

Fostering a corporate culture that produces innovation

Our people are the key players in achieving our new Vision. We are now working to foster an innovative corporate culture through the promotion of diversity and inclusion, skills development, and ASV as one's own initiative.



Increasing investment in human resources as a pathway to enhancing corporate value

The Ajinomoto Group plans to boost investment in human resources by around 2.5 times compared to the 2017-2019 MTP in order to transform into a highly productive organization that can resolve issues and fulfill our new vision. We established productivity per employee as an indicator for monitoring the success of our initiatives. We have also defined employee engagement, diversity and inclusion, and work style as the three pillars to implement for boosting productivity.

First, in terms of engagement, we will promote the skills of each employee to better resolve issues, including literacy concerning nutrition, the environment and digitalization. At the same time, we will set organizational

and individual goals of solving issues together with our customers and standardize the plan-do-check-action (PDCA) cycle of management.

Second, we will promote diversity and inclusion to accelerate innovation. Ajinomoto Co., Inc. plans to increase female directors and line managers to 30% of the total by fiscal 2030.

Third, we will take our work-style innovations to the next step and increase our ability to adapt to environmental changes. We will eliminate all forms of unnecessary work with digitalization so as to dedicate ample time to increasing customer value.

Three pillars for boosting productivity



* Amounts and indicators for Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

Engagement for skills to better resolve issues

The engagement of employees in the creation of customer value is vital to enhancing the Ajinomoto Group’s corporate value. Toward this end, we need to increase the number of employees taking the lead in implementing ASV in their work; or put another way, the number of employees who feel they are contributing to our vision. This is because they will serve as a key driver propelling the organization forward.

The process for increasing employee engagement begins with dialogue with the CEO and General Managers of business or corporate divisions, but also involves setting personal goals linked with the organization’s goals. During this process, we utilize operational excellence methods to ensure employees feel a keen sense of contributing to issue solving, and quantify the results of value improvement, viewing not only consumers, but also other divisions in the company’s value chain as a customer. In addition, by sharing goals within each organization through the personal goal presentation, we foster a culture where employees tackle challenges while embracing our vision. We also actively share and commend best practices.

The employee engagement score on the annual engagement survey is used as an important KPI; based on which we track trends in the ASV engagement of employees and then reflect any issues identified in the survey results in next year’s plan.

KPI: Employee engagement score*



* The percentage of employees who talk about how they implement ASV through their own work with their family, friends and business partners is measured using the engagement survey for the Group employees.

Management cycle that increases ASV engagement



▶ See pp.25–26 “Companywide Operational Transformation.”

▶ For details, please see the Ajinomoto Group Sustainability Data Book 2020. <https://www.ajinomoto.co.jp/company/en/ir/library/databook.html>

ASV Awards accelerating ASV as one’s own initiative

We will share best practices in realizing ASV and utilize them in setting personal goals to help employees embrace ASV as one’s own initiative.

The ASV Awards is a program for commending particularly excellent examples of initiatives that embody ASV. Outside experts are also involved in the selection of awards. The grand prize in fiscal 2019 went to Ajinomoto AGF, Inc., for its project to contribute to the prevention of global warming and realization of a resource recycling society through packaging material innovation of its mainstay stick products. The initiatives entered into the awards are shared with employees through social media and other means, which will be of help for personal goal setting and for further realization of ASV. In this manner, we are accelerating the ASV engagement of employees.



Representative of the Grand Prize winners
Takumi Inoue
Package Development Department
Ajinomoto AGF, Inc.

Outside judges for ASV Awards



Kumiko Bandou
President
Japan Legal Support Center



Junko Eda
President
e’s Inc.



Yukiko Yabu
Outside Director
Daiwa House Industry Co., Ltd.



Yasuo Saito
Outside Director
Ajinomoto Co., Inc.



Takashi Nawa
Outside Director
Ajinomoto Co., Inc.



Kimie Iwata
Outside Director
Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

Skills development to better resolve issues

To produce innovations that resolve food and health issues, we need to promote the ASV engagement of employees and skills development to enhance the issue-solving ability of each employee. Our focus is particularly on increasing the literacy of all employees concerning nutrition, the environment and digitalization, organizing participatory training to promote ASV as one’s own initiative, and our in-house entrepreneur development and venture collaboration programs. We will implement the PDCA cycle where skills development is combined with the management cycle for increasing the ASV engagement of employees.

Increasing employee literacy aimed at realizing the Vision

In fiscal 2020, we will prepare training curriculum and promotional activities on the theme of nutrition for employees of Ajinomoto Co., Inc. Employees will master basic knowledge of nutrition, nutritional issues around the world, approaches to nutrition by the Group, the power of amino acids, and the nutritional information of the Group’s products. By doing so, we will empower employees to propose new value to customers with confidence and engage in proactive activities concerning nutrition.

In addition, to increase digital literacy, we have started curriculum for fostering business DX talent, system developers and data scientists, and we will establish certification programs for each. By fiscal 2022, we aim to certify 100 employees as business DX talent, 20 employees as system developers and 50 employees as data scientists. With our operations upgraded as a result, we will be able to lead social transformation using digital technology.

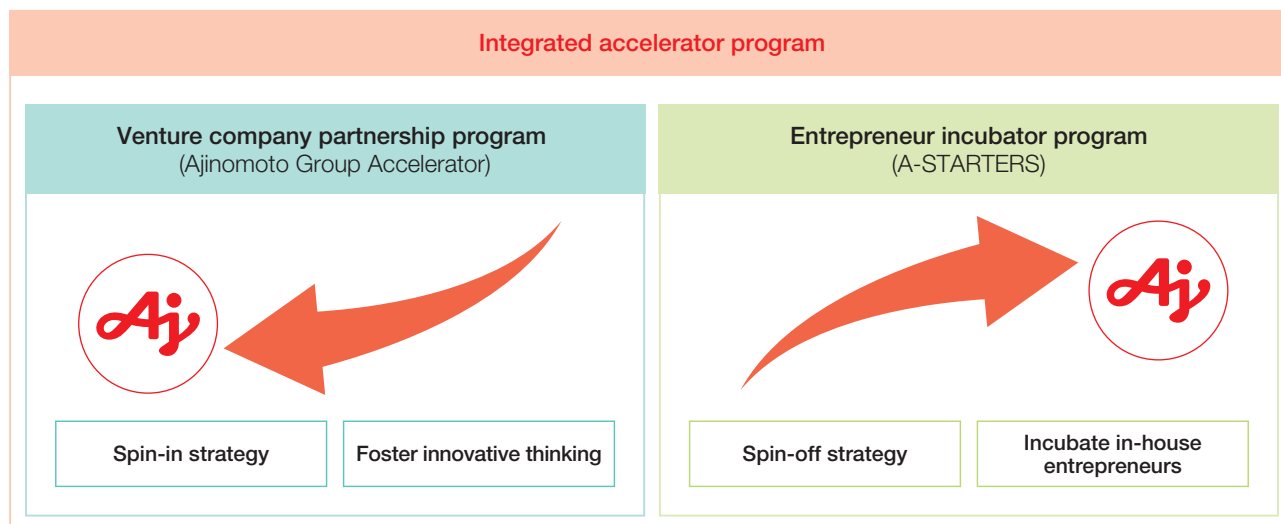
Integrated accelerator program for identification and fostering of internal entrepreneurs and collaboration with outside entrepreneurs

We will implement an accelerator program that integrates the following two programs with the purpose of fostering a corporate culture for innovation creation and development of the infrastructure needed in-house.

First is Ajinomoto Group Accelerator, a program that supports and promotes business development of outside venture firms. This program will allow us to invigorate initiatives for new business development based on the themes of “food and health” and “coexistence with communities and the earth,” and support venture firms that are active in these domains. Catalysts for bridging the Ajinomoto Group’s management resources to venture firms during the program will be selected within the company, and through collaboration, we will foster entrepreneur talent. When a promising venture firm is identified, we will make a small investment, and, even after the program ends, we will continue with the business partnership established.

Second is A-STARTERS, a program for employees of Ajinomoto Co., Inc. It identifies and educates entrepreneurs within the company, and promotes commercialization of business ideas. The program allows employees to work for the company to promote their entrepreneurial ideas even if they do not possess enough knowledge or experience in commercialization. Those who pass the screening will undergo training and receive support for commercialization, including mentoring. In addition, after the program ends, we will provide outlets for commercialization, including spin-outs, regarding promising business ideas.

Creating a new growth model using open and linked innovation



Diversity and inclusion for corporate culture transformation

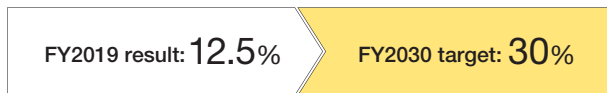
To generate innovation in a timely manner, talents from diverse backgrounds, including gender, generation, nationality and career, need to harness their skills. For this reason, the promotion of diversity and inclusion represents an important management strategy for the Ajinomoto Group.

We are not only hiring and promoting diverse talent, but also developing the systems required for diverse work styles and diverse career paths. Simultaneously, we are cultivating an organizational culture that embraces diversity.

We have launched initiatives from Japan, recognizing that the country lags behind other parts of the world in terms of diversity and inclusion. Ajinomoto Co., Inc. will increase the number of female leaders and accelerate the transformation of our corporate culture. We aim to increase female directors and line managers to 30% by fiscal 2030.

Percentage of female directors and line managers (Ajinomoto Co., Inc.)

Percentage of female directors



Percentage of female line managers



HR development committee for women supporting the advancement of female employees

In October 2017, we established the HR development committee for women, chaired by the officer in charge of diversity and HR. Its goal is supporting the promotion of female employees and the active role of women in the workplace. The committee’s initiatives include mentoring programs. Officers or organization heads mentor female employees (manager class or higher) to provide skills development support from an objective perspective beyond their direct supervisor. This program is aimed to speed up the appointment of women to senior management positions and allows them to expand their horizons and grow their personal network inside the company.

Fostering an organizational culture with unconscious bias training

Unconscious bias is a hurdle to promoting diversity and inclusion because it makes it difficult to be aware of one’s own bias. In 2018, Ajinomoto Co., Inc. began holding unconscious bias training. This training examines how to become aware of one’s own unconscious bias and what impacts it has on decisions related to people and things. The objective of the training is for employees to recognize and control bias in their thinking and actions.

In 2018, this training was held for senior management and HR departments. In October 2019, we began providing the training to all employees. Through this training, we hope to foster an organizational culture that embraces diverse opinions, and gives rise to daily creative innovation from new perspectives.



Training participants

▶ For details, please see the Ajinomoto Group Sustainability Data Book 2020. <https://www.ajinomoto.co.jp/company/en/ir/library/databook.html>