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JOB SEARCH—JAPAN: STRATEGIES FOR GAINING EMPLOYMENT IN A JAPANESE FIRM/SUBSIDIARY OR MULTINATIONAL SUBSIDIARY IN JAPAN

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important activities that MBA/MIM students are concerned about is their placement in future careers. Hereafter, the MBA/MIM students are referred to as the students. This paper deals with American and non-Japanese students hoping to secure employment in Japanese companies, foreign subsidiaries in Japan or Japanese subsidiaries throughout the world, including in the U.S.A.

The students may have more questions when it comes to finding a position in one of the above mentioned companies than they would working for American or European companies. This is due to the fact that finding a position in Japanese-affiliated companies may have unfamiliar and unknown aspects.

The students will obviously find it difficult to prepare themselves for securing employment in Japanese-affiliated companies. This may be due to the way Japanese companies conduct their recruiting activities or define their recruiting criteria, which may be different from the American and/or European way of recruiting. Thus, it is very critical for the students to understand the Japanese recruiting process well in advance.

The purpose of this paper is to describe and suggest a useful step-by-step process for preparing students for positions in Japanese-affiliated companies. In an effort to help students secure future career employment with Japanese-affiliated companies, this study will provide information from the beginning of a job search to actually receiving a job contract: career search, prospective employers, Japanese resumes, cultural areas, mock interviews, job interviews, interpretations of a questionnaire and a

recommended strategy.⁸ All of the personal names and companies' names are fictitious to protect persons and companies' identities.

COMPANY INFORMATION

The students may find it difficult to obtain information on the company that they are interested in. They may have difficulty in finding a position in a Japanese-affiliated company in Japan. Reviewing the company's web site is one method to use in order to obtain a general view of the target company. The web site lists such information as type of business, composition of products or sales, and the number of employees.

The second method may be to read the *Nikkei Kaisha Jyoubou* (Japanese Affiliated Companies' Information) published by the Japan Economic Newspaper Company. This publication lists various pieces of information including the corporate profile, financial information, and organizational data. If the students are interested in the current, or previous year's, condition of a company, an annual report of a company is also helpful.

The fourth method is to purchase job recruiting magazines such as *Partner Audition* (*snukan shigzoto hakken—weekly job finding*). These magazines are published every week, costing about \$2.00 per issue. In order for a company to recruit employees, the publishing company charges \$5,000 for a half a page advertisement for two weeks. Other job recruiting magazines include the following:⁹

⁸All of the personal names and companies' names are fictitious to protect persons and companies' identities.

⁹I have listed the names of the publications and contact information for students who may be interested in obtaining the publications:

- a. *On the Front Line: Job Hunting in the Global Market, Kokusai-ha no Tenshoku*
Publishing Company: ALC Publishing Company
P.O. Box 55
Suginami Yubinkyoku, Tokyo
- b. *International Recruit Magazine*
Venture Placement Guide International written in Japanese
Publishing Company: Recruit LC.I.
Internet: <http://www.rici.com/icn>
Telephone:
U.S.A.: 1-(800) 859-8535
England: 0800-96-2044
Europe (call collect): 1-201-216-3186
Asia: Peking / Shanghai: 10800-2085
Taiwan: 0080-81-2145

- *Venture Placement Guide International*
- *Nikkei Placement Guide International*
- *International Recruit Magazine*
- *On the Front Line: Job Hunting in the Global Market*
(*Kokusai-ha no Tenshoku*)
- *Nikkei Student Journal*
- *UNI-PLATZ*

In addition, job-recruiting activities include utilizing the university career centers, and headhunters and placement agencies. An annual job recruiting career service conference has been offered in Boston in November for long-term career positions.

PERSISTENT FOLLOW-UP FOR LONG-TERM EMPLOYMENT

When students search for a long-term career, their preparation in finding a position should be carefully designed and planned well in advance, taking a step-by-step approach.

When John Smith, for example, first contacted the manager of a major American investment subsidiary in Tokyo, he took a course called “Asian

-
- Other areas (call collect): 81-3-3575-5549
 - All other areas (call collect): 1-201-216-3186
 - c. Nikkei *Kaisha Jyohou* (Japanese Affiliated Companies' Information) Nihon Keizai Shinbunsha
Publisher: Yoshifumi Ozawa
Publishing Company: Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc.
 - d. Nikkei *Placement Guide International*
Internet: <http://www.dicr.com>
DISCO International Career Resources, Inc.
152 West 57~' Street
27~hFloor
New York, NY 10019
Telephone: 1-(800) 999-0179
 - e. Nikkei *Student Journal*
Publisher: Yasuo Koike
Publishing Company: Nikkei Jigyo Shuppansha
2-8-4 Kanda-Tsukasa cho
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan
Telephone: (03) 3256-7074
 - f. UNI-PLATZ
Publisher: Media 21 Company, Ltd.
EMG Kodenma-cho Building, 4th Floor
7-10 Nihonbashi Kodenma-cho
Chuo-ku, Tokyo, Japan 103
Telephone: (03) 3665-1010
Fax: (03) 3665-1011

Financial Institutions” offered during the winterim period at Thunderbird. Lectures and field trips were conducted at various companies in Tokyo and Hong Kong. John was particularly interested in working for the American subsidiary in Tokyo, even before coming to Thunderbird. From the first semester, he carefully took the kinds of courses that were either related to the position or beneficial to making his dream a reality.

When the course invited the manager of the subsidiary, Mr. White, for the first time to get acquainted with the class, John met with Mr. White and later expressed his strong desire by e-mail to work for the subsidiary. Later, John told the author “You have to make it happen if you want a job. You should not be bashful.”¹⁰ Through networking, Mr. White became aware of John’s interest in working for the subsidiary.

The second opportunity for contact came when John sent a thank-you note to Mr. White through e-mail, expressing his gratitude. John also took this opportunity to inform Mr. White of computer skills that he promised to study. The objective of sending the e-mail was not merely to express his appreciation to Mr. White, but to let him know that he was highly motivated in obtaining a position in the subsidiary.

The third opportunity came when the author (John’s teacher) visited and spoke with Mr. White at the subsidiary. Not only did the teacher recommend John to Mr. White, but he also suggested that John’s personality would be suitable for the Japanese corporate environment.

To Mr. White, ensuring that John’s personality and attitude would fit with the company’s culture was important. Mr. White really needed to know that John could get along with the Japanese employees, especially after having some negative experiences with two American employees who had to be transferred back to headquarters in New York.¹¹

Endorsement by the teacher, to a certain degree, assured Mr. White, who planned to attend the annual job recruiting activities in Boston in November. At the Boston conference, both John and Mr. White were quite confident that they would meet, and a series of job interviews would be conducted for all candidates in two days. John knew that he would not have received the job offer if he had not taken these steps prior to the meeting and interviews. He also knew that informing Mr. White of his motivation and commitment certainly increased the possibility of a

¹⁰Interview with Mr. John Smith on November 29, 1999 at Thunderbird.

¹¹Interview with Mr. White on August 10, 1999 in Tokyo, Japan.

job interview. John prepared his English resume, but did not create a Japanese resume.

RESUMES

American Resumes

In American resumes, the most recent information is written first. This is because the newer information has more value to the interviewers than old information. In addition, they tend to have more detailed information about previous job experience than Japanese resumes, so that the interviewers can figure out the possibility of utilizing the job experiences and skills of the candidates. American resumes are usually one page with very little information on the candidate's family background.

Japanese Resumes

Japanese resumes usually have two pages. Education and job experience information are listed in chronological order. In most cases, phrases and fragments are written rather than complete sentences, using as many Chinese characters as the students can on two pages.

On the second page, qualifications and licenses, including a driver's license, can be written. Perhaps the most striking area is the space provided for personal information on the second page. In this column the students are supposed to hand write their family members' names with their ages. The interviewers can, and most likely will, ask personal questions regarding the parents' occupations, the siblings' jobs and their marital status. Although asking such questions in job interviews in the U.S. is against the law, it is not against the law in Japan.

Japanese resumes are usually handwritten, requiring painstaking efforts. Some resumes may be written using a computer; however, the traditional way to prepare a resume is by hand. In Japan, the saying "one's writing is a reflection of the mind," is still cherished. It implies that a person who writes neatly tends to have a good personality. When the interviewers look at a neatly written resume, they usually get a good impression of the candidate before starting the interviews.¹²

When the students prepare for a Japanese interview, they should be prepared to answer questions relating to the contents of the resume. For example, some Japanese words on the resume include "*shokureki*" (job experience), "*gakureki*" (educational background), "*nyuugaku*"

¹²Interview with Mr. Takahashi, President of an Australian subsidiary on August 10, 1998

(entering a school), *sotsugyou*” (graduating from a school), *nyuusha*” (entering a company) and *taisyoku*” (resigning a company). Since these words are already used in the resume, the interviewee should use them without difficulty in a job interview. However, before a job interview takes place, it is recommended that the students participate in a mock interview.

MOCK INTERVIEW

Many mock interviews are held at Thunderbird. John’s mock interview was conducted by two Japanese students. According to all students, the questions that the author asked in the mock interviews and the questions that the interviewers actually asked in the real interviews were not the same except in John’s interview. However, other students mentioned that the mock interviews provided the kind of atmosphere to set their mind in the frame of formal interviews. The frame of reference also helped them develop and maintain confidence for their real interviews.¹³

The mock interviews also provided the students with insight into the cultural differences between how Americans and Japanese conduct interviews. Just as an American student greets American interviewers by shaking hands, in a Japanese interview, the student bows courteously when entering the room and does not sit down until told to do so. During the interview session, it is important for the student to answer the questions briefly. At the end of the interview, it is nice to express appreciation in Japanese, *“kyoowa oisogashiitokoro mensetsu no kikai o ataete kudasaimashite arigatou gozaimasu. kongotomo yoroshiku onegai itashimasu.”* (Thank you for giving me an opportunity for an interview today. Please treat me favorably.) and bow again before leaving the room.

CULTURAL SUBTLETY

It just so happened that when John went back to the reception table on the second day, one of the company representatives bowed to John courteously, suggesting that John come behind the table area. He naturally bowed simultaneously. He realized that the representative might

¹³The author has conducted or directed four mock interviews in the past and four students reported that their mock interviews were helpful in preparing themselves for the interviews. They all received job offers.

do or say something important; the representative brought a Japanese female executive who had interviewed John on the first day. She greeted John, showing a big smile and said, "Congratulations! Here is a copy of your contract. Please read it carefully and send the first page back to us if you accept our offer."¹⁴

Understanding cultural subtlety immensely helps students realize what the Japanese interviewers expect or think. In John's case, bowing in the interview represents respect and the representative's bow meant congratulations and respect. The students, after participating in their mock interviews, all received offers at the end of their interviews.¹⁵

JOB INTERVIEWS

When a job interview takes place, students should be at the site of the interview fifteen to twenty minutes earlier than the appointment time, relaxing and preparing for the interview. Judy felt that her early arrival was interpreted as showing that she was very motivated.¹⁶

Questions That Were Asked of John

American interviewers and Japanese interviewers usually do not look at the same aspects in a candidate. In many cases, American interviewers ask questions relating to the assessment and/or ability to perform jobs well, based on the candidate's job experience and background. During the winterim course John met Mr. White, who mentioned the kinds of skills that are necessary if John wished to work for the subsidiary.

Not only did John seek opportunities to learn and exercise the skills needed, but he also predicted the types of questions he would be asked in the actual interview. In Boston, John was interviewed in Japanese by two Japanese employees, while Japanese candidates were interviewed by Mr. White in English.

Being a subsidiary of an American investment company and, at the same time, being located in Tokyo dealing with Japanese clients, the

¹⁴Interview with Mr. John Smith.

¹⁵In addition to what John Smith was asked in his interview, a list of questions has been provided in Appendix A. These questions have been used by a subsidiary of an American financial company in Japan. The list of questions is also helpful because each question is accompanied by an explanation of why each was asked. In other words, students should be able to answer each question, making sure that they cover the reasons and objectives of these questions.

¹⁶"What Are Japanese Employers Looking For?" *Global Business Languages* (1999) 165.

subsidiary needed employees who could function effectively in both Japanese and American business cultures. In other words, the subsidiary needed bicultural employees.

For this reason, John was asked if an interview could be conducted in Japanese. The interviewer asked a lot of questions aimed at finding out how he thought, how he made decisions, how he dealt with and solved problems, and how he dealt with frustration and irritation.

One question, for example, was what he would do when an employee did not work as much as he should. John replied in Japanese, "I would be irritated." "Well how would you deal with the irritation?" John continued responding to the question. "You shouldn't criticize him. Perhaps something has happened and affected his life. Maybe his wife died; maybe he has a sick person in his family. Behind the scenes, not directly, you can find out why he is acting that way. If you can't, maybe you can ask him why he is acting that way."¹⁷

Another question was whether or not he would feel comfortable working with women older than himself, and whether or not he would mind starting at an entry-level position. Many of the questions sought to find out how patient John would be. Americans. Who work at the subsidiary typically have a hard time dealing with patience. They go in and institute changes very quickly with a top-down style. The Japanese employees are not happy about said new policies. "One reaction that comes from Japanese employees is that they are not cooperative. American employees cannot complete their tasks without the support of Japanese employees. They get frustrated. This is a problem. Are you a patient person?" John responded by saying, "I get things done in a bicultural environment."¹⁸

Another person asked John why he wanted to work for the subsidiary. He responded that working for the subsidiary had been his goal since 1991, even before going to Thunderbird. Later, John told the author that his desire to work for the subsidiary was received very well by the interviewers.

When John was invited to ask a question, he inquired about the degree of patience and ability necessary to fit in the organization. The interviewer replied that 90 per cent of employees are Japanese. The minority American group feels discriminated against because of the

¹⁷Interview with Mr. John Smith.

¹⁸Interview with Mr. John Smith.

language problems. Sometimes in the meetings, Japanese do not translate the conversations into English. This is one of the problems that American employees face.

In another case, Mr. Nakamura had a series of interviews for the position of vice president of sales in a joint venture company in Japan. The computer service joint venture company in Japan was composed of an American company, a Japanese trading company and a Japanese newspaper company. The board members were composed of four Americans and two Japanese. Mr. Nakamura was called to headquarters after the board had a meeting to recruit a new vice president of the sales department.

American Board Members' Questions

The American board members concentrated their questions on Mr. Nakamura's previous job experience at American Express in Tokyo. The board members tried to assess his ability to assume the job as vice president of sales of the new company based on his experience and skills.

One of the success stories that Mr. Nakamura mentioned to the board was when he was in charge of American Express' strategy of issuing only 10,000 platinum credit cards in Japan. The company issued only 10,000 cards in order to position the platinum credit card as an exclusive product. The strategy and service that the bank offered was a great success. Because of its exclusive service, many Japanese consumers wished to have the card.¹⁹

Mr. Nakamura told board members the following situation:

One service extended to a Japanese cardholder was when he had a conference to attend in New York. He took a taxi from Kennedy Airport to a hotel, reading the agenda of the conference in the taxi. As soon as he arrived at the hotel, he checked in. He was not aware that he had left his glasses in the taxi until he went to his room. Because he did not pay attention to the taxi company, he could not remember the name of the driver. He was at a loss! He finally called the platinum card office of Tokyo. The following day, he attended the conference, staying in New York for three days and returning to Japan. When he arrived home, his wife said that a small package was delivered the day before. To his surprise, he found his glasses in the package. This is the kind of service

¹⁹Interview with Mr. Nakamura, on August 13, 1999 at Thunderbird, The American Graduate School of International Management, Glendale, Arizona.

that American Express offered, as Mr. Nakamura expressed to one of the board members. He also mentioned that American Express hoped that the 10,000 cardholders would spend a large amount of money. The line of credit was such that a cardholder could purchase expensive items such as a castle in Europe or a jet plane.

Mr. Nakamura also explained the marketing strategy of the platinum card to the board members. In order to create an image of exclusivity, out of a Japanese population of 125 million, consumers who had had a problem making payments were automatically excluded; as well as those people who took advantage of the platinum card by purchasing electric appliances for business. Although the target market consisted of males, 40 years old and older, the bank did not directly go after them in order to introduce the platinum card. The bank predicted that one of the most powerful approaches to reach the target market was to target female partners, whether the female partners might be wives, girlfriends, friends or siblings. The bank suspected that when the men were asked to possess the platinum card by their wives, girlfriends, friends, or siblings, it would be very difficult for them to decline. This was where a weakness of Japanese males existed. In other words, the bank found an influencer to convince the target market.²⁰

Japanese Board Members' Questions

The two Japanese board members wished to find out whether or not Mr. Nakamura was an honest and sincere man. He realized that the vice president whom they were seeking was the kind of a person who fits in the image of the subsidiary. They were looking for a vice president whose leadership excels and who can maintain the image of the corporate culture as a group.

At the same time, the two board members were very traditional, hierarchically oriented businesspeople who expected that Mr. Nakamura would follow their advice. Mr. Nakamura made sure that he faithfully answered their questions and contributed to the interview process, showing that he would follow their advice. Because they were very traditional, Mr. Nakamura avoided using any words borrowed from English. He also took the attitude of an ordinary and common Japanese, rather than that of an MBA/MIM graduate. Mr. Nakamura knew that

²⁰Interview with Mr. Nakamura.

although the number of MBA/MIM graduates is on the rise in Japan, Japanese businesspeople still consider them as special people.

* * *

Finding a job takes a significant amount of effort that includes many steps such as persistent follow-up for long-term employment, writing a resume in English and Japanese, a mock interview, and a job interview. These preparations are solely performed by the students.

Along with the preparation for a long-term career, there is another aspect that students should be aware of. Each job search is unique and each interviewer has a different set of criteria. Before a job interview takes place, an important strategy is to know and predict what Japanese businesspeople think about the job candidates. Some questions are:

- What criteria do Japanese businesspeople generally use?
- What categories are emphasized more than others?
- Do interviewers consider the ability to communicate in Japanese?
- How much emphasis do they place on Japanese honorifics?

In an effort to find out the general opinions in these areas, the author conducted a survey by distributing 75 questionnaires in the Tokyo, Boston and Michigan areas from June to December 1999.²¹

SURVEY

Of 75 questionnaires, 56 were returned. The respondents comprised 47 male and 9 female businesspeople. The questionnaires were distributed to the following organizations:

- 1) Thunderbird, the American Graduate School of International Management, Glendale, Arizona (11 people)
- 2) A cigarette and foodstuffs company in Tokyo (14 people)

²¹Of 75 questionnaires, 56 completed questionnaires were returned to the author. These questionnaires were circulated at Thunderbird, the Boston and Michigan areas, in the U.S. and six companies in Japan from June 1 through December 31, 1999.

- 3) A stock and security investment company in Tokyo (4 people)
- 4) A petroleum company in Tokyo (9 people)
- 5) A pharmaceutical company in Tokyo (3 people)
- 6) Another pharmaceutical company in Tokyo (4 people)
- 7) A group of businesspeople in Tokyo (5 people)
- 8) A group of businesspeople in the Boston and Michigan areas (7 people)

ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Statement 1

Among American and/or foreign graduates, there is a group of graduates who can carry on a daily conversation in Japanese and another group of graduates who can speak Japanese quite well, write resumes in Japanese, speak in Japanese during job interviews, and do presentations in Japanese. If the second group of graduates were interested in working for your company, would you like to see and talk to them?

Background Information

By all means, I would like to see them.	13 responses
I would meet them and talk.	27 responses
I may or may not meet them.	9 responses
No need to meet them.	3 responses
I would not like to meet them.	1 response

Based on the figures, 40 businesspeople responded positively. For this reason, the students proficient in Japanese may have opportunities to meet with recruiters and, perhaps can request a job interview.

Statement 2

What are the main reasons that your company recruits graduates? Please indicate the most important category with a number 1. List as many categories as you wish. (A lower number indicates more emphasis is placed on the reason.)

memos, and (4) receive job interviews in Japanese. The abilities to negotiate in Japanese and to deal with clients in Japanese require much more training before one can start to work for a company. The ability to deal with clients in Japanese especially requires much more training which includes further understanding of the usage of honorific forms and expressions.

The manager of the investment company mentioned that American and foreign employees primarily concentrate on internal jobs, which include collecting data and analyzing financial information for purchasing certain types of stock, whereas native Japanese employees handle external business which includes assisting Japanese clients in order to ensure that business relationships go smoothly with the clients. John also mentioned that during his interview, regrettably, honorific forms and expressions did not come out naturally. Japanese honorific forms and expressions are areas which American and foreign students find difficult to learn.

Statement 4

When you recruit Americans and/or foreigners, what thoughts do you have on the candidates learning and knowing Japanese honorific forms and expressions? Please check as many as you wish. (The higher the percentage, the more statements represent importance to the respondent.

Rank Statements

	Thunderbird	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3	Company 4	Company 5	Company 6	-----	Michigan	Average
1.	Since the employees speak English among themselves internally, honorifics are not necessary; however, our clients are Japanese and, therefore, they should know how to use honorifics when speaking with our clients.									
2.	I would like employees to know Japanese honorifics when dealing with clients.									
3.	Japanese honorific forms and expressions are a must.									
5.	It is important to make a clear distinction between superiors and subordinates in the company and employees should use correct usage									

knowledge of cross-cultural aspects, (4) language, (5) communication, (6) ability to perform jobs, and (7) facing pressure.

In the same article, 29 questionnaires were distributed in 1996. The rank order of the criteria was (1) personality, (2) character, (3) rapport, (4) adaptability, (5) special field/skills, (6) job experience, (7) language, (8) motivation, (9) education, and (10) Japanese culture.

We have added four more criteria (1) (actual) job performance, (2) etiquette, (3) clothing, and (4) resume screening process. The differences in the ranking order of importance between the 1996 and 1999 studies are as follows:

Ranking 1996 Survey	1999 Survey
1. personality	(actual) job performance
2. character	job experience
3. rapport/cooperation	personality/ character
4. adaptability	sense of cooperation
5. special field	motivation
6. job experience	foreign languages (Japanese)
7. language	sense of adaptability
8. motivation	special skills
9. education	education
10. Japanese culture	understanding Japanese culture
11. grade	etiquette
12. student life	previous company's letter of recommendation
13. teacher's recommendation	school grades
14. resume	teacher's recommendation
15.	clothing
16.	student's extracurricular activities
17.	resume screening process

As we can see in the survey, actual job performance and job experience rank first and second respectively. However, from number three through ten, the order of importance has not changed much. In both cases, the 1996 and 1999 surveys demonstrate that the least emphasized categories are students' extra curricular activities, school grades, teacher's recommendation, clothing, and resume screening. Again, when

As the survey indicates, many businesspeople expect and hope that the students would know about the decision making process, *keiretsu*, and how to conduct meetings. In addition, many businesspeople believe that not being familiar with Japanese business practices makes it difficult to maintain a good rapport between supervisors, subordinates, host companies and clients.

Statement 7

When recruiting Americans and/or foreigners, you will have cross-culturally related problems with them. How do you think they should act during working hours?

CONCLUSION

Many MBA/MIM students told us that they spent seven to eight months before they landed a job offer. One student wrote one hundred cover letters and he was lucky to receive two replies for an interview. Job searches require tremendous effort, but knowing what the prospective Japanese recruiters wish to see will be helpful in receiving a job offer. The president of a subsidiary in Tokyo mentioned that when the candidate's goal and the job description meet, an offer would be made. In Japanese companies, including foreign subsidiaries, having a tremendous ability to perform tasks is one thing and getting along with other employees is another. In other words, the fact that a candidate excels and can do tasks smoothly based on previous experience does not necessarily mean that he/she can get a job offer. This is because the employee may be ostracized and may not be able to work together with other employees.

importance, each interviewee can demonstrate the strengths rather than weaknesses in his/her forthcoming job interviews.

APPENDIX A

The questionnaires were written in Japanese and circulated to the companies. This is a translation of the questionnaire.

July through October 1999 Akihisa Kumayama
Thunderbird, The American Graduate School
of International Management

Questionnaire for business practitioners who employ American and/or
foreign students with MBA/MIM degrees

Sir/Madam:

Thank you for your cooperation in filling out the questionnaire. I am currently conducting research on MBA and/or MIM (Master in International Management) graduates with respect to their recruiting conditions and necessary terms of employment. I would be grateful if you would answer the following questions:

Nationality: _____

Sex: Male ___ Female ___ Type of business ___

Age:

- 23 – 29 years old
- 30 – 39 years old
- 40 – 49 years old
- 50 – 59 years old
- 60 years and older

Year of employment with your current company:

- 1 – 5 years
- 6 – 10 years
- 11 – 15 years
- 16 – 20 years
- 21 – 25 years
- 26 years or longer

Type of company:

- Japanese company
- subsidiary of a foreign company in Japan
- subsidiary of a Japanese company overseas
- American company that does business with Japanese companies
- American company that is managed by Japanese
- Other: (Please describe)

Background information:

Please assume that, through the personnel department of your company, it has been agreed that American and/or foreign students with a MBA or MIM will be recruited. With this situation in mind, please answer the following questions:

1. Among American and/or foreign graduates, there are a group of graduates who can carry on daily conversation in Japanese and another group of graduates who can speak Japanese quite well, can write resumes in Japanese, speak in Japanese in job interviews, and do presentations in Japanese. If a second group graduate is interested in working for your company, would you like to see and talk to him/her?

- By all means, I would like to see him/her.
- I would meet him/her and talk.
- I might or might not meet him/her.
- There would be no need to meet him/her.
- I would not like to meet him/her.

2. What are the main reason(s) that your company recruits graduates? Please number the most important category with a #1. List as many categories as you wish.

- Offshore procurement
- Corporate strategy
- Because my company is a subsidiary of a foreign company
- Technology implementation
- To internationalize operation
- Put employees to work immediately because of the expertise of candidates
- Revitalize the company
- Necessary to get jobs done

- Coordinate jobs between headquarters and branch offices
- Others: _____

3. Please assume that you are in charge of recruiting employees. When you recruit graduates with different Japanese abilities, what language skills would you like them to possess? Please check as many as you wish.

- Carry daily conversation
- Read simple internal memos
- Write simple internal memos
- Write reports in Japanese
- Conduct job interviews in Japanese
- Write a resume in Japanese
- Receive job interviews in Japanese
- Deal with clients in Japanese
- Do marketing presentations in Japanese
- Be an interpreter from English to Japanese overseas
- Read Japanese newspapers and magazines
- Understand Japanese in meetings and conferences
- Use Japanese honorific forms, expressions
- Others: _____

4. When you recruit Americans and/or foreigners, what thoughts do you have on the candidates learning and knowing Japanese honorific forms/expressions? Please check as many as you wish.

- Japanese honorific forms/expressions are a must.
- It is important to make a clear distinction between superiors and subordinates in the company and employees should use correct usage of the language.
- I would like for employees to know Japanese honorific when dealing with clients.
- Japanese honorific forms/expressions are necessary in Japanese society.
- Since the employees speak English among themselves internally, honorific is not necessary; however, our clients are Japanese and therefore, they should know how to use honorific when talking to our clients.
- Japanese honorifics are not necessary at all.

() Japanese honorifics are not necessary in the office. However, in Japanese society and overseas, there will be necessary occasions to use them and it would be better to study them.

() Because there have not been opportunities to use Japanese honorifics in my job, I do not feel it necessary to use Japanese honorifics.

5. When recruiting Americans and/or foreigners, there are many criteria that you consider. Below, different criteria are listed. Please number the most important one with a # 1. Label as many as you wish.

() previous company's letter of recommendation

() education

() school grades

() student's extracurricular activities

() professor's letter of recommendations

() resume

() can speak foreign languages, particularly Japanese

() sense of cooperation

() job performance

() job experience

() sense of adaptability

() special skills

() motivation

() understanding of Japanese culture

() etiquette and manners

() clothing

() understanding Japanese business practices

() others: _____

6. When you recruit Americans and/or foreigners, how much understanding of Japanese business practices is necessary? Please mark as many as you wish.

() Graduates should know business practices such as socializing, gift exchange practices, weddings, funerals and the like to a certain degree.

() Graduates should understand the decision making process, *ringi* system, *keiretsu* (horizontally and vertically integrated business conglomerates) and the like.

() Japanese business practices differ a great deal from foreign ones. It would be difficult to teach them to the graduates at the company since it requires a lot of time.

() Graduates should study and understand the business practices prior to their work.

() When they are recruited and are engaged in business, there are areas that they might be unfamiliar with regarding the way of conducting business in Japan. As a rule, I think it would be a good idea to understand Japanese business practices, decision making process, *keiretsu*, how to conduct meetings and the like.

() To a certain degree, unless they understand Japanese business practices, communication among colleagues, supervisor and clients will not go smoothly.

() I have heard about cases in which some foreign business practitioners were not familiar with the Japanese business practices, and therefore they had a hard time.

() There will not be any problems in doing business, even if the graduates do not know Japanese business practices.

() Our clients do not expect that the graduates understand the business practices, and even if they do not know business practices, their jobs will not be interfered with at all.

() Japanese business practices, decision making process, *keiretsu*, how to conduct meetings and the like are very cumbersome and annoying to foreigners, and therefore they would be very difficult to understand them. However, graduates should not ignore Japanese business practices even if they are not well-versed in them.

7. When recruiting Americans and/or foreigners, you will have cross-cultural related problems with them. How do you think they should act during working hours?

() The graduates should think and act like Japanese.

() The graduates place emphasis up to 60% on the Japanese and 40% on the American and/or foreigners' way of thinking, when conducting business.

() Whether placing emphasis on the Japanese way or American and/or foreigners' way of thinking depends entirely on each case. In some cases, the American way of thinking can be emphasized.

- () I would like for them to conduct business 50% in the Japanese way and 50% in the American and/or foreigner's way of thinking.
- () When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Just like this proverb, graduates should use the Japanese way when doing jobs in Japan.

Thank you very much for filling out the questionnaire.

APPENDIX B

For those students with job experience, the author recommends that they concentrate on preparing for the following questions based on the rank order of emphasis in the 1999 survey:

Category 1

Questions relating to job performance and job experience

1. あなたの経歴をお聞かせください。
(Please talk about your job experience.)

(簡潔かどうかの評価の基準。時系列や事実関係が順序たてていないもの、冗漫なもの、2分を超えるようなものは、その人に処理能力に問題ありとみなしてよい、とされています。)

(This question is to evaluate the candidate's ability to be concise. When the activities and events are not in chronological order or the candidate is too verbose, taking more than 2 minutes, it is considered that the candidate has a problem in his/her ability to summarize.)

2. あなたは我が社にどんな貢献ができますか。
(In what areas can you contribute to our company?)

(貢献できるということに関して、すでに何らかの実績、または裏付けが伴っているかどうかを判断。)

(With respect to making contributions, this question assists the interviewers in verifying and judging the contents of the answers and his/her actual job performance and supporting statements.)

3. あなたが過去に勤めていた会社をどう評価していますか。
(How do you evaluate the previous company you worked for?)

(自分を育ててくれたことに感謝する発言が模範解答。批判するならば、その時点で不合格。)

(An ideal answer would be to respond showing gratitude to the company that nurtured the candidate to be more productive than ever. If the candidate criticizes the company, he/she will be a failure at that point.)

4. あなたはその会社にどのように貢献しましたか。
(How did you contribute to your previous company?)

(詳しくかつわかりやすい内容かどうかを主眼において評価します。また、貢献した内容についても企業の価値観で評価します。)

(The question is to evaluate the candidate's job experience with an eye to detailed information and contents that are easy to understand.)

Category II: (If you do not have much job experience, you should start emphasizing your strategy in answering the questions from this category.)

Questions relating to job performance, job experience, personality/character and a sense of cooperation:

1. あなたが仕事上で、失敗した例を挙げてください。
(Please give an example of how you failed to meet expectations in your previous job.)

(簡潔であること。人の批判をするような発言は低いポイントです。)

(The answer should be brief, however, if the reply involves criticizing other people, the candidate will get a low score.)

2. あなたはその失敗をどう処理しましたか。
(How did you manage your mistakes?)

(簡潔であること。クリエイティブであったかどうか。リーダーシップやチームワークをどのように発揮したか、また、如何にポジティブであったか。)

(The answer should be brief. This question is to find out if the candidate has come up with a creative solution, if he/she has demonstrated leadership and if he/she has dealt with the problem with a positive approach.)

Category III:

Questions relating to personality/character and a sense of cooperation

1. 過去の経験であなたはチームワークを体験したことがありますか。

(Have you experienced any jobs that required teamwork before?)

(やはりどこの会社でも基本理念となっているチームワークについて、その人がどれだけ理解と強調性があるかを見ます。)

(Just as most (Japanese) companies consider the basic management concept of teamwork to be important, this question will find how much the candidate is aware of teamwork and cooperation.)

2. この仕事はあなたにとって物足りないのではないですか。

(Will this job be challenging enough for you to be satisfied?)

(質問の主眼は、その人が熱意をもって仕事をしてくれるか、その会社にいてくれるかどうかの2点です。)

(The main objective of the question is to clarify two points: 1) whether or not the candidate performs his/her jobs with enthusiasm and 2) the candidate will work for the company for a long time.)

Category IV:

Questions relating to motivation:

1. 我が社と他の会社から複数の採用通知をもらったらどうしますか。

(What would you do if you received an offer from our company and from another company?)

(御社以外にはない、またはこれに類することを即答できないようなら評価は低くなります。)

("I don't have any other company in mind, your company is the only one." This is what the interviewers wish to hear from the candidate. If the candidate cannot come up with a similar answer, the score will be lower.)

2. 入社後、やってみたいことはどんなことですか。

(What kinds of jobs do you wish to perform after starting to work for our company?)

(具体的かつ熱意とクリエイティビティーのある答えかどうかの評価のポイントです。)

(This question is to evaluate whether or not an answer is enthusiastic and creative.)

3. 我が社に入社したい特別な理由がありますか。

(Do you have any special reasons why you wish to work for our company?)

(目的意識を評価します。但し、会社のやり方を批判する者は内容いかんで失格にする場合も)

This question is to evaluate the objective of wanting to work for the company. Candidates who criticize our company's way of doing business or management style, may be disqualified at this point depending on the situation.

4. あなたが就きたい仕事の一番の魅力とは何ですか。

(What are the reasons why you are attracted to the job that you wish to perform?)

(その人の仕事に対する熱意を見ます。但し、これも簡素であること。)

(This question is to find out how eager the candidate is. Again, the answer should be brief.)

Category V:

Questions relating to sense of adaptability and leadership

1. あなたが我が社の戦力となるまでにどれぐらいの期間を必要とすると思いますか。また、その理由についてお聞かせください。

(Please tell us how long it will be before we put you to work and you can be productive and why?)

(その理由についなも聞き、きちんとした裏付けがあるか、そして熱意があるかどうかを確かめます。)

(This question will seek to find out whether or not the candidate has proof of his/her answer by listening to the reasons and whether or not the candidate has enthusiasm.)

2. リーダーとして要求される条件は何だと思いですか。

(What qualities do you think a leader should have?)

(内容よりも 簡潔であるかどうか。その人の情報処理能力を見ます。一言で的確に言えた人は最高点。2分以上になったら、不合格。)

(The length of the response is more important than the contents. The question observes the candidate's ability to summarize information. If the candidate can answer it precisely, he/she should deserve a full score. If he/she spends two minutes or longer, the response is a failure.

3. あなたはリーダーとしての素質があると思いますか。それはなぜですか。

(Do you have the qualities to be a leader? If you do, what makes you think so?)

(はい、と答えるかどうかは1つの基準。また、「なぜか？」との問いに簡潔でない回答は、情報処理能力の低さ、自信のなさ、普段からの問題意識の欠如、さらにはタイムマネジメントの出来ない人物とみなしてよいとされています。)

(One standard evaluation is when the candidate says "Yes." If, after a follow-up question, the candidate cannot come up with a brief statement, it signifies that his/her disposition of information is low, he/she does not

have confidence, he/she lacks the conscientiousness to be a leader; furthermore, he/she does not know how to manage time.)

4. マネージャーとして人を採用する時に何に着手しますか。
(As a manager, when you recruit candidates, what criteria do you use?)

(その職務に応じたスキルがあるかどうか、新しい環境に順応できるかどうか、また熱意があるかどうかを見ます。)
(This question is to find out whether or not a candidate has the skills for the job description, can adapt in a new environment or his/her enthusiasm for the position.)

Category VI Questions relating to other areas

1. 当社の業界で、将来重要となるのはどんなことだと思いますか。
(What are the areas that will become (very) important in our industry in the future?)

(的確かつ簡潔なものほど評価が高くなります。)
(The more precise and brief the answer, the higher the points the candidates receives.)

2. あなたの長期的なプランをお聞かせください。
(Please tell us your long-term plans.)

(“もし、御社に入社を許されゆならば” ...とはじめるのが模範解答。これも簡潔さを基準にします。)
(An ideal answer would be to start the answer, “If I were allowed to work for your company....” This answer also requires brevity.)

3. 服装、姿勢、面接態度についての評価
(An evaluation on the candidate's clothes, posture, and interview attitude.)