

Our Sustainability Message from Outside Directors



Outside Director

Haruo Shimada

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Developing human resources capable of facing the challenges of high-net-worth individuals

Aoyama Zaisan Networks focuses on recruiting and developing human resources, building relationships with partners, and utilizing DX and AI in order to achieve sustainable growth. As investors around the world grow increasingly interested in Japan, we intend to become more active in investor relations activities.

Recently, investors around the world have begun to pay increasing attention to Japan. The balance of direct investment from abroad to Japan was about 1–2% of GDP in the early 2000s, but it hit 7% in the 2020s. Although the environment surrounding the Japanese economy is not entirely optimistic, interest in Japanese equities is growing, and we are beginning to see some movement that may shake off Japan's decades-long mood of stagnation. In Japanese companies, more and more managers are able to use financial indicators as their own language, communicating with investors all around the world. At AZN, we intend to double down on our efforts in investor relations activities in order to respond to the high level of interest from investors around the world.

In recent years, asset prices, including stock prices and real estate, have risen considerably. Compared to many other countries, Japan is distinctive for the depth of its high-net-worth population. Although there are only a few “ultra” wealthy people with assets in the billions of yen, Japan has tens or hundreds of thousands of people with assets that could be described as “high-net-worth.” While they naturally want to increase the value of these assets, many people are seeking the right advice and guidance. For our company, which serves high-net-worth clients, this modern era has tested our abilities more than ever before.

Our Vision for 2027 is to be recognized as a “leading authority in the high-net-worth business.” The key to ensuring this path is human resources. Recruiting and training consultants who have strong interpersonal skills and passion and are capable of building long-term relationships of trust with

clients will continue to be a major theme. Many clients consult with their spouses when making major decisions. In this sense, we need to make further efforts to train female consultants. We are also moving forward with a more holistic HR strategy that includes the training and appointment of personnel responsible for creating new services that meet the changing needs of the times.

We recognize digital transformation (DX) and AI as significant issues, and we are redoubling our efforts to boost success in the field of human resources. I myself use generative AI, and am often amazed at the speed and precision of the process. The company, too, has entered the testing phase for an AI agent capable of performing multiple tasks autonomously. Within a year or two, we hope to introduce it into our consulting and corporate practices. For example, if this AI agent works as a “junior” to our consultants, significant improvements in operational efficiency can be expected. We expect that DX and AI will change the way we do business in the near future.

In order to improve capital efficiency, we have started to consider ROIC (Return on Invested Capital) by department, and each department operates with an awareness of capital efficiency. We recognize that foreign investors are particularly interested in whether our profit margins are sufficient in relation to our ample cash flow, and whether or not we are using capital efficiently. As we utilize ROIC as a management indicator to measure the results of the HR strategy and utilization of DX/AI outlined above, as an Outside Director I will strongly support the management team as it aims for further growth.