

## 24th session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

### Written statement by International Shinto Foundation

*Agenda item 8: Strategies for changing mindsets in the public sector, retaining talent and attracting younger workers*

Organizations and regions must be open to attract and retain young talent that stands out in the public sector. Spaces and people where they can share their sensitivities and dreams must be present. At the same time, they will recognize this as a valuable place when they can freely approach places and individuals they find attractive, both inside and outside the organization. Why, then, are they unable to attract young talent?

Currently, public sectors' encounters with outstanding young individuals are primarily facilitated through public recruitment centered on website entries, participation in domestic and international job fairs, and some on-campus recruiting. However, all of these approaches are passive and reactive. Simply waiting will not lead to meeting young talent. How can we create opportunities to connect with these "young talents"? The key terms here seem to be "sense of mission" and "excitement."

Public sector organizations attempt to convey their vision and job details through company information sessions and recruitment websites. However, modern youth tend to be strongly inclined to act "now" and "immediately" regarding social mission and excitement. They are unlikely to engage with a vague future that they may be involved in several years down the line. Furthermore, creating connections with individuals who inspire a desire to work with them is crucial.

Outstanding young individuals may view their involvement with an organization not as a long-term commitment but as participation in short-term projects. To convey the excitement of the work, its social mission, and the character of the leaders, it may be beneficial to break down the company's business and conduct recruitment in the context of these businesses or projects. Doing so will likely attract sharp young talent.

Identifying talent relies on aptitude tests, multiple interviews, group discussions, and short-term internships centered on a few selected candidates. However, methods primarily focused on interviews cannot discern "unique talents."

Public sector organizations' hiring methods tend to be interview-heavy, aiming to unearth "past experiences" to determine competencies (behavioral traits that lead to successful outcomes). However, competencies represent only a fraction of many professional abilities. Moreover, the competencies valued by those organizations are behavioral traits derived from "past" achievements. Those traits are not guaranteed to drive future success in a rapidly changing environment.

Today's talented young individuals are confident in their capacity to effect change (self-trust) and have a strong mindset toward future transformation (change-oriented curiosity). They are acutely aware of being at the center of this change and are proactive in their efforts (sense of ownership).

Because of these challenges, I'd like to highlight an innovative recruitment method implemented by a non-public sector organization, which is an illustrative success story. In 2013, a talent agency in Japan introduced a recruitment approach called Mission-Based Recruitment, which garnered significant attention. According to the company's executive officer, "To meet strong young people mentally and skill-wise, we discarded all existing systems such as entry sheets and aptitude tests." Instead of an entry sheet, applicants were asked to articulate how they wanted to transform the entertainment industry, framing their aspirations as a "challenge document" and a "business plan," facilitating a dialogue about the future between recruiters and candidates. The application process did not include sections on educational background, nationality, or past experiences. As a result, the nature of the talent attracted dramatically changed, with a significant increase in lively and uniquely individualistic young people.

The submitted business plans were noted to be "entertaining reads." While this may sound emotional, bringing such a sense of excitement into the hiring process would likely be also crucial for public sector organizations.