



Outside Director

## Madoka Mori

## We aim to be a pleasant workplace in which employees are healthy

Creating a workplace where women can keep playing active roles is a major theme, and we have been gradually building systems and structures to this end.

Step by step, we are making progress toward creating an environment that supports the realization of individual career plans from multiple directions, regardless of gender.

It has been a little more than a year since I was appointed as an Outside Director of AZN in March 2024. I have always strived to bring fresh perspectives to the Board, whether from my background in the medical field or in media or my personal qualities as a woman. Several examples indicate how these perspectives have been developed into measures. For example, an in-house seminar held on “Health Issues Specific to the Working Generation” helped to improve health literacy and emphasize the importance of health management. Not only this, but the Board of Directors’ flexibility in accepting new ideas and the speed with which they put them into action gives me confidence that our company has the potential for continuous evolution.

Active roles for women is one of the themes I want to focus on. At present, the company has a single female executive officer. I am the only female member on the Board. Developing female managers and creating an environment that supports long-term career growth from multiple directions presents a major challenge. Although often discussed at board meetings, there is no easy solution. Steady, gradual efforts will need to be continued, which include changes in awareness and behavior.

While I hope that female consultants will come to exert a greater presence, I also believe it is important to implement measures aimed at our administrative departments, which have a large number of female employees. Our goal is to create a workplace in which all employees can show their potential. They may choose to master a specialty such as human resources or accounting, improve their management skills, or transfer to a consulting team to hone their skills further. Regardless of gender, we need to be more creative in supporting individuals over the mid- to long-term to help them realize their own career plans.

In discussions with employees, the topic of taking paid leave has come up. This led us to change the system so that employees can take paid leave in one-hour increments instead of one-day increments. This has been a significant step forward, especially for those raising children. We believe that in the future, the departure of middle-level employees to act as caregivers could present major issues for our company. In order to prepare for these sorts of risks, we need to establish a framework based on a flexible approach, not constrained by existing rules.

In formulating the 2025–27 Medium-Term Management Plan, the Board of Directors discussed the matter multiple times. What impressed me was the attention to detail paid to how this was expressed. Beyond the actual content of the plan, the Board also spent a great deal of time choosing words that truly convey the company’s direction and values, and that are consistent with what we are trying to achieve.

The Medium-Term Management Plan also emphasizes marketing strategy. As we transition into the next stage of our company’s consistent growth, marketing and branding will be crucial. In order to continue good relationships with stakeholders, what kinds of messages must we send, and to whom? I hope to be able to brainstorm with the marketing team.

Sustainability strategy is another key pillar of the Medium-Term Management Plan. As a rather multifaceted concept, the SDGs are perceived in different ways by different people. After identifying the significance of our commitment to this theme, we need to continue to engage in activities that contribute to the development of our clients and local communities. I look forward to furthering such discussions.