



Third Way Forum

INFOGRAPHICS

Weekly Meeting Highlights 10.9.20

Japan is special...Really?

Summary

- **Realities & Current Challenges**
 - Japan is thought of as, especially by Japanese executives, a *unique* customer base and unique quality assurance environment
 - Japan is special in that high-quality & service are standard and expected by all
 - Some Japanese companies try to govern overseas business from internationally located HQ's, but the majority of Japanese companies are still managing overseas business from HQ's located in Japan.
 - Governance can be separated between Japan and the rest of the world.
 - 1 focusing on Japan
 - The rest focusing on the rest of the world
 - Within Japan, executives are seldom non-Japanese
 - Japanese business is very *relationship based* as opposed to contract based
 - Have to be HIGHLY considerate of relationship maintenance
 - Japanese demographic, as a whole, is shrinking
- **Comfort-zones**
 - Use of the *Japan Card & Language Card*
 - May be viewed as excuses for refusing/failing to adapt
 - Japan's notoriously comfortable & convenient society
 - Prohibiting self-awareness?
- **Reflection & Projection**
 - Hansei-kai: reflection time
 - Starts from earliest ages
 - No similar example for the future and/or in the interest of critically evaluating recent events
- **Iteration tends to be incremental**
 - Often crisis-stimulated or non-existent (see Covid & remote work)

Third Way Considerations

- **What is meant by "Global"?**
 - Are domestically-valuable cultural considerations forced out as a direct result of globalization? *Does Japan have to lower the quality of products to export?*
 - Are there existing strategies for reaching a balance between domestic and international needs?
 - Is change slow because Japanese leadership is primarily older conservative Japanese men
- OR
- Is Japanese leadership comprised primarily of older conservative Japanese men because change is slow?
- **Hansei-kai adjustments...incorporate future-planning time?**
 - Considerations for *tomorrow*
 - What are we going to do next?
 - What can be done to make it better?
- **Education - at all levels - can be infused with international/critical/practical analysis**
 - Awareness is mandatory for progress
 - Exposure to external options must be shared beyond the executive levels of organizations
- **Is convenience overdone to the point of creating non-critical individuals?**
 - Can a *spoiled* citizenry effectively govern organizations?
 - Excessiveness
 - Overbearing service providers
 - Oversharing of information on trains, in stores, etc.
 - Goods manufacturing processes in need of updates
 - Is Japanese product packaging out of touch with environmental realities?
- **What is preventing the change?**
 - Are Japanese HQ's prohibitively "strong" for global markets?
 - Any exploration of easy components to streamline
 - Inertia based vs. deliberate evolution
 - Gradual shifts are to be expected in Japan (incremental)
 - Execution of plans often occurs only as follow-up to crises