

## Next-Generation Employees Discuss Nichimo

## Today and Tomorrow

**Mr. Iwameji**Food Business Department 2  
of Food Business Division**Mr. Nakayama**Synthetic Products Department  
of Machinery and Supplies  
Business Division**Ms. Tsuchida**Food Quality Management  
Department of  
Administrative Section**Ms. Ochiai**Research and Development  
Office of Marine Business  
Division**Mr. Oi**Machinery Engineering and  
Sales Department of Machinery  
and Supplies Business Division**Ms. Tanoguchi**Treasury Department of  
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## ■ Nichimo's culture and my work

◆ **Ochiai** I think the appealing point about Nichimo is that it develops products in cooperation with customers. I work in the Marine Business Division. I'm involved in the design and development of fishing nets in Shimonoseki City, Yamaguchi Prefecture. We ask fishermen to look at model experiments made using a large experimental tank and give us their opinions so that we can develop fishing gear that meets customers' needs. We also reflect their opinions in the development of environmentally friendly biodegradable materials and so forth.

■ **Nakayama** Nichimo is a company that values encouraging people who would like to take on a challenge. If people feel like trying something, they are encouraged to try. I work in the Synthetic Products Department, where I can say to my boss, "Right now we are working like this, and the customer's response is like that. So I want to try taking on a challenge like this." I report the situation in this manner and the boss gives me their opinion. I also like the way that team members have a relationship where they can give each other advice. Sometimes I go with my team members to the recreation facility and we share opinions with each other.

▼ **Oi** Nichimo has just over 200 employees, and I think this makes for a good atmosphere. I sell food processing machines in the Machinery Engineering and Sales Department. In addition to the good atmosphere within the department, we also cooperate closely with other departments. For example, we cooperate with the Synthetic Products Department where Mr. Nakayama works to sell cardboard boxes, food trays, and packaging materials, and we cooperate with the people in the Food Business Departments to sell scallop adductor muscles.

■ **Tanoguchi** As Mr. Oi said, we handle various

merchandise in cooperation between departments, and we conduct world-wide operations. I work in the Treasury Department, and I am sometimes tasked with making payments for raw materials purchased overseas. Through my work, I can learn about the systems in various different countries. I think it is an appealing point that I can experience working not only on transactions that take place in Japan, but those that involve overseas business as well.

## ■ Workplace environments where people can play active roles

■ **Tsuchida** Understanding and consideration from the Company regarding employees' work-life balance is essential for enabling them to continue working over the long term. I work in the Food Quality Management Department, where I had used the childcare leave system until March 2023. Being able to use this system gave me a sense of security. Recently, men have started to use the childcare leave system as well. Support from the Company is also necessary for them to overcome the barriers to taking childcare leave.

■ **Iwameji** Like Ms. Tsuchida, I am also balancing childcare and work. I am in charge of sales in the Food Business Division. I have been able to do my job while caring for my children. The reason for this is because we have a system where team members support one another. In my team, we have excellent cooperation, which really helps me. But I feel there is some difference in the level of enthusiasm between teams, and I think that is an issue to be addressed.

◆ **Ochiai** In my workplace, there aren't any women balancing work and childcare, so I'm not really able to imagine how I would be able to do that in the future, and I

feel some anxiety about it. I feel a sense of satisfaction in working near to the front lines, so I feel unhappy about the idea of being restricted in doing the work I want to do for the sake of balancing work and childcare.

■ **Tanoguchi** With an increase in the number of women in the workplace, I hope we will have workplace environments that are easier for women to work in. Working under male managers in a department with only one or two women, our voices always tend to be treated as a minority opinion. As the number of female managers increases, I think there will be more opportunities for women's voices to be heard. Also, they will become role models, which should increase motivation for other women.

## ■ Nichimo's future and challenges for the future

■ **Iwameji** Marine resources are limited, and their supply fluctuates severely due to various factors. In this situation, I believe Nichimo's mission is to provide a stable supply of high quality marine products for consumers' tables. The pillars of the Food Business are surimi (kneaded fish meat), crab, pollack roe, frozen fish, and processed products. In addition to delivering them to diners, I believe we should also take on new challenges going forward. I myself would like to be actively involved in such a challenge. I also think that we should promote the appeal of the Nichimo brand more strongly, so that its value will be more highly appreciated by end consumers.

■ **Nakayama** I am in charge of construction film. As Japan's falling birthrate and aging population accelerate further, the number of new housing starts is expected to decrease, and so we need to take some kind of action. I

don't think that the need for the film that Nichimo provides will disappear, but there should be a number of areas where we should take a proactive approach, such as medical and nursing care facilities, the number of which is expected to grow in the future. Within the cycle that Nichimo seeks to cover "From the Ocean To Dining," there is also the housing space. For example, I think we could provide interior finishing for food product plants, and so forth, or create new products through collaboration between departments, which is one of Nichimo's strengths.

▼ **Oi** I am involved in machinery sales, so I have a really strong sense of the serious shortages of labor that customers are facing. Needs for labor saving and mechanization seem likely to increase going forward. In order for Nichimo to understand customer needs even more closely and resolve their issues, it might be necessary to acquire machinery manufacturing functions through M&A and so forth, and use expertise in machinery in dialogue with customers. Providing high level expertise that increases the level of trust in our relationships with customers might enable us to capture various business opportunities outside of machinery as well.

■ **Tsuchida** I think that Nichimo's strengths are in its small number of elite, highly expert individuals, and in the smoothly functioning cooperation between departments. However, I feel that the expertise of individuals is mainly used at the individual level, and hasn't yet really been shared or passed on so that the knowledge can be used by the organization. While cooperation is working well horizontally, there isn't enough vertical cooperation. If Nichimo has overcome this issue in ten years' time, then it will have created products and developed businesses that bring together the strengths that currently exist in isolated pockets inside the Company. I'd like to work towards achieving that myself going forward.