

Swan Bakery

Swan Bakery is

The principle of normalization aims “to realize a society where persons with disabilities and without disabilities work together and live together.” Swan Bakery is a corporation that the late Mr. Masao Ogura, founder of the Kuroneko-Yamato Home Delivery Service, established in cooperation with the Yamato Welfare Foundation and the Yamato Transport Co., Ltd. for the purpose of making this philosophy come true.

Background

The number of persons with disabilities in Japan is estimated to account for about 5% of the population, or approximately 6 million people. The majority of them are working in more than 6,000 joint community workshops and small scale sheltered workshops scattered throughout Japan. However, their wages are as low as less than 10,000 yen monthly and under this situation they are far from becoming independent.

Mr. Ogura, keenly felt that there was no hope of helping these people to get out of this low waged work without the transfer of management know-how to the executive staff members of welfare facilities. Therefore he started to hold seminars in all parts of the country in 1996, striving to change the awareness. In his seminars, he promoted not to achieve just the production of “finished goods” or “pieces of work,” but the creation of marketable “products for sale,” targeting the general consumers.

In the course of holding these seminars, Mr. Ogura needed to demonstrate how it is possible to pay more than 100,000 yen in monthly salaries by setting a good example. Then he got the idea of establishing shops selling “delicious bread fresh from the oven.”

Mr. Ogura gained the understanding and cooperation of Mr. Seiichi Takaki, President of the Takaki Bakery Co., Ltd., which has developed a nationwide network of famous bakery chains “Andersen” and “Little Mermaid”. After finding that it is possible for persons with disabilities to bake bread from the frozen bread dough that Takaki Bakery developed, Mr. Ogura immediately put this into practice.

Spreading bakery chain

In June 1998, a shop in Ginza, downtown Tokyo, opened as the Swan Bakery’s first shop. It was the late Mr. Ogura who named “Swan Bakery”. He took his clue from the work of Hans Andersen, the Danish writer of storybooks, who told the story of what seemed an ugly duckling was in fact a “swan.” Presently, these shops are scattered across the nation and now there are over 20 outlets employing more than 200 people with disabilities. They have become economically independent and achieved participation in the society through their jobs.

“Swan” will fly, flapping its wings vigorously and open new shops throughout Japan.

Management policy [Management based on love, justice and courage]

Swan Bakery will, in order to strike a balance between the employment of persons with disabilities and corporate management, practice management through love, justice and courage. “Love” means the love to live together with persons with disabilities; “justice” means a form of justice based on the principle of right and wrong, rather than profits and losses; and “courage” refers to the courage to keep on practicing without giving up.

It is often asked whether it is really possible to strike a balance between the employment of persons with disabilities and corporate management. It may sound paradoxical, but it is Swan’s policy that, in business, if it is useful for the public, it will inevitably be accepted in the market, and then sustainable management becomes possible; and if it becomes unmanageable, the problem is with the manager.

Human resources development [the Swan is me]

Swan Bakery wishes, first of all, employees become able to carry out the work on their own. If this is not possible, we want them to become “tough” individuals who can do with someone’s support. And also we wish them to be “kindhearted” individuals who are able to feel the pain in other people’s hearts: For this purpose, Swan Bakery promotes:



- OJT (On the Job Training) that draws out a voluntary decision-making attitude in an employee-driven workplace through the transfer of authority to the employees.
- Management by all employees-the strong points of each employee are utilized and their weak points are supported by their fellows.



Swan supports not only economic independence, but also the true independence of persons with disabilities to be able to live on their own.

Product development

- To develop products which can compete in the market.
We pursue marketable products, and not something that persons with disabilities can do.
- To develop products which create jobs for persons with disabilities
In addition to making products and packing them in boxes, we challenge to develop new types of jobs for persons with disabilities such as e-commerce data entry etc.

Market Development

Swan makes original products with a corporate logo design for companies for their events directly linked to the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), and for use as commemorative gifts.

Swan's Other Activities

SWAN LOHAS (Lifestyles Of Health And Sustainability)

Through the concept of “Good for Health, Good for the Environment, Good for Persons with Disabilities,” Swan promotes its own LOHAS “gradually and kindheartedly” by providing organic ingredients and eco-bags in the shops.

Tie-up with the companies' CSR

Swan collaborates with companies for sales to outside customers or sales of commemorative gifts for companies.

Collaboration with University: Internship

When we sell our products at universities, sociology students also participate in sales activities, which are directly linked to their classes.

Swan accept internship of university students in the shops for their practice.

Activities involving the government

We participate in Disabled Person's Week organized by the Cabinet Office, symposiums and CSR activities of various organizations, and call for the real independence of persons with disabilities.

Art exhibitions, mini live concerts, etc.

“Come Together, Artists”. Since Swan is located in Ginza, an area famous for art galleries. Swan offers its walls for free to those who pursue an artistic career.

It is not limited only to paintings, but also exhibiting fair trade cotton, flower arrangement, pictures shown through projectors, and holding mini live concerts. In this way Swan supports artists as a social enterprise.