



Makoto Takashima

Keidanren *Women's Executive Network*Leadership
Mentor
ProgramKeep your eyes up,
your head down,
and your heart open

Keidanren Women's Executive Network

Leadership Mentor Program Vol.32

April 9, 2025 Keidanren Kaikan, Otemachi, Tokyo

Three Experiences That Formed
the Foundation of My Career

Through my overseas experience spanning 11 and a half years, I learned the importance of approaching people from different cultural backgrounds with respect. At the same time, I keenly realized that in a highly competitive environment, original ideas and approaches are essential to establish one's presence. Based on this thinking, when I served as project leader for our Medium-term Management Plan, I approached the development process as if I were the bank president myself. Later, during crises such as the 2008 financial crisis, the Great East Japan Earthquake, and the COVID-19 pandemic, I sought ways to minimize damage to our company while maximizing support for our customers. Through these experiences, I gained a profound appreciation for banks as critical social infrastructure.

Core Mindsets I Value

Throughout my career, I've tried to maintain three key mindsets. The first is Stand up & step in—taking a higher-level perspective and proactively extending your reach beyond your defined role. The second is Change something, always—constantly driving change, grounded in a deep understanding of the core issue. The third is Listen first—even when busy, take time to listen patiently and humbly so as not to miss critical information.

Strategic Directions I Focused
on as a Business Leader

To transform the organization as a business leader, I focused on three strategic directions: Beyond our boundaries (actively expanding financial and non-financial businesses both domestically and internationally), Innovation & Evolution (promoting innovation inside and outside the company), and Communication Engagement (strengthening communication with customers and employees). The interaction between personal mindsets and organizational direction creates the driving force for realizing the SMBC Group's vision of becoming a trusted global solution provider committed to the growth of our customers and advancement of society.

Essential Qualities for Business Leaders

The fundamental philosophy I cherish as a business leader is: Keep your eyes up, your head down, and your heart open. I strive to set ambitious goals with a long-term perspective, maintain humility, and treat colleagues and subordinates with genuine care. Regarding the three mindsets I mentioned earlier, an executive whom I deeply respect has expressed similar views about the qualities expected of business leaders, which suggests a common understanding among executives. I hope you find these insights helpful.

Mentor Profile

Makoto Takashima

Vice Chair,
Keidanren Chairman and
Director-Chairman,
Sumitomo Mitsui Banking
Corporation

Mr. Takashima joined The Sumitomo Bank, Limited (now SMBC) in 1982. After that, his career mainly focused on global banking and corporate strategy. After serving as Executive Officer and General Manager of the Corporate Planning Department, Managing Executive Officer and CEO of The Americas Division, Senior Managing Executive Officer and Co-Head of the International Banking Unit (Europe and Americas), Mr. Takashima was appointed President and CEO of SMBC in 2017. In 2023, he was named Chairman of the Board (current position). In May 2024, Keidanren appointed him Vice Chair. Mr. Takashima holds a LL.B. degree from Kyoto University and a LL.M. degree from the Boalt Hall School of Law, University of California, Berkeley.

