

Finalists for the 2nd DBJ New Business Plan Competition for Women Entrepreneurs

Keiko Yoshimoto

Kanagawa Prefecture



Bringing the World the Highest Quality Japanese Tea, Developed and Produced Entirely In-house!

DBJ Woman Entrepreneur
Grand Prize

Premium cold-brewed tea in wine bottles, is a strategic, non-alcoholic beverage. Containing nothing but tea leaves and cold water, this additive-free tea is brewed over a period of days according to the SGS-HACCP control method. They generate demands of nondrinkers to enjoy drinks and atmosphere as drinkers do. Royal Blue Tea was launched in May 2005, and in 2008 the firm brought out a brand of premium Japanese sencha tea co-worked with a tea grower in Hamamatsu, Shizuoka Prefecture through collaboration among agriculture, commerce, and industry. While more and more tea growers are leaving the industry, Royal Blue Tea aims to spark a resurgence of the Japanese tea market, starting from scratch with careful sourcing and in-house production. Sales channels include airlines, luxury hotels and traditional inns, department stores, and direct retailing. The firm has accelerated its growth by opening a store under direct management. Complete with a café in which customers can sample the products, the store instantly conveys the brand's quality to shoppers. By expanding its sale routes to include other major world cities, Royal Blue Tea aspires to a global position as a purveyor of the finest in Japanese tea beverages.

PROFILE Born in Kanagawa Prefecture. Graduated from Kyoritsu Women's University with a degree in home economics. Having become seriously ill while in school, she took up graphic arts during her recovery. In 2004 she joined Chamonkou, a quality tea salon and school headed by Setsuo Satō. On the recommendation of the Shōnan Foundation for Industrial Promotion, she started out in business for herself, launching Royal Blue Tea Japan Co., Ltd., in July of 2005 in partnership with Mr. Satō. She is in charge of the company's business strategy and production manual and is in charge of corporate design, Visual Identity, Corporate Identity, marketing, and product planning and development. Her goal is to grow the firm into a global brand for high-quality teas from Japan and across the world.
< President and CEO, Royal Blue Tea Japan Co., Ltd. >

Miki Hino

Fukuoka Prefecture



Building Local Innovation through an Inland Fishery: Can Farmed Fish be Better than Wild?

DBJ Woman Entrepreneur
Prize

Using original production processes and freezing technology, NishinihonReishoku earns high rates of profit preparing sushi toppings with high added value. Boiled shako (mantis shrimp) is one of its leading products. Additive-free and processed to ensure safety and security, it enjoys a major share of the domestic market. Shako shells are used as food for unagi (eel) at the firm's eel farm, which is the first such enterprise in the world. NishinihonReishoku is running a business with local innovation, utilizing a previously-discarded byproduct in developing a top-quality brand of farmed food originating in Fukuoka. Other original uses it has developed for shako shells include dashi soup stock, consommé and other new seasoning bases. The company is committed to ensuring that its products remain safe, secure, and free of additives and antioxidants, and that through upcycling it serve as a primer for regional regeneration.

PROFILE After working at a food company handling seafood and other products, she started her own firm out of a desire to provide consumers with a range of healthy foods. With a team that includes sales staff and others with global contacts, the firm is seeking to expand its fields of business. Eel farming was chosen as a means of promoting tourism in Harazuru Onsen (Hot Springs) located in her hometown of Asakura, Fukuoka Prefecture. At the same time, the company's upcycling projects put previously untapped resources to use.
< President and CEO, NishinihonReishoku Co., Ltd. >

Hiroko Samejima

Tokyo Metropolitan



Leather Goods Made from Top-quality Ethiopian Sheepskin: Combining Beauty with Ethical Principles

Special Prize
(High-Spirits Prize)

Soft as a feather; light as silk. Ethical and beautiful leather goods made from Ethiopian sheepskin, among the finest in the world. The firm operates workshops in Ethiopia, where direct oversight ensures that finished products meet the highest standards of design. The business gives needed jobs to Ethiopians and helps promote the country's leather industry. Japanese consumers, meanwhile, can enjoy top-quality goods produced ethically from the very best materials. Its special events and workshops bring together local producers, consumers in Japan and across the world, and creators while providing a venue for discussion on the future of monodukuri (manufacturing or craftsmanship) and the creative process.

PROFILE Born in Tokyo. After working as a designer with a Japanese manufacturer, she served as a design specialist with the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers in Africa. Her work in Africa involved the fashion industry. Upon returning to Japan, she led the creative team in the marketing division of a foreign luxury brand. In February 2012 she founded andu amet Co., Ltd., which specializes in the production and sales of beautiful, ethical leather goods made from Ethiopian sheepskin – among the finest in the world. In 2013 she won the Nikkei Woman of the Year award in the field of career creation.
< President and CEO, andu amet Co., Ltd. >

Kazuko Ishikawa

Ibaraki Prefecture



Control of Heat Means Control of Development: Thin-film Thermophysical Measuring Devices Development, manufacture and sales of the Nano TR and Pico TR; commissioned analysis

Thermophysical properties are an important source of information for thermal analysis and thermal design in fields including information and telecommunications, energy and the environment, nanotechnology and its materials, biotechnology, and space development. With integration and speed becoming ever more important in the semiconductor industry and many others, the question of heat is attracting growing attention. To find solutions to heat-related problems, it is important to understand the flow, spread and temperature distribution of heat arising internally. It is thus essential to accurately measure the thermophysical properties of thin film. PicoTherm commercialized the optical pulse heating thermorefectance method developed by AIST, and in 2008 began using it in commissioned analysis of the thermophysical properties of thin films. The Nano TR and Pico TR, two devices for the measurement of thin-film thermophysical properties, were completed in 2011 and 2012 respectively. These devices made it possible to measure properties which had previously presented huge challenges, such as the thermal diffusivity, thermal effusivity, and thermal conductivity of thin films, as well as the interface thermal resistance of multilayer films. Their use in the design stage rendered heat generation issues capable of resolution. With heat measurement and analytical technology of national-standard reliability and SI traceable calibration techniques, PicoTherm provides its customers with thermal solutions.

PROFILE Graduated from the University of Tsukuba with a degree in natural sciences from the College of Physics, School of Science and Engineering. Worked at NEC on the development of heat control systems for satellites and laboratory equipment for weightless environments. In 2006, after spending some years in publishing and in the planning and productions arms of an art center, she launched the Venture Business Creation Task Force project at the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST). In 2008 she founded PicoTherm Corporation and has since served as its President and CEO. Vice Chair of the IEEE Japan Council Women in Engineering Affinity Group.
<President and CEO, PicoTherm Corporation>

Mio Katagiri

Tokyo Metropolitan



Retirement Startup Support: From Business Plans and Office Sharing to Networking Events, We Make Dreams a Reality for Senior Entrepreneurs

As one of the world's most rapidly ageing societies, Japan needs to make sure that its citizens can build meaningful and enjoyable "second lives" after retiring from a regular job. Ginza Second Life offers broad-ranging support to seniors who wish to continue working by starting their own business. With the firm's help, many senior entrepreneurs have seen their ideas through to fruition. The firm provides support in three ways: ① by managing rental offices used by multiple entrepreneurs (more than 650 at present); ② by holding networking events at which participants can lay the groundwork for business expansion (about 100 participants in each event); ③ by providing consulting and clerical support from startup through management. It has gained keen attention for its lineup of support activities, both hard and soft, for senior entrepreneurs. Media coverage has included reports by outlets including NHK television's "Good Morning Japan," TV Tokyo's "Dawn of Gaia" and "World Business Satellite," the Nikkei newspaper, Nikkei Money magazine, "Nikkei X BS Live at 7 p.m.," the Diamond weekly magazine, and Radio Nikkei. Ginza Second Life won the Award of Excellence at the Yokohama Business Grand Prix Competition and the Honorable Mention Award at the Ota-ku Business Plan Competition, and was chosen as a "Business Utilizing Regional Resources to Support Innovation" by the Tokyo Metropolitan Small and Medium Enterprise Support Center.

PROFILE Notary public, certified financial planner, and 1st class financial planning technician. Graduated from Gakushuin University's Faculty of Law. Joined the Kao Corporation, where she provided expert legal advice as a member of Kao's Legal and Compliance Department. Moved to the Underwriting Examination Department of Daiwa Securities SMBC, where she gained experience in assisting IPOs. She then spent a period caring for her grandmother, which inspired her to help people of all ages in their quest to build meaningful lives. In July of 2008 she founded Ginza Second Life Corporation. Each year she presents over fifty lectures and seminars, assisting some 150 prospective entrepreneurs per month – more than five thousand to date – in bringing their business ideas to fruition.
<President and CEO, Ginza Second Life Corporation>

Toshiko Sugawara

Aichi Prefecture



e-casebook.com®, A Case Discussion Platform for Physicians: Pooling Knowledge to Improve the Quality of Medical Care

To provide their patients with the best in medical care, physicians must keep abreast of ever-evolving developments in medical technology. This project was created in order to consolidate in one platform a wide range of resources, including doctors' experiences, new techniques, and information, from and for the benefit of doctors throughout the world. By indexing these resources to clarify the specialties of each user (i.e. to improve the medical transactive memory), the project also aims to play a part in enhancing the quality of medical care. A physicians' social networking service is one of the features. Physicians can participate either individually with mutual authorization or as members of participating academic associations, in research workshops or local medical bodies. The platform allows them to share visual data on their cases (in forms such as CAT scans, MRI, or cineangiography), and refer to that data in discussing selected cases. Data used in discussions are processed to remove personal information and are given a number for identification. Participants in discussions can designate pages by number, easily moving back and forth from one page to another in a system that greatly facilitates the exchange of views.

PROFILE Received a master's degree in business management from the Professional Graduate School of Kwansai Gakuin University. Earned a further degree from the School of Entrepreneurial Finance Practice of the Research Institute of Advanced Management. After a period working in the marketing headquarters of AstraZeneca plc, she founded Heart Organization Co., Ltd. With a corporate philosophy of "building a secure community for all," the firm supports the work of paramedics by undertaking the staging and administration of academic conferences and workshops and providing training for healthcare professionals, mainly in the cardiovascular field. In August of 2013, Heart Organization launched IT-based internet services and a knowledge-pooling program for physicians, the case-discussion platform e-casebook.com®.
<President and CEO, Heart Organization Co., Ltd.>

Ji Sunghee

Tokyo Metropolitan



Branding of the Coaroo Bag, a Next-generation Shoulder Bag with a Single Strap that Never Needs Reattaching

The next-generation "Coaroo" brand shoulder bag represents a new genre, structured to give the wearer freedom of adjustment along with safety, security and convenience. By separating a conventional shoulder bag strap into three parts, permitting adjustment around the arms and in relation to a movable pad in the center, the Coaroo's revolutionary, patented configuration allows the wearer to use the bag in five different ways, including as a backpack, a messenger bag, and – a first in the bag industry – a front-body bag. While most of its business centers on items developed in-house, the firm has an expanding lineup developed in collaboration or under licensing agreements with other companies. Products are also being developed for the pet and home-health sectors. Coaroo is also putting energy into exports, both of products and intellectual property. It has been covered extensively in the media and has won numerous awards, including the TASK Monodukuri Grand Prize and the Korean Women Inventors' Prize. Coaroo bags have qualified as "deserving of support" by the Small and Medium Enterprise Support Center. The company is promoting the brand both at home and abroad as part of an overall global growth strategy.

PROFILE Born in Seoul, Korea. Arrived in Japan at the age of 24 to attend Waseda University, where she majored in Japanese cultural studies. Worked as a translator and editor at a publishing firm, then wrote on Korean and Japanese culture, cooking and language while teaching Korean. Seeing the need for a product that would make life easier for mothers of small children, she devised the Coaroo Belt, taking inspiration from the Japanese tasuki (cords for holding up the sleeves of kimono) and onbuhimo (cloth baby carriers). She launched Coaroo Co., Ltd. with the aim of establishing a functional genre brand. Coaroo products have won numerous awards, including the TASK Monodukuri Grand Prize and the Korean Women Inventors' Prize, and have been widely covered in the mass media. In addition to selling through mail order systems and retailers, the firm creates special items in collaboration with leading department stores.
<President and CEO, Coaroo Co., Ltd.>