

② Employment for a Wide Range of People Oki WorkWel Co., Ltd. (special subsidiary)

Oki is a pioneer in the employment of people with severe physical challenges and provides increased opportunities for work as IT engineers.

Established on April 1, 2004, Oki Workwel Co., Ltd. is Japan's first special subsidiary* specializing in employment for people with severe physical challenges. It offers work primarily on a telecommuting basis.

By using IT to create new ways of working, Oki helps to expand employment opportunities for those who find commuting difficult because of their severe challenges.

***Special subsidiary:** A subsidiary company based on the Japanese law that gives special consideration to employment for challenged people. This system expands job categories for challenged people and establishes office environments and flexible ways of working according to their special characteristics.

From OKI Networkers to Oki WorkWel

Oki began to employ people with severe physical challenges under a new system introduced in 1998. The first three people were employed under this system and worked at home as contract employees with qualifications as basic IT engineers. These "OKI Networkers" used computers and the Internet to perform various IT-related tasks at their homes, including website design and data entry. The scheme was highly successful and was progressively expanded to include Oki Group companies as well as Oki itself. By March 2004 five group companies were employing a total of 13 OKI Networkers to carry out tasks ranging from web system development to poster design. Based on this experience, Oki established Oki WorkWel Co., Ltd. as a special subsidiary subject to specific requirements, including the recruitment of people with physical and mental challenges. It commenced operations in April 2004 with 22 employees, most of whom were originally OKI Networkers who had transferred to the new company.

Positive Perspective on Working with Disabilities

Oki Workwel's vision is to "work with the challenged to build the e-society." First used in the United States, "the challenged" is a new way of referring to people with disabilities. This term emphasizes positive rather than negative perceptions, and encourages people with disabilities to apply the experiences that result from their physical challenges to benefit themselves and society. Oki Workwel is putting this principle into practice by applying the experiences and characteristics of people with disabilities to the development of IT services that are easier to use. Oki Workwel is also diversifying into new activities, including the production of name cards by employees with mental challenges, and consultation on the introduction of systems for challenged employees to work at home.

The day-to-day activities of Oki WorkWel are carried out by teleworkers with physical and mental challenges and coordinators, who manage and coordinate interaction between the teleworkers and clients. The coordinators also function as sales representatives and systems engineers (SEs) and handle detailed arrangements with clients if this is not practical for the teleworkers. They give detailed instruction and allocate tasks according to the skills and physical condition of individual teleworkers. This system ensures that work proceeds according to client specifications and deadlines, and that quality is properly managed. Client reaction has been very positive.



An Oki WorkWel teleworker acts as a lecturer in wheelchair access for a course in voluntary services run by Tokyo's Katsushika Ward



Accessibility is also an important consideration when designing websites



Oki WorkWel employees



Telecommuting OKI Networkers

Social Contribution Activities Utilizing IT and Experience

OKI Networkers play a positive role in the social contribution activities of the Oki Group. They use their IT skills by working as voluntary teachers for computer courses, and by helping NPOs to create websites and posters. Several OKI Networkers assist with wheelchair access education for social welfare councils and schools in their local communities.

Oki WorkWel will continue to expand employment opportunities for challenged people by providing the widest possible scope for activities based on the experiences, sensitivity and skills of individual workers.

Comprehensive Assessment of the Activities of Oki WorkWel

In 2004, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare selected Oki WorkWel for "The Nice Support Award" under its One More Life Worker Volunteer Award scheme.

The Japan Telework Association gave Oki WorkWel its fifth Telework Promotion Award, "The President's Award"