

Human Capital

Special Feature Engineer Interviews

Fostering engineers' growth and success with a unique business environment

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From Business Cards to Interpersonal Networking: Challenges for Engineers During the Start-Up Phase

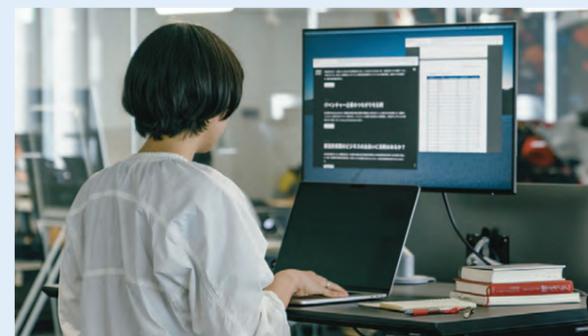
When I joined Sansan in 2009, we'd just made the major decision to revamp our systems. Business cards became just one part of such information. This project involved changing our core concepts and internal structure without changing our user-facing aspects. I led these changes. Until then, the system's core concept had been business cards, but when you focus on data points—like who met and what they did—and try to make this into an asset, there are limits to basing this around business cards. We therefore, changed the system so that information is aggregated around people.

Sansan is a corporate service and is structured in such a way that Company A's data can only be used within Company A, and Company B's data within Company B. But information about interpersonal

networking produces two types of value: that as a corporate resource/asset and that as a representation of an open network. Sansan had only addressed the former, so we began prototyping Eight in 2010 to create a product for the latter.

Discovering Rewarding Experiences in Each Phase of Product Growth

I think most of our engineers are people who find it fun to discuss entirely novel ideas, such as how to turn things into reality and how doing so will produce something unprecedented. When presented with two technological options, such engineers find it relatively easy to pick the right one. But making decisions becomes harder when the future is unclear. For example, say there are significant business constraints. Even after accepting these constraints, it can be challenging to determine the correct way forward. A deep understanding of



the business is needed to overcome such difficulties. All engineers have technical skills, but what makes an engineer truly valuable is their ability to make decisions based on business understanding.

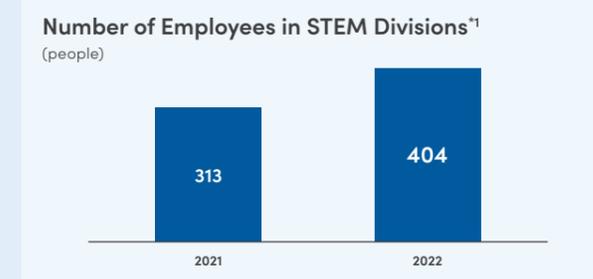
It's not easy to add new functions to Sansan, which is now in its 16th year. You have to understand the entire system, keep vast amounts of source code in mind, and add new designs without impacting pre-existing ones. That all requires experience. On the other hand, some of the projects we've launched in the past year or two are still small, so it's relatively easy to implement new features. Yet, the earliest phases of a project, when you have to lay down a strong foundation, produce their own kind of difficulty and excitement. One of the best parts of working at Sansan is that we can gain broad engineering experience at all these different levels. This experience of making judgments and decisions, and producing designs that suit the characteristics of the project's phase, leads to true growth among engineers.

Pursuing Scalability Through Commonality and Efficiency

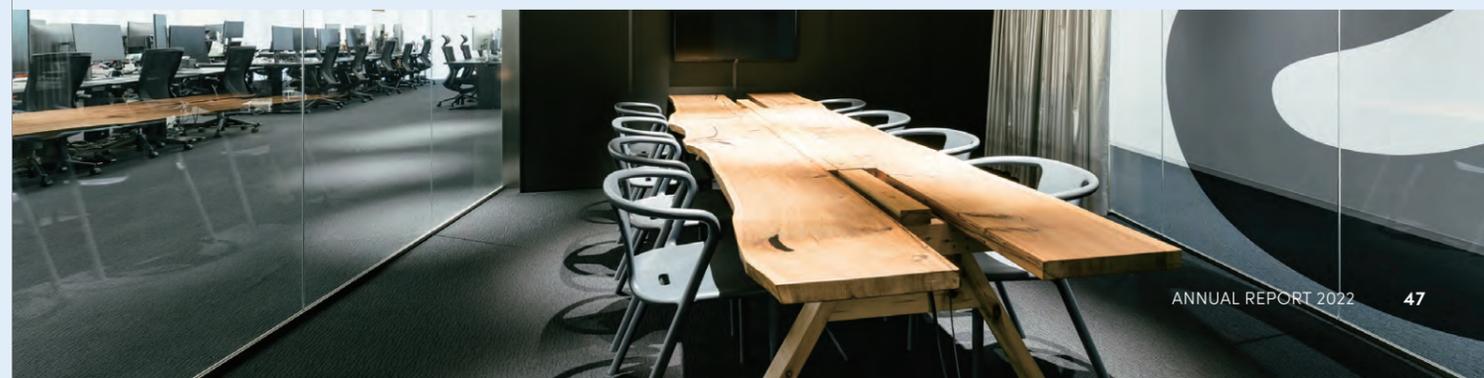
Sansan was an entirely new concept, so it was hard for people to understand its value as a product. Since it's hard work to create a system like this, we prioritized speed and optimized our business and system development around this single product. We've taken the same approach for Bill One and Eight, and we've also worked to further optimize it for each business. Our thinking was that, while a product's

future is still uncertain, it would be better to aim for individual optimizations. But we've recently undergone a significant reorganization. Our company is now based around functionality instead of products. Engineers are assigned to the Engineering Division but will gradually expand their activities in a cross-sectional way to become involved in other parts of the business. Through this change, we're aiming for engineering that is scalable thanks to commonality and efficiency. We're also aiming to contribute to individual engineers' growth. Engineers who have gained enough experience with Sansan should be encouraged to take on challenges in new fields because the knowledge gained from Sansan is not necessarily directly applicable to Bill One or Eight, so this will provide them with entirely new experiences. These kinds of challenges are stimulating and are growth opportunities. The fact that we can provide so many opportunities within the company is one of the strengths of our organizational growth. Although our employees in STEM Divisions^{*1} as of the end of May 2022 has increased to 404, up 91 year on year, we must continue to increase our engineering talent to achieve further growth in the future.

The dynamic and challenging nature of creating our unique products, and the possibility to develop multiple products, will hopefully appeal to overseas engineers as well. From May 2023, we will be strengthening our overseas recruitment of engineers, as well as our local recruitment. We look forward to the new culture these engineers will bring to our company.



^{*1} Results for fiscal years ended in May (engineering, R&D, and creator positions for regular employees and contract employees of Sansan, Inc. and Sansan Global Pte. Ltd.)



– Human Capital

Investments in Human Capital and Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion

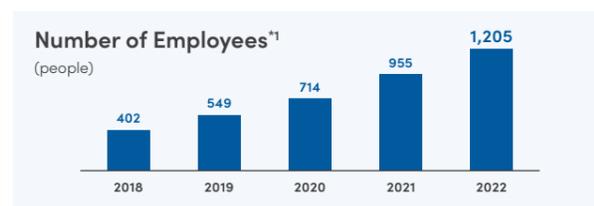
Talent is an essential management resource. Our ability to achieve high growth while creating new markets owes to the successes of our talented human resources. To ensure our future growth, we must provide environments that welcome diversity and allow all staff, whatever their background, to work with great

motivation. Through this approach, we have identified recruitment, development, and promotion, along with diversity and inclusion, as critical focal issues and are working to create innovations that solve business challenges through various measures, including promoting our employees' activities.

Recruiting, Developing, and Promoting Human Resources

Continuous strengthening of recruitment is an essential element of our growth strategy. As of May 31, 2022, we had more than 1,200 employees, and our various organizations, including development, sales, and back office, comprise talented individuals from diverse backgrounds. We emphasize hiring employees with strong expertise and skills, and who have a mission-driven attitude that matches our corporate philosophy. This emphasis stems from our belief that people whose ideals match our corporate philosophy, such as our mission, vision, and values, are more likely to be successful after joining. This mission-driven corporate culture has been an effective tool for recruiting, enabling us to hire a range of highly capable individuals. We are also developing systems and environments that not only enable our staff to succeed, but also allow our organization to absorb their knowledge and promote their growth and success to also nurture those around them. For example, we have adopted a mission grade framework for our personnel system, in which authority, responsibility, and benefits are determined

by grade. Grade designation is based not only on performance but also on future expectations, enabling us to leverage each individual's growth. We have also adopted a 360-degree employee evaluation system in which colleagues in various positions assess individual employees. This comprehensive incorporation of feedback from people other than direct superiors lets us provide fairer evaluations. Additionally, we conduct monthly engagement surveys for regular employees and contract employees. We analyze these results and use them for self-management, organizational management, and the planning of company-wide internal systems and measures.



^{*1} Results for fiscal years ended in May

Supporting Women's Careers

Our policy is to actively recruit and promote talent without focusing on attributes such as background or gender, and to give all employees fair evaluations and promotion opportunities. Our ratio of female employees

is thus increasing, with women in management positions reaching 16.5% as of May 31, 2022. Monitoring in each business period ensures a fair and unbiased evaluation process. We have also designed internal systems to

provide more opportunities to play active roles. One example is Oyaco, a system that supports women—who are unequally burdened by pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare—to better balance motherhood and work. Oyaco provides subsidies for the extra fees associated with non-accredited nursery schools until age 3. We also provide support for the use of babysitters

and housecleaning services. And to support career development while balancing childcare and nursing care, we allow employees to choose work styles that suit their circumstances. By establishing and applying various employment classifications, we strive to realize flexible ways of working that respect employees' will and motivation.

Promoting Employment of Foreign Nationals and People with Disabilities

We have raised our ratio of foreign nationals to 2.6% as of May 31, 2022. We strive to produce a richly diverse corporate culture through active interactions between foreign and Japanese employees around the world.

Our ratio of employees with disabilities as of March 31, 2022, was 2.4%. We are working to create and expand opportunities for people with disabilities to work alongside us.

Support for Human Resource Development (Support for the Kamiyama Marugoto College of Design, Technology, and Entrepreneurship)

The Kamiyama Marugoto College of Design, Technology, and Entrepreneurship aims to change the future of humanity through technology and design. Supporting its development in turn fosters the development of entrepreneurs. A vital challenge for our group is recruitment, training, and promotion of human resources, and we believe our support for the

college will contribute to creating IT human resources in Japan. Our company has started a dedicated internal department to support the college. By offering the marketing, design, and PR expertise we have cultivated through our business, we aim to create a world where the people creating the future can utilize our services as business infrastructure and produce innovation.

Kamiyama Marugoto College of Design, Technology, and Entrepreneurship

In April 2023, the Kamiyama Marugoto College of Design, Technology, and Entrepreneurship, a private technical college, will open in the town of Kamiyama in Japan's Tokushima Prefecture. Unlike conventional technical colleges, which focus on technical education, Kamiyama Marugoto will let students simultaneously study technology, design, and entrepreneurship, with the goal of nurturing people who can accomplish great things by creating great things, and who can change society. Students receive a five-year integrated education from ages 15 to 20. It is a residential college, with students living together with peers their age. The curriculum will include practical aspects, such as exercises and experiments, as well as lecture-style classes. During classes,

students will not only work on their assigned tasks but also develop practical problem-solving skills through bidirectional communication fostered by small group discussions, group work, and debates. Besides classes, the college will also provide students with opportunities for independent growth through extracurricular activities and interactions with the local community.

