

IUJ

Business Practice in Situations
- Manners at Work -

B u s i n e s s P r a c t i c e



Center for Language Education and Research

Acknowledgements

First of all, we consulted the employees of Japanese companies in Myanmar and Vietnam for creating this textbook and receiving advice. It inspired the cases in the textbook.

We also consulted the following book for structure: “A guidebook for supporting foreign children –sharing the courses of children’s lives” by *Bonjin-sha* publisher.

We also consulted Mr. Kazuhiro Mihashi of Mihashi Corporation for valuable advice from a corporate viewpoint since the inception of this textbook. We received insightful suggestions from Ms. Minako Suzuki of Fuji Xerox Co., Ltd. about employee training. We created this textbook through much consultation and in collaboration with Ms. Keiko Kobayashi, who used to work for Isetan Co. Ltd. and was engaged in human resource development. She provided us with detailed advice on essential rules and manners when working in Japanese companies.

Furthermore, we learned much from Professor Aya Kondou and Professor Reiko Ikeda, who were the lecturers of a workshop titled “Japanese education workshop through case studies –a method to design activities for discussion for problem solving.” This workshop was organized by the society for teaching Japanese as a foreign language on 5th March 2011. What we learned through the workshop greatly benefited our creation of this textbook.

This textbook could not have been made without suggestions and help from the people mentioned above. We are deeply indebted to all of them.

July 2016

Authors

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GSIR Graduate School of International Relations

The Graduate School of International Relations mainly focuses on issues in the public sector, and aims to train leaders with professionalism who possess a long-term vision over changing trends and global perspectives to recognize and understand the diversity of values, and who are capable of analyzing and resolving a wide range of issues in an international context. Since its inauguration in 1982, the School has continually produced many prospective leaders of the 21st-century global society who make their valuable contributions in a variety of fields, for which it garners international recognition.

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PMPP **Public Management and Policy Analysis Program**

●MA in Public Management

The program is designed to train specialists who, with competence in implementing and evaluating policies, and in organizational management, can excel in the public sector whether in international organizations or state/local governments. Students acquire the technical knowledge, scientific methods and practical theories necessary for efficient public management and development of good governance.

IRP **International Relations Programs:**

●MA in International Relations

The course provides a comprehensive, interdisciplinary understanding and analytical perspective on major trends in contemporary international politics, economics and society, designed to train competent leaders in their respective areas of specialty in the global communities.

●MA in International Peace Studies

The course deals with major global issues concerning the protection of human security, encompassing violent conflicts and peace building, poverty and development, environmental disruption and sustainable development and many forms of discrimination, such as by gender.

IDP **International Development Programs:**

●MA in International Development

The course is designed to train well-rounded professionals in international development. It enables students to acquire the specialist knowledge, scientific analytical methodologies and practical reasoning that are necessary for contributing towards an international society that is eco-friendly, peaceful and devoid of poverty and economic inequality.

●MA in Economics

The course aims to train well-skilled specialists in economics, aspiring to engage in planning and executing economic development policies for sustainable economic growth. Students will not only learn the high-level economics theories and measuring/analytical methods, but also acquire practical skills with which they can apply the theories to real-world economic development policies.

PPP **Public Policy Program (One-year course):**

●MA in Public Policy

The course aims to train talents to become one of the competent promoters of Japan to the world as the country is faced with the urgent need to adapt to fast-revolving globalization. This is a one-year Master's degree course mainly designed for candidates who have two years or more of experience of working in governmental offices, local authorities or corporations.

GSIR Graduate School of International Management

The Graduate School of International Management primarily focuses on the issues in the private sector, aiming to train talents to become insightful global leaders. Training is provided for the acquisition of competence in the leadership required in a culturally-diverse, multi-national environment, as well as administrative skills and knowledge fundamental to management. Many talents have graduated from the School, as competent general managers. The School has been recognized as one of the most prominent business schools in Asia, with its place awarded in the Global MBA Ranking.

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MBA **MBA Program:**

●MA in Management

The course offers initial basics in finance, marketing, production and development, management, IT and human resource management before students step up to select specialized courses relevant to their career plans. It is dedicated to train management leaders capable of finding practical solutions to management challenges in a multinational environment.

IMBA **Intensive MBA Program (One-year course):**

●MA in Management

This is a 12-month intensive course for candidates who already possess career-based specialist knowledge. The course facilitates the development of their capabilities as global managers. The enrollment prerequisite is five-year experience in employment in business management.

E-Biz **e-Business Management Program (One-year course):**

●MA in e-Business Management

This is a one-year Master's degree course designed to develop candidates' competence in applying technology to business for generating added value. The flexible course design allows students to select from a wide range of programs, including ones in the MBA course, according to their career plans.

Center for Language
Education and
Research

English Language Program

As the English language is the single official medium of communication at IUJ, a summer term intensive English program (IEP) is offered to prospective students, and other programs to current students such as on academic English, thesis writing, etc. during their first year. These programs give support for attaining the appropriate command of English as an indispensable communication tool for all professionals.

Japanese Language Program

The programs cater to all levels of competence in the Japanese language, from beginner to advanced. They cover everyday conversational Japanese, Japanese for working and/or studying, and high-level literacy in Japanese at a diplomatic level, which will be valuable for the students to serve their own countries in the future.

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<Instructions>

This textbook is prepared for people who aspire to work, or are already working, in relation to Japan, to learn manners and rules in Japanese business contexts.

There are 14 themes pertaining to manners at work in this textbook, which are: time management, keeping the work environment in order, communication, preparation, reporting, schedule organization, prioritization, and being proactive. They are distinct themes, and any of them may be undertaken randomly to suit the needs of the learners.

Each theme is structured with the following: situation (case), consideration, employee's opinion, supervisor's opinion, discussion, conventional Japanese communication, and typical corporate culture in Japan. Their descriptions are as follows:

Situation:

A thematic situation is introduced as observed in a business context. It provides the topic that participants may use to think about their own behaviors, in actuality or hypothetically, as an introduction to the theme. Pay attention to the background of each situation, and facilitate a good understanding of the case.

Consideration:

A multiple-choice simulation allows participants to take an objective approach to their own attitude towards work. The purpose is not to find a correct answer, but to provide insights into the participants' own work practices and ethics. It is therefore permissible to select more than one option, and also to encourage them to suggest an option that is not among the ones provided. It also helps to analyze each option to understand what is problematic in them. Describing the reasons for selecting particular options will also give participants the opportunity to objectify their own attitude towards work.

Employee's opinion:

A given situation features a new recruit or an employee still unfamiliar with Japanese corporate cultures. The Employee's opinion section describes inner thoughts of this employee (Mr. A, Ms. B, etc.), with the section entitled as "Mr. A's opinion" or "Ms. B's opinion," etc. The employee would have some thoughts about the situation, seen from his or her perspective. Participants may agree or disagree with the statements. It is important to empathize with their understanding, then prompt them to reflect on what can be done, similarly drawing on the supervisors' opinions given in the following section.

Supervisor's opinion:

There is a marked importance in understanding superiors' viewpoints to gain insights into how work is or should be done. It also helps to understand typically Japanese corporate cultures by following the thought process from the supervisors' point of view. This section can be utilized to introduce certain aspects of Japanese culture or Japanese corporate cultures. It will be of value to be well-acquainted with such cultural aspects.

Discussion:

This section is designed to give participants an opportunity to develop their ideas as to how to improve their work efficiency or sensitivity to colleagues and other personnel at work, based on their understanding gained from the preceding sections. Discuss each item as a starting point to consider desirable ways and attitudes, comparing the particulars of the Japanese corporate cultures and their counterparts in the participants' own cultural backgrounds.

Conventional Japanese communication:

This section introduces Japanese expressions in speech relevant to the theme. Often the expressions contain phrases and speech patterns used in Japanese corporate contexts, including a typical polite form - keigo - although students at a beginner's level of Japanese may find it difficult to understand. Phrases and vocabulary relevant to the theme are underlined. Beginners in Japanese may start by learning and understanding these words and phrases. Participants whose levels are intermediate or above may be given the task of memorizing these phrases or sentences, or alternatively, the tasks appropriate to their acquired language skills.

Typical corporate culture in Japan:

This section explains certain aspects of Japanese corporate cultures corresponding to the given situation. It provides points of view regarding the accepted actions the employee in the episode could have taken, or possible precautions that could prevent problems. Additionally, it provides advice as to how to deal with situations similar to, or different from the situation given for the theme. Participants may be given an opportunity to think about what they can do before moving on to this section. Also, there are key words at the end of each thematic part, which may be used as a prompt before explaining the respective aspects of corporate cultures in Japan. Other ideas for the use of this section include preparing a checklist using the items provided in the section, and letting participants run a self-check. Some themes have rather detailed explanations. Instructors may be creative in devising ways to pursue the course, for example, by preparing excerpts or assigning two sessions for a particular theme, as appropriate to the levels of the participants.

We hope that this textbook serves the purpose of giving course participants invaluable opportunities to think about their attitude towards work and Japanese corporate cultures, as well as to reflect on their own work ethics.

Theme

1. Time management

1) Situation

Mr. A made an appointment for a meeting with a client company at three o'clock. It was for the purpose of discussing a contract. On the day of the meeting, it was raining and buses were running behind schedule. When he finally arrived at the client company, it was 3:20 p.m. The client asked him, "What happened?" He answered, "Well, it's raining, and my bus was delayed." The client had a wry smile on his face.

Consideration

Think about the situation from the client's point of view. Choose one of the following three statements that is closest to your opinion. Explain the reason for your choice.

1. It is understandable that he arrived late if the bus was running late due to the rain.
2. I would be appalled to hear him say that he was late because of the rain and the bus running late.
3. I would not mind it because I had been in the same situation myself before.

[Mr. A's opinion]

I left the office five minutes earlier than planned because it was raining, but the bus did not arrive on time, so I ended up being late for the meeting. I did leave early, so my being late was not my fault. I was late by only 20 minutes, it wasn't that I was one or two hours late, so it is not a big deal. If the meeting was unsuccessful because I was late, it would surprise me. They should relax a little bit.

[Client's opinion]

I had things to do, and I had to put them on hold because of the appointment. Then I had to waste 20 minutes just waiting for him. I could not believe my ears when he said he was late because it was raining and his bus was delayed. If he knew that he was running late, he should have called us. It is common sense to give sufficient time for traveling on a rainy day, because traffic delays can easily be possible. I could only give him a bitter smile, but he did not even seem to take any notice of it. I am not looking forward to working with him.

Discussion

Discuss each of the following four points.

1. How would you feel if someone arrived at an appointment late because of delayed bus services, etc.?
2. How much lateness would you accept for a business appointment?
3. What would you do if it were raining on a day you have an appointment outside?
4. What would you do if you were likely to be late for an appointment?

2) Conventional Japanese communication

Employee of Company A: I am being delayed by the traffic congestion due to the rain.
I am sorry but could we change our appointment to 4 p.m.?

Employee of Company B: OK. I will be waiting for you.

Understanding Japanese corporate culture

It is commonly pointed out that the Japanese are punctual and that trains always arrive on time. In Japan, new recruits learn from the very beginning of their career that it is the norm to always be ready for any assemblies five to ten minutes before they start.

Naturally, not all Japanese people are always punctual. You will come across some Japanese people turning up late for private appointments. However, business appointments, delivery dates and so on, must be treated as arrangements that cannot be missed.

<Be prudent not to be late for appointments.>

(1) Set a realistic time for an appointment.

Avoid making a tightly scheduled appointment. Consider the necessary travel time to the place of appointment.

(2) Arrive 5-10 minutes before the arranged time.

- Do thorough research on how to get to the place, and leave your office in ample time just in case you might get lost on the way.
- If you must make a long journey, check the train timetable and take a train before one that arrives just in time. However, turn up at the appointment on time as previously agreed. It is a good practice to be considerate, as the other party may not be ready before the agreed time.

(3) Give more time for travel if an eventuality due to the weather (rain, snow, typhoon, etc.) or events (festivals, concerts, election campaigns, etc.) may possibly cause delays in transportation.

- * Leaving the office at the last minute is likely to result in forgetting to take something with you, or taking a wrong route by mistake.

<What to do when you are likely to be late>

(1) Try alternative means of transportation (taking different routes, using a taxi, etc.) to be in time.

(2) Make a call to notify your delayed arrival at the earliest opportunity if you know you are, or are likely to be, late for the appointment.

(3) Tell your possible arrival time and the reason for being late, and ask if it is acceptable.

Be careful not to indicate the time sooner than the likely arrival time. If you indicate that you are running late by 5 minutes and actually arrive 10 minutes late, it will aggravate your counterpart. If you indicate that you would arrive within 15 minutes, arriving in 10 minutes would be perfectly fine.

(4) Even if you notified your late arrival, make your best efforts to arrive as soon as possible.

Failing to make to the appointment on time results not only in making a bad impression of yourself, but also in compromising your company's credibility. Make it your habit to keep

promises not only for meeting appointments, but also for deadlines for document submissions, deliveries, phone calls and emails, in order to help everyone involved to do their work smoothly.

**Good time management helps
to earn your company a good reputation.**

