomy support for managers, career change support, etc.

- **Retirement/Rehiring**
  - 50s (management) career training
    - Follow-up consultation
    - Personal financial planning
  - Life planning seminar (held by pension fund)
  - Information session for retirees (path selection)

- **Internal career counselor training workshop**

Fuller support for career autonomy

In fiscal 2014, Ajinomoto Co., Inc. introduced early retirement incentive program and a career-change support system(1) as part of its manager career autonomy program designed to expand employee career choices. From fiscal 2016, the Company made it possible for employees to apply for the voluntary early retirement program from age 47 and for the career change support system from 54 years.

The Company has also introduced an organizational and occupational contribution appraisal for seniors seeking reemployment after mandatory retirement to expand opportunities for being engaged at work.

Health and productivity management

**Approach to health and productivity management**

The Ajinomoto Group believes that employees’ health & well-being is fundamental to improving employee engagement and simultaneous growth of employee and the company. The Group implements considerable effort in creating working environments that maintain and improve employees’ health & well-being. The Ajinomoto Group Health and Well-Being Initiatives were compiled as part of this drive in May 2018, and the Group is now turning its attention to developing a new health approach for advancing employee self-care called the A-Health Solution.

**The Ajinomoto Group Health and Well-Being Initiatives**

Since the foundation, the Ajinomoto Group explored businesses by sharing the original ideal of “Eat Well, Live Well.” For further contribution to the world’s food and wellness through our businesses, the Ajinomoto Group will develop work environment in accordance with “Group Shared Policy on Human Resources” to improve employees’ health and well-being.

By practicing improvement of health and well-being, employees will realize ASV Value Creation Stories.
The A-Health Solution

To maintain and improve employees’ health & well-being, it is important for employees to enhance health-related literacy and capabilities of self-care.

In August 2018, Ajinomoto Co., Inc. introduced a new approach that visualizes an individual’s state of health, which links to a smartphone app offering health advice. The Company is also in the process of appointing a dedicated person at individual group companies who will start these initiatives based on their individual circumstances.

Structure of “A-Health Solution”

Health promotion framework at Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

Ajinomoto Co., Inc. aims to maintain and promote employee health and well-being by focusing on the idea that employees should advocate for their own health. Since new employees, mid-career employees, and managers face different health issues, occupational health physicians offer training for each layer of employees. New managers and mid-career employees learn about health and well-being management of themselves, and also about specific ways to identify signs of health problems among subordinates and colleagues.

At the Company this self-care is supported by the Wellness Promotion Center, a team of nine occupational physicians and 12 healthcare staff members. The center also supports health & well-being management at group companies in Japan.

To help employees move steadily in the right direction for their health by working on self-care and devoting themselves to health improvement, care and recovery, the roles of the workplace (superiors), medical staff (occupational health physicians, healthcare staff) and HR Department are separated and thoroughly defined to enable responsible decision-making for their respective roles.
Individual consultations as preventive care

Ajinomoto Co., Inc. requires all employees in Japan to attend an individual consultation with a medical expert at the Wellness Promotion Center at least once a year. Medical experts provide appropriate health guidance based not only on checkup results but also on signs of physical or mental disorder that are difficult to detect via medical examination. To prevent health disorders caused by overwork, the Company provides direct medical guidance to employees who work more than a predetermined working time, based on internal standards that are stricter than the broader regulatory requirements. The medical experts at the center monitor results of annual medical examination of employees on assignments outside Japan, and provide them with follow-up guidance. They also respond to consultation for their accompanying family members and give advice.

Mental Health Recovery Program aiming for zero relapse rate

Ajinomoto Co., Inc. has its own Mental Health Recovery Program. Employees on temporary health leave are encouraged to spend ample time for reflecting and objectively reviewing their own personalities and values, and to participate in repeated simulation training to prepare for a return to work in order to gain not only a healed but also a more resilient spirit. The Company will continue making its efforts through the program for those employees returning to work to maintain their mental health.

Inclusion in the 2018 Health & Productivity Stock Selection

Ajinomoto Co., Inc. was included in the 2018 Health & Productivity Stock Selection for the second consecutive year as a company strategically promoting employee health and productivity from a management perspective. The selection is made by the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE). In the same year, the Company was also included in the "White 500" where METI certifies 500 companies actively working in employee health management through Certified Health and Productivity Management Organization Recognition Program.