

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



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Short Description

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT case study

Description

Case 5 :-

Toyota in France: Culture Clash?

Hiroaki Watanabe, the Japanese general manager of the first major Toyota plant in Valenciennes, France (and in continental Europe), has a lot at stake. He is in charge of a modern and efficient \$570 million Toyota Motor factory designed to manufacture the Yaris, a subcompact car. The plant was designed to employ 2,000 workers. Currently, there are about 200 Japanese managers and 150 Japanese trainers on staff. The remaining employees are mostly French. Culturally speaking, there were many potential areas of conflict between the Japanese and French customs. For example, the plant holds calisthenics at 8:00 A.M. every morning to avoid starting off the day “cold” and being more prone to injuries. This is a common Japanese practice that is not frequently done in France. Also, the plant does not serve wine at lunch, a common practice in other French organizations. As is common in other Japanese firms, blue and gray windbreaker jackets are made available with the word “Toyota” on the back and the employee’s name on the front.

To help bridge these and other potential cultural gaps, the leadership of the venture needs to understand the potential cultural clashes that these issues can cause. How did Mr. Watanabe prepare himself for this high-profile assignment?

Although fluent in English, he decided that he would learn French and as much about French culture as possible. After all, the vast majority of workers at the plant would be from northern France. To prepare himself, he traveled to France as a tourist and visited the Toyota plant in Canada. He conducted interviews in French, with assistance of an interpreter, in order to improve his language skills.

Are his efforts succeeding? Toyota had high hopes for this first major undertaking in continental Europe. Its goal was to increase its market share that was 3.7 percent in 2001, less than half its share in the United States in that year. In 2004, Toyota surpassed this goal by achieving a 5.3 percent market share in Europe, higher than both Mercedes and Audi. The French employees at the Toyota plant have a lot at stake when one considers that the Valenciennes area, a former coal and steel region, suffers from high unemployment with closing of many companies in heavy industry over the past 20 years. To underscore the importance of Toyota to this region, more than 30,000 people applied for the 2,000 jobs at the factory when it first opened its doors.

Questions

- 1. What potential conflicts could arise between the Japanese managers/trainers and the French employees? Explain.**
- 2. What do you think of Mr. Watanabe's approach to preparing himself for French culture? Do you think that his approach would be useful for American managers? Why or Why not?**
- 3. What kind of organizational culture did Mr. Watanabe want to establish at the factory in Valenciennes, France? Do you think he'll try to manage the plant just like a Toyota factory in Tokyo? Why or Why not?**
- 4. What implications are there for the French employees of the plant if its good fortune takes a turn for the worse, and the factory consequently shuts its doors? Explain.**

Details

- 1. Case study solved answers**
- 2. pdf/word**
- 3. Fully Solved with answers**