

With Local Communities

Social Contributions Activities in Japan

Breathing New Life into Machines for Lease with the "Mottainai" Spirit

Refurbished fax machines and multi-function centers, which were destined to be scrapped, being donated to welfare organizations, etc.

In June 2010, Brother Sales, Ltd., a sales facility in Japan, donated a total of 162 machines kept in stock for lease to customers, to 72 entities such as citizens groups and organizations that support hearing-impaired individuals. The donated machines included fax machines (FAX-300/210 series) and laser multi-function centers (MFC-8820J).

Brother Sales, Ltd. used to lease products to customers when their Brother products were returned for repair. In recent years, the Brother Group in Japan has worked more closely with logistics companies and significantly shortened repair times, obviating the need for lease machines. These machines were not needed in-house either, and so the excess machines held in stock were going to be scrapped.

But some employees thought, "What a waste (mottainai in Japanese)! These machines can still be used. We should find another way in view of the disposal cost and environmental impact." After some research, they identified eparts, a nonprofit corporation, which runs programs to donate personal computers and printers to citizens groups that need them. Brother Sales succeeded in winning the help of eparts.

During a one-month period from April 2010, eparts accepted applications on its website from organizations that needed fax machines and/or multi-function centers. Through rigorous screening, 72 of 111 organizations were selected as recipients.

The machines were refurbished by Mie Brother Precision Industries, Ltd., a servicing center, before donation, and the shipping costs were paid by Brother Sales, Ltd.

Starting in the spring of 2011, Brother Sales, Ltd. will refurbish and donate products that have been displayed in stores, in addition to stocked lease machines which are no longer needed, as part of its commitment to both reducing environmental impact and making social contributions.



A fax machine being put to good use in a recipient's office

Words of thanks from an organization that received a fax machine



We are very grateful to Brother Sales which enabled us to replace our old machine. The telephone functions of the fax machine are convenient, and the children who visit our office on the weekends think the buttons are cute. We will use the fax machine to promote international cooperation by children and for children, which is our mission, and encourage children to become involved in voluntary work.

Free The Children Japan, a specified nonprofit corporation.

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"Tokai Young Entrepreneur Seminar" for business-minded young people with a challenging spirit

Started the Tokai Young Entrepreneur Seminar

There has been a recent increase in young people working on business to solve a diversity of social issues and to revitalize local areas in Japan. Yet, because they lack business experiences and the network of contacts needed to grow a business, they cannot always find solutions to the plethora of management problems. On that note, in 2008 Brother Industries started sponsoring the Tokai Young Entrepreneur Seminar to offer support to young business-minded people in the Tokai area where the company has its headquarters. Through the seminar which consists of a number of entrepreneurial support NPOs in Japan, Brother has supported 13 entrepreneurs in total by March 2010. The seminar offers a number of activities for helping would-be entrepreneurs get their business on track via business strategy workshops, product development opportunities together with consumers, etc.



Young people taking part in the Tokai Young Entrepreneur Seminar

In April 2011, applications for the fourth year of the seminar were accepted from young entrepreneurs seeking support for their projects. Five judges, including Mr. Hideto Kawakita, representative of the International Institute for Human, Organization and the Earth (IIHOE), who has a track record of supporting entrepreneurs, were involved in the final screening process and five applicants were selected, following a public selection meeting on June 12.

These entrepreneurs are to be guided by the Executive Committee of the Tokai Young Entrepreneur Seminar for the improvement of the quality of their business models and strategies. Under the guidance of the Executive Committee of the Tokai Young Entrepreneur Seminar, these entrepreneurs will address the improvement of the quality of their business models and strategies for nine months, until a debriefing session of final results in March 2012.

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Developing partnerships with entrepreneurs selected for the "Tokai Young Entrepreneur Seminar" in FY 2010

In addition to the support by the Executive Committee of the Tokai Young Entrepreneur Seminar, in FY 2010, Brother continued to host similar events to foster partnerships between Brother employees and entrepreneurs, and support them from the aspects of staffing consultation, technical advice, and marketing expertise.

In January 2011, as one of the support events Brother Industries held "Challenge! Market" at the company cafeteria in which products produced by entrepreneurs selected for the seminar were sold, and Brother employees directly provided them with feedback on the products that they bought from a customer perspective.

Brother also hosted an exchange meeting, "Challenge! Forum", with about 100 participants both of entrepreneurs and Brother employees, which became a great opportunity for both sides, and especially Brother employees were able to learn their enthusiasm for work and a challenging spirit of the entrepreneurs.



Challenge! Market

Successfully helping young entrepreneurs

Positive results from this support are steadfast showing, to note in particular one of the participants in the first Tokai Young Entrepreneur Seminar won the Special Award in the Startup Category in the 8th Female Entrepreneur Grand Prix held by the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The participant, Ms. Makoto Sato, representative of Hair Supply Peer of Hamamatsu, Shizuoka was recognized in the award of her business that supports especially women who lost their hair due to chemotherapy for cancer, etc. Another recognition was made in April 2010 when Ms. Mayuko Iwai, participant of the second year seminar was selected as one of the 30 Best Practices in Agriculture, Commerce, and Industry, coordinated jointly by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.