

## Management in America

### *DO IT MY WAY*

New York (from The Economist)

Cultural differences between Japanese and American managers have presented the biggest obstacles to Japanese companies investing in America.

A seminar for Japanese executives working in America was attended by 25 men, nearly all of them in identical dark suits. Despite the room's stifling heating system, they resolutely refused to remove their jackets. Their coffee break lasted exactly the scheduled ten minutes. They did not ask any questions until after they had got to know one another a bit better at lunch. They were usually deferential and always polite.

A similar seminar for 25 Americans working for Japanese subsidiaries in America included eight women. Several of the men removed their jackets on entering the room. A ten-minute coffee break stretched beyond 20 minutes. Participants asked questions and several aggressively contradicted what the speakers had to say.

According to Mr Thomas Lifson of Harvard and Mr Yoshihiro Tsurumi of New York's Baruch College- the two main speakers at both seminars- misunderstandings between Japanese and American managers are possible at nearly every encounter. They can begin at the first recruiting interview. A big American company typically hires people to fill particular slots. Its bosses know that Americans are mobile people who have a limited commitment to any particular employer or part of the country. As a result, jobs are clearly defined and so are the skills needed to fill them. American firms hire and fire almost at will.

The assumptions (and the expectations) of the Japanese managers of Japanese subsidiaries in America could hardly be more different. They hire people more for the skills they will acquire after joining the company than for their existing skills.

American managers rely heavily on number-packed memoranda and the like. The Japanese colleagues prefer informal consultations which lead eventually to a consensus. According to Mr. Tsurumi, they find comical the sight of American managers in adjacent offices exchanging memos.

Confronted with a dispute between middle managers, most Japanese superiors refuse to become involved, expecting the managers themselves to resolve the issue. The Americans conclude, wrongly, that their Japanese bosses are indecisive or incompetent. Japanese managers do not share the American belief that conflict is inevitable, and sometimes healthy. They want to believe that employees form one big happy family.

a) **Responder las siguientes preguntas y subrayar o resaltar los párrafos de referencia.**

1. ¿A qué compañías afectó la diferencia cultural?
2. ¿Qué diferencias pudieron observarse respecto de la conducta de los ejecutivos estadounidenses y de los japoneses que asistieron a un seminario?
3. ¿Cuáles son las presunciones y expectativas que manejan los directivos de empresas estadounidenses y japonesas al momento de contratar personal?
4. ¿Cómo proceden los superiores japoneses en caso de conflicto entre sus subordinados?

b) **Distinción entre verbos en pasado y en participio.** Indicar si, según el contexto, los verbos en negrita están en pasado o participio.

1. Their coffee break **lasted** exactly the scheduled ten minutes. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Participants **asked** questions and several aggressively **contradicted** what the speakers had to say. \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Confronted** with a dispute between middle managers, most Japanese superiors refuse to become **involved**, expecting the managers themselves to resolve the issue. \_\_\_\_\_
4. A seminar for Japanese executives working in America was **attended** by 25 men, nearly all of them in identical dark suits. \_\_\_\_\_

c) **Uso de afijos.**

**¿Qué indican los prefijos en las siguientes palabras?**

**Misunderstandings**

**Informal**

**Indecisive**

**Incompetent**

**Inevitable**

**Las siguientes palabras están formadas con el sufijo -ly. ¿Qué tipo de palabra se forma en estos casos?**

**Exactly**

**Aggressively**

**Eventually**