

Human Capital Management: Employee Roundtable Discussion



Corporate Culture Embodying “The Source” Fosters Autonomous Challenges

The PPIH Group cultivates a corporate culture that encourages “daunting challenges” through delegation of authority and tolerance of failure. Our corporate philosophy collection, “The Source,” repeatedly emphasizes “unhesitant in the face of daunting challenges,” and this supportive culture is deeply rooted throughout the entire organization. In this roundtable discussion, employees who embody “The Source” and have accumulated autonomous proactive initiatives and challenges across various fields shared their experiences and discussed the corporate culture and workplace environment that supported their challenges.

■ Participants Kozai: Facilitator of this roundtable discussion. Experienced leading the business format conversion of Nagasakiya and UNY stores as a branch general manager and currently oversees the Group's human resources strategy as Head of Human Resources Headquarters
Oyama: Served as branch general manager and division head in his 20s, and despite experiencing setbacks, currently oversees product strategy as the category leader of Digital & Variety Goods
Ikedo: Responsible for planning and operating “Donki Cosmetics Fest,” an exhibition featuring trending cosmetics brands
Tanaka: Serves as deputy store manager at a store primarily staffed by mate employees

A Corporate Culture that Highlights Trust and Empowerment

Kozai: You have all taken on major challenges through your own initiative. What factors do you feel enabled you to do so—whether in terms of corporate culture, workplace environment, or relationships with others?

Ikedo: I feel that a key factor is our corporate culture that never denies what you want to take on. During a training session, I had an opportunity to speak with the president, so I prepared a proposal outlining the initiatives I wanted to

pursue to solve issues in the merchandising I was responsible for, and consulted with him directly. He listened attentively and said, “It’s amazing that you thought this through and raised your hand.” Both the president and my direct supervisor encouraged me, saying “Why don’t you give it a try?” That encouragement was what enabled me to bring the “Donki Cosmetics Fest” to life.

Oyama: I share the same view as Ikedo-san. Since joining the company, I’ve always felt that if you clearly communicate what you want to do and why, this company gives you the opportunity to take on challenges. I worked as a mate employee during my student days and later joined the

company as a new graduate, but I’ve never once been judged based on my age or position—whether for being young or for being a mate employee. Since joining, I’ve gained a wide range of experience: I served as a store manager, opened new stores, worked as a branch general manager, led an indirect department as division head, and acted as the category leader for Digital & Variety Goods. I believe I was able to take on these many challenges because of the company culture of “entrusting not because we know you can do it, but because we believe you have the potential to succeed.”

Tanaka: I feel that the presence of supervisors and colleagues who allay anxiety about taking on challenges has been truly significant. Although I work as a mate employee rather than a regular employee, I’ve been entrusted with the role of deputy store manager. At first, I had many worries and never even imagined challenging myself to become a deputy store manager. However, my supervisor’s words—“It’s okay to fail. If one out of 100 attempts succeeds, that’s enough”—along with the inspiring efforts of colleagues who continue to grow every day, motivated me to take that first step. The workplace atmosphere, which encouraged me without placing excessive pressure on me, also helped foster a positive mindset. Even now as deputy store manager, I still have much to learn, but I’m greatly supported by the people around me.

Oyama: There is certainly a culture here that embraces failure in a positive way. I don’t think I would have been able to challenge myself and grow this much without an environment that genuinely tolerates failure. And because we have a “comeback culture” that turns failure into a stepping stone to the next stage, I feel we can keep taking on new challenges one after another.

Kozai: That’s right. The PPIH Group has a deeply rooted culture that embraces a positive attitude toward taking on new challenges, and we’ve cultivated an atmosphere of trust and empowerment. It’s precisely because of this culture that employees avoid becoming conservative and instead grow to take on autonomous challenges. I believe this is what makes “meritocracy” truly work. Failure only occurs when one dares to try. Without challenge, there is neither failure nor growth. That is why I believe the PPIH Group values the very mindset of embracing challenges.

The Presence of “The Source” Supporting Challenges

Kozai: I believe this deeply rooted culture of encouraging challenges exists because each employee approaches their work with a shared set of values. “The Source” forms the foundation of these values. In your daily work, are you conscious of “The Source”?

Tanaka: Yes, I’m conscious of and practice the concept of “Think of what you do not as “work” but as a “game,” and have fun!” The store I belong to is a mate-led store where everyone except the store manager is a mate employee. Therefore, we implement game-like initiatives that allow all employees to take ownership of issues while enjoying themselves as we work toward our goals. I value creating an environment where we support one another while also challenging each other to improve, without being limited by assigned areas, so the entire store can operate with a strong sense of unity.

Ikedo: What I value is the concept of being “We are unhesitant in the face of daunting challenges, and unafraid

to beat a rapid retreat when a cold, hard look at reality tells us this is the best course.” By practicing this, I was able to challenge myself with launching a new series of PB cosmetics products. I’m conscious of this concept in all aspects of my work, and it serves as the foundation for my daily decisions and actions.

Oyama: It’s a bit different from my own challenges, but I’m conscious of “Make others the subject of the sentence” and thinking from the other person’s point of view. Since the form of challenge varies from person to person, I think it’s important to respect and support each person’s unique challenges. I think the fact that the PPIH Group accepts this is also one of its strengths.

Kozai: In the PPIH Group, each individual takes initiative, thinks proactively, and pursues challenges to turn their ideas into reality. Listening to all of you, I’m reminded that our corporate culture of trusting and empowering is firmly rooted. This culture has sparked a company-wide momentum for taking on challenges, leading to initiatives like “individual store management,” where employees apply their ingenuity with a management mindset and creating new opportunities for bold challenges. I believe this has become one of our greatest strengths.

Building a Future Fueled by Continuous Challenges—Future Challenges and Roles

Kozai: Going forward, I think you’ll all become leaders who drive the company. What do you want to challenge yourself with in the future, and what would you like to pass on to the next generation of employees?

Oyama: With gratitude for the many experiences and learning opportunities the company has given me, I want to continue taking on challenges eagerly and ultimately aim to become an executive officer. Also, just as I’ve been given many opportunities to take on challenges, I hope many others will experience various challenges as well. I’d really like people outside the company to know that this kind of corporate culture is deeply rooted in the PPIH Group.

Ikedo: Like Oyama-san, I also want to eventually aim to become an executive officer. To that end, I first want to advance initiatives that bring more customers to our stores and contribute to making Donki a “necessary presence” that is loved for a long time. Also, I aspire to be like Director Hitomi Ninomiya, who has steadily advanced her career while navigating major life events.

Tanaka: In the future, I hope to take on the role of store manager while staying in my part-time position. Beyond that, I want to convey to other mate employees that “there are many opportunities for us to thrive” and “the joy of taking on initiatives.” Also, regarding balancing childcare and work, I want to continue creating a workplace environment where we understand and support each other, just as I’ve been supported. While taking on my own challenges is important, supporting the efforts and growth of those around me is also a source of fulfillment for me. Just as many people have supported me, I now want to be in a position to support others, creating an environment where the next generation can take on challenges with confidence and helping shape the future.