



DIJ Forum

Thursday, 11 June 2015, 18.30 h

Robert Tobin, Keio University

Encouraging Entrepreneurial Spirit in Japan

Comment by **Ikuo Hiraishi, SunBridge Global Ventures Inc.**

Since the burst of the bubble economy in 1991, Japan has been diagnosed with a relatively low level of entrepreneurship – not only compared to pre-1991, but also to current levels in other developed countries. This talk discusses options to encourage more of the entrepreneurial spirit in Japan. It shows how government economic policies need to change and what society and the educational system do to squash and encourage entrepreneurial spirit. From an international perspective the talk analyses how the dreams of young people in the US, Japan, and Thailand differ and how this relates to the emergence of a new entrepreneurial spirit in Japan. Picking up the recent government push of Abenomics, the talk explores what opportunities exist for women entrepreneurs in Japan and how large organizations can encourage the entrepreneurial spirit. The talk concludes by showing how to unleash the creativity that is here in Japan.

Bob Tobin is Professor Emeritus at the Faculty of Business and Commerce, Keio University. The focus of his scholarship and teaching is leadership, entrepreneurship and business strategy. Many of the students in his seminar in entrepreneurship have started successful ventures in Japan. He is a frequent keynote speaker throughout Japan, Asia and the United States. In addition to teaching at Keio, he has been a visiting professor at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand and a member of the MBA faculty at Pepperdine University in California. His recent book, *What Do I Want To Create Today* [BenBella Books 2014], was chosen by *Best Magazine* as one of the best 5 business gift books for young people. The book will be available at the conclusion of the program.

Ikuo Hiraishi has been involved in Internet related business since the late 1990s. In 2000, he co-founded and became the CEO of Interscope, Inc., which was sold off to Yahoo! Japan in 2007, and later merged with Macromill in 2010. Also, he co-launched an Internet research society, Internet Research forum of Japan, assuming the position of chairman. In March 2011, he assumed the position of Tokyo Officer of SunBridge's seed acceleration activities, and in May of the same year, in cooperation with Mr. Takeuchi of VentureNow, he launched "Innovation Weekend", a pitch event and networking platform for early stage startups and angel investors. In January of 2012, he co-founded SunBridge Global Ventures Inc. and became its president & CEO (current position). In addition, he presently serves as visiting professor at Hosei University Graduate School of Business Administration (MBA), and outside directors of several startups.

The presentation will be held in English. It will take place at the DIJ. Admission is free, registration is necessary: forum@dijtokyo.org or