



MANAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Nowadays strengthening the competitive edge of an expanding company, managers need to understand the advantages and disadvantages of multiple cultures working together in global companies (Subhash, 2001).

To comprehend this phenomenon the need to know what culture means becomes vital. According to Verluyten culture is defined as "the values and practices that are acquired and shared by people in a group" (2010, p. 26). Culture also changes with the association of people according to different characteristics such as: religion, tribes, gender, nation, organization, etc. The combination of these factors can determine the values that a person will use throughout his life and determine his response to different circumstances (Verluyten, 2010).

A multi-cultural workforce indicates "the co-existence of people from various socio-cultural backgrounds within the company" (Subhash, 2001, p. 1). To incorporate varied cultures can enhance creativity, flexibility, perspectives and opinions which has a positive effect on development and process improvement. Also having minorities and women in the staff provides opportunity to exploit new markets, as well as helping society development. (Subhash, 2001). In the other hand, diversity can also cause troubles when managing people. Especially when it comes to communication, some people have different ways to interpret the same message and more words or explanation is needed to avoid confusion or to eliminate ambiguity (Verluyten, 2010). Also reaching agreements can become a problem when the different cultures participate among others.

In addition, providing opportunities for varied people to occupy a position in every part of the organization helps adopt a synergetic organization. In which no way of managing is wrong but only different. This approach helps to take a full advantage of having a diverse workforce, properly channel through a cross-cultural training for both employees and manager and setting this advantage as this is a part of the company strategy. (Subhash, 2001)

Furthermore, early instructed beliefs tend to be more fixed on the behavior of a person while recent and practical habits can be incorporated later on, an example of this is:

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organizational culture (Hofstede, 2011). Given the advantages previously listed and to avoid problems on an expanding organization, companies develop their own culture which based on shared values can influence the behavior and relationship between people to retain a diverse workforce.

A clear example of different cultures working together can be seen in the movie Gung Ho, which translated from Chinese means "working together". The film shows the singular way the Japanese culture understands work and team effort, and how incorporating their same practices in the American culture is appreciated in a different way. Cultural clashes become greater than the purpose of the organization and managers lose control of the production when the workers go on a strike, by the end of the movie both American and Japanese realize that there is a common ground in which both can adapt to a multicultural work environment and pursue a shared goal.

Overall, the first steps towards understanding the potential of a company's multicultural setting begins by understanding the different dimension that influence people's behavior. In this matter the study of Hofstede on the six dimension model of culture, facilitates to determine the social structure individuals are likely to follow. This frame of actions can also help organizations regarding marketing decision, to understand customer behavior (Mooradian & Swan, 2006).

The first dimension, states the inequality of the decision making process, a culture with a small power of distance will be more participative and opened to accept recommendations from the subordinates (Verluyten, 2010). An example of this behavior is the creation on unions on the USA, in which workers want to be consulted and heard in decisions that a company makes. Enabling employees to have this association reduces the power of distance between employees and managers.

In contrast, high power of distance societies the hierarchy that a person has remains in his favor despite of the situation, employees accepts this unfair authority even outside the working space (Verluyten, 2010).

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For better understanding of this concepts take the example given in the movie Gung Ho, in which the Japanese general manager would give the same treatment to his boss regarding the time or place, even when the superior made the team stay long hours working, when he visited the managers house, on the phone or even in family emergencies, they would consider rude to speak up and contradict their superior. Compared to the American workers' union who demanded increases on their salaries and full employment even when the situation wasn't pro-employee.

Hofstede's second dimension talks about society and whether or not people are group orientated or individualistic. "Two-thirds of Americans say it is important not to get involved in the problems of others: you have to take care of yourself and if you have energy left, then help others" (Verluyten, 2010, p. 145). This approach explains the relationship between staff and managers which is found among mutual benefits. Americans above all want to watch out for their self's and their family, there is no bound with the company therefore loyalty towards the team are minimal (Subhash, 2001).

In contrast, eastern countries create a bond with fellow co-workers so that only by working together they can reach the company's goals, in exchange for their work, the organization takes good care of their employees creating a father-son relationship, in the form of life-time employment, rewards for the performance of the team, personal mentorship, to name a few (Verluyten, 2010).

To recognize this behavior it's imperative to analyze the culture the company is living and/or trying to adapt to. For instance when Assan Motors Corporation started to move workers around the production line, some workers ended up doing what they consider to be diminishing tasks, such as swapping the floor. The American worker's first reaction is to resign, when they consider the relationship worker-manager is uneven.

In the case of Japanese culture having a collectivistic approach leads to employee loyalty as if they were a family, which is why it comes natural to employ a family member, friends or relatives in the same company. (Verluyten, 2010) As seen on the movie Gung Ho among Japanese managers one of them was the CEO's nephew who acted as a "double agent"

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providing continuous information to his uncle about the management and problems on the new American production plant.

In respect to the next dimension studied, societies can also be categorized as feminine or masculine which "refers to the distribution of values between the genders which is another fundamental issue for any society, to which range of solution can be found" (Hofstede, 2011, p. 12).

A strong, competitive, fact orientated culture will be defined as masculine. In this society, solving problems, such as when Assan Motor foreman finds his friend bothering the manager's wife in the supermarket and when confronting him they get into a fight, this competitive and personal approach defines a masculine society (Hofstede, 2011). In addition, other characteristic is to consider work the main activity on a person's life, to obtain career success rather than a thriving family life. Japanese culture is also considered as a masculine culture, when expending long hours working and leaving important family events a side (Subhash, 2001) such as the being present on the delivery of one's own baby, as seen in the movie Gung Ho, when the CEO was inspecting the plant one of the Japanese manager's wife was delivering their baby, but because work still needed to be done, none of them could leave.

Whereas a feminine approach resolves conflicts with discussion and compromising, highlights feelings and is consider a value orientated society where there family and work are equally important (Hofstede, 2011).

The fourth dimension on Hofstede's study is weak or strong uncertainty avoidance and talks about whether or not uncertainty is a problem in an organization (Subhash, 2001).

Weak uncertainty societies are distinguished for approaching a confusing situation relaxed and in a confident way, these are opportunities to learn and accept diverse ways of working. Therefore shifting jobs and innovative ideas come natural to them (Hofstede, 2011).

Remaining confident when facing a board meeting that could redeem or doom his home town was the attitude that Michael Keaton in his roll has Hunt Stevenson in the movie Gung Ho did, an example of facing new cultural barriers with a relaxing line.

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In the other hand, strong uncertainty avoidance as the Japanese culture, people would feel resistant toward going in new unknown experiences where there is minimal guidance. People with this feature prefer to stay on a job that they can polish than to start a new perhaps more challenging one from the bottom up. To reduce these situations punctuality and precision are part of the daily routine (Subhash, 2001), such as quality control which is carefully control for imperfections. In the production line in Assam Motor imperfections were measure and attributed to an employee to keep precision.

Regarding the short/long term orientation Hofstede compares a country's effort to concentrate in past or future events. Short term orientated cultures, like the American tend to consider that the "most important events in life occurred in the past or take place now" (Hofstede, 2011) not look forward in the future. They become inspired from great achievements from the past and make plans from the present (Hofstede, 2011). For instance the management style of Hunt Stevenson throughout Gung Ho movie focused on dealing with last minute problems, every new decision or change made by the Japanese administration reflected on the employees' attitude, when Hunt is able to convince his fellow co-workers into compliance he loses control of the plan and the employees goes on strike. Opportune actions were needed to stop cultural clashes on the start of operation but short- orientation culture reacts upon current events.

Long-Term Orientation is characterized by believing that future holds the most memorable moments of a person's life. Nevertheless, traditions set a background in which people react and plan future actions (Hofstede, 2011). For example, by the end of the challenge proposed by Stevenson of assembling 15 000 cars in one month, the CEO of the factory, Mr. Sakamoto relied on his traditional beliefs of team work, perseverance and started to appreciate the potential and future outcomes that a multicultural factory can produce.

The newest dimension of culture was added 2010, it has been define as the "happiness research" (Hofstede, 2011, p. 15) and explains whether or not the culture promotes or condemns natural human desires such as entertaining, pleasure or gratification. (Hofstede, 2011). Restrained societies don't manifest emotions and have authoritarian social restrictions. Compared to indulgence countries which can a freedom of speech, consider to

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have control of their life's, stating as a characteristic been happy (Hofstede, 2011). This contrast can be illustrated when looking at the characters personality, in one hand there is Mr. Sakamoto, an illustration of the restrained Japanese culture, he does not express his emotion such as laughing or gives positive reinforcements to the team restraining his employees. On the other hand, Hunt Stevenson pretends to have control of his own life, when really all things are adding up against him. He always speaks his mind and shows and happy face.

The contrast of cultural dimensions and cultures led to several clashes, these took place throughout the movie, and the difficulties they faced are described as follows:

- 1) Different sense of humor. Especially the moment when Hunt met with Japanese executives during their first meeting

From American SRC:

Hunt is a good man, humorous and kind of easy going person and he is not paying much attention when it comes to the protocol. He attempted to introduce himself in broken Japanese, which is in Hunt's perspective a good start to impress the Japanese executives, but they didn't looked impressed at all. Hunt, realized that and then tried to recover from this situation by switching to English and trying to break the ice by making some jokes but the Japanese did not seem interested and still acted in a cold stony style.

From Japanese SRC:

The Japanese consider a meeting as a serious thing, they will never make jokes during a business meeting. They will consider as if Hunt is not being serious about doing business with them. The Japanese tend to ignore any unnecessary talking during the meeting, they just want Hunt to directly discuss the things that need to be addressed, without wasting any time for ice-breaking opening remarks and humor.

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2) Hunt put up a picture of a woman in one of the slides of his presentation

From American SRC:

Hoping to break the silence during the meeting, Hunt shows a picture of a woman in his presentation. This effort was not working.

From Japanese SRC:

For The Japanese and maybe for most Asian people, they are polite and stick to the norm of politeness. They will consider it is not appropriate to show a picture of woman with a low-cut blouse in a formal meeting, especially when the meeting is supposed to discuss serious things, and more over when the executives of the company are present. They will consider that as embarrassing action.

3) Exchanging Business Cards

From American SRC:

American business people see business cards as an important source of future information, but just that's it, they consider it important but they will exchange business card **casually**, they don't have a formal way to exchange business cards. It doesn't mean that they don't appreciate the counterparts' business card, it is only that they just consider that as a common thing that not need to be treated as something special that need to be conducted in such formal way.

From Japanese SRC:

In Japan, the exchange of business cards is **formal** it's a form of self-introduction with the aim of remembering the other person's name and role to aid future correspondence.

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It's helpful to think of the actual business card itself as being the face of the businessperson. This is meant in both a literal and figurative sense in that the business card contains vital information identifying the other person, and also that it demands that the receiver treats the card with the utmost respect, as if it were a physical extension of that person.

There even some rules in conducting business cards exchange:

- a. The most senior people will do the exchange first.
 - b. Present your business card and take the counterparts' business card using two hands, and it is will more appropriate if after receiving your counterparts business card you try to spell the name written on it, just to make sure you spell it correctly.
 - c. Ensure the card is turned towards the receiver.
 - d. Keep received cards on display for the duration of the meeting.
- 4) Hunt seated straight after the business card were exchanged

From American SRC:

Americans view the meeting as something serious but they will not conduct the meeting in a rigid but instead in a flexible way. You may have seat at any place around the meeting table, it does not mean that you don't appreciate the most senior man in the room, but American people feel that everybody in the meeting room is equal regardless of his/her position. So the position of seat does not mean that they don't respect the counterparts.

From Japanese SRC:

In a business meeting with the Japanese or even most Asian people, the seating arrangement had been predetermined before the meeting took place, the seating position will be determined by the host of the meeting, and it reflects the importance

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of the meeting participants. **Do not just sit anywhere**; if you are attending a meeting in an Asian country, the host will direct you to a certain seat that has been arranged for you. Usually, the most senior/respected person will sit at the head of the meeting table. The rest of the participants will take their seats accordingly based on their rank or position. As for the counterpart delegation, those with the highest status sit closest to the meeting chairman. In an Asian country, you should wait for the meeting chairman to tell you to be seated. Last but not least, another important thing, at the end of the meeting, please be seated in your seat until the meeting chairman has stood up.

5) When the Japanese delegation arrived at the airport in Hadleyville

From American SRC:

The American try to honor their guests by bringing a red carpet, which is in fact borrowed from some local theatre, by doing so the Americans wanted to show their respect to their guests.

From the Japanese SRC:

One of the Japanese custom is to always take off their shoes before entering a home or in this case before stepping on the red carpet. For the Japanese, shoes are not meant to be worn inside a house or inside some place that considered as sacred and special, because Japanese don't want the floor (in the movie, the red carpet) to stain the carpet with some dirt that they might have in their shoes. When the Japanese stepped down from the airplane ladder, and found out the red carpet has been installed, it made them feel as if they had to take off their shoes, and luckily the major of the city followed.

6) Morning exercises before work

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From American SRC:

American workers don't have the time to exercise before going to work, when they come to work they will just simply go to work. On the first day of the joint venture, Kazihiro addresses the American workers: "We must build spirit. We must be a team, one, with one purpose only. Everyone thinking only of the company." He intended to build this spirit by having the workers exercise together. The workers resist until Hunt begins doing the exercise. Eventually the workers finally join the exercise, but in their own exercise styles rather than according to the Japanese regimen.

From Japanese SRC:

Healthy conditions is important for Japanese people, they love exercising a lot. Through exercise, the Japanese believed that one of the key drivers of a company's success is the workers themselves. The Japanese consider its workers as an asset to the company that have to be maintained to get the most out of the asset. The morning exercise also has another advantage in building the sense of togetherness among the workers, then this togetherness, in some extent also leads to decrease in accident rates, the increase in productivity, and the employee's absentee for sick is reduced significantly. In addition to those mentioned benefit, employee morale and the employees feel as if they are mutual part of the company itself.

7) Different way to paint the car

From American SRC:

Americans love to do things that they have been used to do it, the feel that there's nothing wrong with doing it the "American way", as long as they can finish the task.

From Japanese SRC:

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The Japanese have their own style in painting the car, they will just paint the part that needs to be painted, and just spraying the paint in every part, the Japanese will consider as ineffective and inefficient.

8) Saving Face

From American SRC:

When Hunt saw Kazihiro in the management training program wearing some ribbons of shame, from Hunt's perspective, he was wondering what that was all about and maybe felt that those ribbons of shame have nothing to do with future performance of the managers. But for the Japanese, the using of ribbons of shame is commonly used to motivate workers to perform better in the future. The Japanese even consider it as a normal thing, when they display the punishment a managers who was in management training program in public (in the street). For the American people, they just don't do such things, because they will consider that as a humiliation.

Another example that American consider saving face is very important, when conflict arises when one of the Japanese managers, had an argument with Buster (one of the workers), and then handed a broom to Buster to sweep the floor, Buster didn't accept that punishment, because he felt humiliated, because the Japanese manager punished him in front of other workers.

From Japanese SRC:

The high-context style of the Japanese emphasizes harmony and "saving face." An example in the film is when the Americans challenge the Japanese to a game of softball. Buster cheats when he intentionally knocks a man down. Rather than speaking up about the incident, the Japanese accept the loss and leave. Another example when high and low context styles clash is when Audrey and Hunt were

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invited for dinner at Kazihiro's house. After the meal, Kazihiro wants to discuss business. For the Japanese women, when the husband mentioned that they wanted to discuss business, means this is a cue for the women to leave, but in the other hand Audrey stays. Hunt, realizing that the Japanese feel uncomfortable with the Audrey still in the dinner table, directly asks her to leave, but the Japanese men, who clearly don't want her there, say nothing. The Japanese don't want Audrey to feel embarrassed, so they don't say a thing even though they clearly don't want her to be there.

- 9) When one of the workers got hurt, one of Japanese managers did not seem to care and forces the other workers to back to work

From American SRC:

American people are well known as hard workers, but they pay attention to safety issues and take care of any worker who gets hurt. When the Japanese manager forced them to go back to work, for the American perspective it is not a sympathetic behavior.

From Japanese SRC:

For the Japanese reaching a company target is highly important, they will not let the accident of one worker hurt or delay the production process.

- 10) Feeling of being equal between the employee and the managers

From American SRC:

The American workers, always believe that regardless what kind of position you have in the company, you still have the right to speak or to express your mind in making decisions especially when it is related to the fate of company. In a joint venture, this can cause conflict between the Japanese manager and the American

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workers. When the workers challenged the management decision, the Japanese managers feel as if they are not being respected by the American workers, while in the other hand the American workers simply believe they are just standing up for their rights and there is nothing wrong from trying to express your mind.

From Japanese SRC:

The Japanese use a high power style. They accepted the fact that the manager will tell his workers exactly what to do, and then the workers will follow the orders without any complaint.

When conflict arises regarding a clash between cultures with specific relationships versus diffuse relationships, it causes a lot of tension between the parts, an example of what the conflict was and how it was solved is taken from the movie Gung Ho as well: Willie, one of the guy who works at the factory, asked to take the rest of the day off so he could be with his son who was having his tonsils removed. Hunter is upset because the Japanese supervisor is giving him a hard time for requesting the time off and he tries to smooth things with Kazihiro by explaining, "The guy just lives for his kids." Kazihiro says, "But work suffers."

For Kazihiro, the individual must sacrifice in order to achieve a long term goal, while Willie values how every person should be treated instead of measuring him by accomplished goals. It's clear that for the American, family is more important than the job, but the Japanese sees it in the other way, the Japanese will put the company first and above their personal needs or even family matters.

This issue was finally solved when Kazihiro tried to be more understanding of what entails an American way of thinking. In one of the scenes in the movie, Kazihiro stands up for one of his workers on this issue. Kazihiro wants to give the worker time off because his wife is in labor, but the Boss intimidates the worker into staying. This is a turning point for Kazihiro; he stands up to his boss and says, "We work too damn hard. This is not our lives, this is a factory. Our friends, our families should be our lives. We are killing ourselves". Actually

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Kazihiro understood something that he believes the Japanese could learn from Americans and put into practice. Kazihiro values individualism over collectivism and low power distance over high power distance.

Gung Ho means working together, but there's one force that influenced the two opposite cultures to work together.

Initially, was the fact that both Kazihiro and Stevenson wanted to save their jobs and fix their wrongs, in one hand Kazihiro was told that if he made one more mistake he was ruined and in the other hand Stevenson had lied to his friends and coworkers about the raise and how many cars they had to produce in order to get a better pay.

The biggest thing that helped both of them to solve their issues was that both Kazihiro and Stevenson wanted to be a little like the other, they realized what the other's strengths were; Kazihiro wanted to be more like Stevenson in terms of acknowledging that being supportive of your team is sometimes more important than measuring their performance by goals or targets and realizing that they needed to make their families and friends their priority, instead of being completely devoted to their jobs.

Similarly, Stevenson wanted to be more like Kazihiro, he realized he couldn't be the one man who saved the team, the hero that came to the rescue of everyone, because maybe he was taking on this role for the wrong reasons, he realized he put himself in front of the benefit of the town and all the workers, he learned how to value collectivism.

Consequently, they both feel upset of how bad they failed, they discuss the things they regret and what could have done differently, they both realize how their own culture and their values and tendencies were being counterproductive and was doing more wrong that right to the factory, they agree that if they could get one last chance they could work better, now that they know that there's room for improvement and they actually know what needs to be done in order to make these changes, improve and accomplish their goal.

Lastly, they go back to the factory and aim to build 1000 cars together, as a team; their teamwork spirit is contagious and the rest of the workers and supervisors join them and help them achieve their goal.

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Working for a Japanese company is like joining a new family, being adopted by the organization gives the workers relatively large number of privileges. The company offers a life time employment to the employees who generously enjoy lots of social aid and day care for their kids and many other aspects. However, the employee should, from his side, show devotion and fidelity to the company. In this type of workplace, traditions have substantial influence on the relationship between the group members including the boss, hierarchy is well recognized, formality is a must, orders are made to be followed and the centralization of the decision is obvious.

Assan HRM arrives on the scene in the very beginning of the movie, before the watchers know what was happening. Around ten people were screaming loudly in an unusual way, they were standing in rows, wearing the same white uniform, expressing some kind of profound deep inner emotion; one of them fainted in the middle of the practice.

In the following scene, a confused, scared, feeling guilty guy appears. Moreover, he put 10 "ribbons of shame", tried to ask for mercy and forgiveness of his mistakes. He was completely indulged in the practice with full attention. In another scene he was beaten by his supervisor on the side walk in public.

Japanese first week of their residence in the American town after reopening the car factory didn't try to really understand the American culture and their life style. The Japanese run through their habits and live their routine the way they lived it back home, they bath in the river together and eat their traditional meal without any effort to integrate with American's way of living, even though they didn't pay attention that their co-workers were laughing at them and made jokes about the way they eat rice. On the other hand, the Japanese who own the plant run the business according to their point of view regardless that most of the workers are Americans who were at the first place the employees of the same factory, they have their own way to work, they have even accustomed to the place.

All the misinterpretation of the new environment and the insufficiency of information about the different way of thinking of the American co-workers led to many clashes between them and the Japanese which led to a low productivity first of all. Japanese HRM didn't pay

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attention that Americans laugh at them while having lunch nor while bathing, that mistake delayed the problem. The Japanese management focuses on productivity without trying to better understand the employees' approaches, how they communicate, how they live their life or even how they work. Moreover, Japanese managers were so strict in the procedures in the factory. They tried to impose the Japanese manners during the manufacturing process. "There is one way to run a factory, one way!!" according to the Japanese boss. Another conflict took place when an accident happened to one American worker, his hand was stuck in a machine, the rest of the workers rushed to help him and the whole manufacturing process stopped. A Japanese manager asked about what happened and when he figured out the situation, he didn't understand why the work stopped.

- "one of the worker had accident"

- "why the others stop working" then he yelled: "back to work! Back to work!!! "

Another scene, when Ms. Kazihiro asked for permission from the big boss to one Japanese worker to go home during working hours because his wife was in labor, the worker was afraid to admit that he wanted to go and refused to take the rest of the day off. At that time Mr. Kazihiro bursted in an irritated way and said:

- "This is insane, we worked too damn hard, this is not our life, this is a factory. Our friends, our family should be our life"

Mr. Kazihiro, the Japanese CEO in the American plant, didn't make extra effort to reduce the differences between the two parts of the conflict. He was confused and irritated without knowing what to do. However, he had a blurred idea about the solution. He knew that Japanese part should pay more effort to integrate in the American habits and work style. He was hardly trying to implement his idea back home with his own family. This was obvious when he insisted that she should talk in English, he said: "practice your English, don't speak Japanese with me". His kids played with western games and watched American broadcast television. Once the big boss from japan paid him a visit at home, his son came to the room, holding a plastic machine gun and screamed "G.I.Joe" representing the American soldier. The problem was that he didn't have enough courage to apply the same strategy at work. And the conflict went bigger and bigger.

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All these observations lead us to develop a solution plan that is 100 % feasible and not at all in conflict with any of both sides' strategies. Some prepositions of the solutions are explained in the following paragraphs.

HRM department has instruments to fulfill the tasks of the company in a better way, those tools include an employee handbook which explains rules and regulations that should be performed by the workers in order to fit the company's values. A perfect usage for this handbook would be possible by developing tolerable and acceptable rules for both parts of the job. Rules that make the other part capable to better predict the opposite act or react, depending on the situation, and avoid any misunderstanding. A good performance system might skillfully analyze the effort for each worker which could steer the manufacturing process faster than ever. Besides, it will help to differentiate hard workers from lazy ones.

A clear reward and discipline systems definitely facilitate manager's job and ease the employees to work responsibly and precisely. HRM also can practice a strong training; the training should take place before coming to a new working environment which consumes less time to adjust. They can display as well a clear presentation for the American in order to give them an idea about Japanese custom and social habits along with adequate knowledge of their practices inside the organization. HRM should arrange a social event at the beginning of the reopening, let the employees meet with each other and get to know the new co-workers better. This might help break the glass and avoid lots of later conflicts between them.

American and Japanese organizations practice different types of management. They express collectivism dimension in high degree, they depend on harmony rather than orders, and care more about relationship between group members than achieving the task. Terry Myers, senior vice president of Tokai Bank once said: "in many Japanese companies, the human resources manager is given virtually no authority".

On the other hand, American companies need the clarity in the management structure. They offer specific training more often than most of Japanese companies do. While

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working, American workers prepare for him an appropriate work environment. Additionally, because task prevails over relationship, they find suitable tools to fulfill his assignment.

It is obvious in the movie that Japanese managers give importance for the details during the process in the plant, like the way the employee should paint the car. They try to keep the harmony between them and practice their ritual together. But they might be responsible of cleaning the floor when they failed at tasks. However, the American manager, Hunt puts all his effort to complete the task without paying attention to his employees' needs. He encourages them to get the job done at all costs and think about their families as their priorities. At the same time, American workers are allowed to put music during work, they can smoke and the paint the cars the way they think it is good.

In other words, both cultures have advantages and disadvantages. It is so stupid when they work together not to mix the advantages and get rid of disadvantages. A Japanese American team which considers the work colleagues as a family but at the same time respects private issues and maintains a certain level of solidarity is a dream team for any company. Moreover, a qualified team with enjoyable general work conditions might be much more fruitful than qualified individuals working in their private universes or even generalists working in a strict, well defined working environment.

In a nut shell, mixing cultures can be much more fruitful, enjoyable, efficient and effective than any other closed environment.

And that is the main interest of all international companies!!

The movie is a clear example of how team work leads to better results, being aligned with each team member and understanding how working as a group and helping one another helps accomplish a goal, when they started working together given that their job had to be done in a production line and with a time constrain, they were able to work faster and more efficiently, both cultures understood and agreed on the fact that team work should always involve the managers.

A good example of how both cultures realized this is when Kazihito and Stevenson, hit rock bottom regarding being satisfied with the job they were doing, they finally realized what a

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great job they could have accomplished and decided to give it one last try, they managed to spread their enthusiasm to the rest of the workers to accomplish their goal and assemble the 15000 cars, which generates above team work a sense of camaraderie this is clearly seen when even the Japanese supervisors went to the production line and started helping the American workers and they all begin to finally work together as a team; they learned from their differences and similitudes to accomplish their common goal.

At first, the team from Japan see how having a job is a blessing, and the company is their big ally for which they work as much as it takes without getting paid for extra hours if it's necessary for the company to grow, while the American think of it as something that is sadly necessary in order to have money and to have a decent living.

The Japanese learned from the American that individuals should not sacrifice their personal interests to the team's vision, they understood how a shared vision becomes an extension of your personal vision, and they finally came to terms to agreeing that their job and their company should not be above your personal considerations.

They also understood that work will not be affected if you give your family the importance and time they deserve and how there must always be a balance between your job and your personal life outside of the office, not making one less or more important than the other but finding a perfect balance so neither one suffers. In the movie, two good examples of how the Japanese weren't involved with their family and their lives is seen when Stevenson asks Kazihiro how they are liking America, to what he only answered I don't know, I haven't asked. The other example is seen when it's Kazihiro's son's birthday and he says he doesn't have time to help his wife assemble the bike because he's too busy working.

The American learned from the Japanese the importance of doing all the tasks in the production line the right way, having a method for doing all the different tasks, understanding what needs to be done, how to do it better and aiming to have close to zero percent defect, they recognized how quality control can help them improve in the long run with their job, making sure everything that is being assembled is being done properly, so at the end of the assembling process there are almost zero defects that need to be corrected.

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However, if at a given time the company needs urgent and important actions that involve the whole team, they need to stay and put on some extra hours, help and work together to find a solution that is going to fix the issue as fast as possible.

The Japanese team also learned that there is no right way to run the factory, both models, the Japanese and the American weren't the answer to solve the problems the company was having in terms of productivity, this is seen at the beginning of the movie, while the Japanese were focused on productivity, the Americans only wanted to work the same amount of hours they were working before the factory closed but they wanted to be paid as much as possible.

What they were doing was failing because they never took the time to identify the different cultural frameworks and they never did any cross cultural training, when they finally came to terms to understanding why their imposed model was failing, they had to find some common ground and find the best practices from both the American and Japanese perspective, that of course are being influenced by culture, and implement them of course, after everyone agreed on this. They understood how management is a cultural aspect, there's no absolute right, and they learned the importance of understanding people's values.

There was no sense of empowerment within the American workers because they were not given the chance to suggest what could be changed or done differently in their activities but instead a really strict method was being imposed. This can be seen when they forbid them to listen to music while working, video cameras recording their every move and strict and longer working hours.

The lesson was finally learned towards the end of the movie when one of the Japanese supervisors was seen enjoying the music they were playing while working at the line and it did not seem to affect his performance at the job he was doing, it might have even encouraged him to do a better job, because he felt that aside from doing his job, he was enjoying himself and having a little fun while doing it; showing that there's nothing wrong to consider your job as something fun to do instead of something you have to do.

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In the same context, the Japanese learned how important communication between the supervisors and the workers is key to make a business run better, make the employees feel like they are involved, like they matter and like their voices are being heard; the Americans were doing this in their different union meetings, which at the beginning made the Japanese feel a little afraid of what these meetings could do, but at the end even though it's not said I believe they learned the importance of having open communication with their employees; dialogue was another important part and it's mentioned in a meaningful way because with an open dialogue you can get to know the real interests as it is interpreted through words, finally practice is the basis of all dialogue, discussion and of course success.

The Americans learned from the Japanese that there are some things they could use in their daily work life, at first they seemed reluctant to do their morning exercises before their job begins but for the Japanese this was the best way to begin their morning before heading to work, maybe because they feel more energetic which might lead to a better job performance and productivity.

At the end of the movie once the factory was operating once they accomplished their goal, all of the employees are seen in the yard standing in line waiting for one of the supervisors to guide them with their morning exercise routine and they all seemed to be enjoying this new practice at work and just like Kazihiro said the first day the factory reopened at the beginning of the movie: "We must build spirit. We must be a team." That's what they achieved, finally being and working as a team.

From the experience of working together, both Japanese and American realized the importance of building a stronger group rather than having individuals working with no connection to any other worker, the skills and knowledge of each can and will improve the overall performance in the factory, motivation will increase, and new ideas will be brought to the table.

No company can replicate the diversity of their workforce, which is the most important asset and competitive advantage a company can have.

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