

Assignment name: The danger of complacency and culture

Submit to: Carl

Submitted by: Sunny 0552677

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1. What can you learn from this article as a manager and professional worker? After reading the article, the overall perception for me of why in the 21<sup>st</sup> Japan's economy started to slip is that it is far too conservative. Though holding a conservative view could avoid bankruptcy and risky activities to the great extent, it weakens the creativity at the same time.

According to the article, the main reasons for why Japan is holding business back are:

- Not enough reforms and lack of creativity
- Misallocation of both financial and human resources
- Certain cultural traits and the lose of 'samurai' spirit
- Lack of the concept of globalization
- Squandered talent

For the first point, as is mentioned in the passage 'although Japan has made substantial reforms in corporate governance, financial openness and deregulation, they are far from enough.' As is known to all, reforms promote the development of the history. Without enough reform, Japan is destined to fall behind. So in my opinion, as a manager and professional worker, first, he or she should check the rules and regulations in a period of time, follow up with the international tendencies and make some adjustments. Second, he or she should evaluate the performance of the staff according to the revised regulations. Third, give staff feedbacks and essential rewards to motivate them to go forward. Finally, encourage creativity (chatting, competition, etc) is a good way to absorb new blood and improve productivity.

For the second point, the article cites the saying of a business professor 'They are too afraid to face the reality of the power shift.' As a manager or professor, it is common that he or she wants to seize the power, however, the old, familiar models do not always bring benefits to a company. To many managers, empowerment is just superficial, they are never willing to deliver their power. However, on the contrary, appropriate empowerment will not only improve efficiency, it will also build mutual trust and confidence.

For the third point, in Japan, cultural traits are deep-rooted. Respect and hierarchy play the dominant role, leading to the hidden of good ideas. As a manager, he or she should not only focus on the hierarchy, though in Japan, it is really hard. Maybe realize this and changing day by day is a good way for a manager to learn, especially for Japanese managers. Additionally, motive the morale of staff can not be ignored.

For the fourth point, managers should realize that only regard themselves as international can they create boundless possibilities. New ideas and thoughts

are just like the new blood injections. In addition, the grasp of diverse languages will also help managers to be more competitive in the international stage.

For the final point, it seems that not just Japan, many other countries also hire fewer women managers than men managers, though the movement for women's rights once provoked much discussion, the reality is not so optimistic. So as a manager, how to put women employees in the right position should be his or her concern. Exclude discrimination of women who can not be in the top position and the distribute talents appropriately will surely be beneficial to the company.

2.What can China learn from what has happened in Japan?

We have known the reasons why Japan is holding business back from the article. In my opinion, what China can learn from Japan is to absorb the merits of Japan and to avoid the wrong way Japan has taken. Now I will explain my opinion in detail.

Though Japanese is conservative, Japan's bankruptcy rate is half of American's. Japan's mistake is that it is far too conservative, which makes it not successful in creating new firms. However, we can not deny 'conservative' absolutely. Sometimes moderate conservative will help the company to run smoothly and to avoid risks. Only too conservative will destroy the motivation of creating new firms.

According to the above points and the current Chinese situation, **First**, I think China should also make reforms in regulations and management models. Managers' primary duty is paying attention to the current issues and international trends, and then make appropriate adjustments according to the performance of the company. Holding competitions to encourage new ideas, chatting is also a good informal way to know the ideas and thoughts of the staff. **Second**, distribute the resources rationally will help Chinese companies run well. Nowadays, it is common to see that the positions people in are not well-matched with what they learn (background), each organization relies on 'relationship' too much. Though it cannot be changed quickly, realize this will be a leap in the process of cognition. In the recruitment process, try to match what people learn with the positions, and then the training costs and ill-suited match will be reduced to great extent. Make observations when people work ( Management by working around) could also help managers to discover the advantages and disadvantages of people and then put them in the positions they are suitable in. **Third**, certain cultural traits and the lose of 'samurai' spirit seems contradictory. Actually, certain cultural traits which need to be improved do not change, however, some good spirits are affected by some other cultures, especially 'American Culture'. China is somewhat likable, since the economic globalization,it has more or less affected by other countries' culture. Most of the Asia countries are conservative, however, nowadays, China is also becoming haphazard, so China should learn how to be more careful in

decision makings and to set formal regulations for employees. Open up training classes (focus on morale cultivation), and maybe in the long run, people will be motivated. **Fourth**, China is doing well in globalization, keeping on focusing on current issues will help Chinese companies do run smoothly. **Finally**, China is not doing well in appropriate distribution of talents. It seems that 'relationship' has been deep-rooted in China and it will not be changed in one day. Realize this situation is the primary mission, even though it is hard to change, Chinese companies could learn how to put people in the right position, even though put woman in the top position, and then the overall productivity will be improved, gender distribution should not appear in the modern society.

3. What do you think is China's biggest strength and weakness in business for the future?

In my opinion, China's biggest strength in business for the future is that the business in China is willing to be involved in the international organization and to accept international standard. Think of the changes of China in the 30 years, since the opening and reform policy took place in China, China has developed rapidly. It attracts many foreign investments and takes this opportunity to develop China's own economy. Moreover, international communications bring the fresh blood at the same time. Now China is still in hypergrowth. Compared to what Japan suffered, its economy started to slip from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the main reason is that Japan is not willing to change itself, Japan does not regard itself as international, many of its systems remain the same. Maybe that is why Japan can not go that far.

China's biggest weakness in business for the future is that China lacks of creativity. As is known to all, China is so capable of imitating, but it is really hard for China to develop innovative products. Now most of the China's businesses are still manufacturing goods for foreign countries and we have merely heard of that Chinese company invents something. When mentions innovation, the spirit of 'Apple' company is what China should learn from. China should prefer invention rather than rest on imitating. If it continues, it will threaten the further development of China's business. So maybe sending people abroad to learn the advanced technology and practice creating something by ourselves are good ways to solve this problem.

4. What solutions can you offer for Japan, its businesses and culture?

For Japan's business, **first**, training them to be international is the appropriate way, and I have heard that nowadays many Japanese students do not want to go abroad to continue their further study, this limits the development of Japan's business. Young people are the pillars of the state, if young people can not go abroad to learn some advanced technology, how can we be optimistic of Japan's future? Trying to let the elders change? So continue to make reforms

according to the international standard will help Japan's business a lot. **Second**, pay attention to the current world issues will broaden Japanese people's horizons and then gradually innovative firms will spring up like mushrooms. Though Japanese bosses are afraid of facing the reality of the power shift, they should be realize that if they stick with old,familiar models, they will be expelled from the market.So, **third**, try to change a little day by day, use empowerment,and then compare the performance with former time's to see whether it is improved.**Fourth**, the certain culture traits make Japan less open to foreign countries, actually, listening to the ideas and thoughts of young people could also help the business to do well, though respect for seniority is historically. Please believe that the combination of both the new ideas and the sophisticated actions will help business make breakthroughs. **Finally**, it is about the issue of woman's position, in Japan, "Even women have make substantial efforts and sacrifice, they are still in middle level. According to a recent survey, the position of Japanese woman is the lowest in Asia countries."<sup>1</sup> Maybe progaganda and cultural communication activities can help to change the position of woman in Japan to some extent. Though it has changed a lot in recent years, it still has a long way to go.

## Reference

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