

June 19, 2014

<Estore with 30% foreign employees - Foreign employee's real report>

Becoming Japanese within 1 - 2 years after joining the company

If you get used to it, it is quite easy - Japanese ambiguity

Estore (Minato-ku, Tokyo / President: Kenichi Ishimura) provides comprehensive support for online shopping sites, has been employing foreign workers under the goal of "More Foreign Employees at the same time when recruiting Japanese Employees" since 2011. Our company's slogan is "50% of new employees are foreigners". Estore has been recruiting foreign nationals - not only new college graduates but also mid-career job seekers. (As of May, 2014, the ratio of foreign employees is 30%.)

We surveyed our foreign employees (Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, Bangladeshi) to find what they are really feeling working in Japan - problems and surprises, etc., in this chaotic business environment where globalization is rapidly progressing.

Foreigners becoming "Japanese" in 1 to 2 years

— Regardless of nationalities, they are unknowingly becoming "Japanese" - taking pro and con of "Japanese" into themselves —

When they just came to Japan, they are mystified by "ambiguous Japan" but, in one year, they get used to it. They find "goodness" of being "ambiguous" and they themselves become "ambiguous" - they themselves can distinguish between "principle" and "reality" and act accordingly. "Sumimasen" or "Daijobu" - They can use sensitive words correctly that have many meanings in everyday conversation.

■ Foreigners - Real Report: "Good" and "Bad" about Japan

Too much details - good and bad

From foreigner's point of view, Japanese work worrying too much about small details. It not that always bad but sometime good.



- Too much detail to start working
- Too many checks - working slow
- Too many distributed responsibilities - Inefficient



- Clear responsibility and scope - Easy
- Making very detailed schedule - Sense of achievement
- Detailed explanation - Clearly understanding the goal

"Principle and Reality" - Hard to become friends

Japanese hates "dispute". Japanese don't want to hurt the others - playing "principle and reality". Foreigners have difficulty to become friends with Japanese who do not easily show their emotions.



- Hard to see the real Japanese - Hard to become friends.
- It is difficult to know what to do and it is troublesome.
- "Right" or "Left" - Confusing



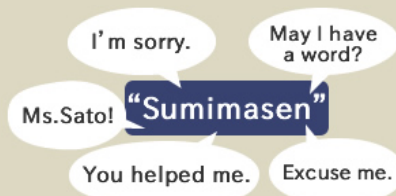
- Don't need to hurt the other person.
- Does not cause argument.
- Don't have to "fight"
- Smooth interpersonal relationship.

I thought I was thanked but apologized - "Sumimasen"

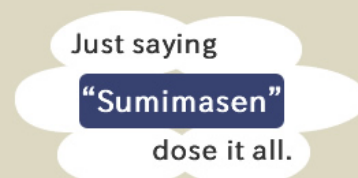
"Sumimasen" - This unique and universal Japanese phrase with delicate nuance is used in many situations - confusing foreigners.



"Sumimasen" - Isn't it an apology?



Ambiguous phrase. Convenient if used correctly.



Editor's note

While we interviewed those foreign employees, we could see that they became "Japanese" gradually after then joined the company. When they came to Japan, they were confused and felt strangeness in Japanese working style and in vagueness in those Japanese phrases. However, after they worked with Japanese for 1 to 2 years, they themselves adapted to "Japanese way", and felt nothing about "Japanese Way" or strange Japanese phrases.

■ Anecdote from the interview

- A Chinese woman, who felt awkward in very detailed Japanese way, has now accustomed to it and say "...anxious if I don't do that in detail".
- A Korean man, who used to say he couldn't get close to Japanese colleague, now complains "...got used to the distance but I have to keep the comfortable distance."
- A Korean woman used to complain that Japanese uses too many "Sumimasen" phrases, and now, when I handed a paper, she said "Sumimasen".

<Survey Outline>

Method: Questionnaire

Surveyed: Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, Bangladeshi

No. of people surveyed: 6 males / 7 females (Total 13)

<E Store - Ratio of Foreign Employees>

Nationality: China, Taiwan, Korea, Bangladesh

Age: 22 - 37 (Average: 26.9)

Estore Corporation

Name : Estore Corporation

President : Kenichi Ishimura

Established : February 17, 1999

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URL : <http://Estore.jp/>

Business : Netshop Comprehensive Package (Shop Serve)
Shopping Cart Function (Store Tool)
Rental Server (Site Serve)
Online Shopping Site ("park"), EC (Electronic Commerce) site development agency,
EC related seminar planning/launching

Estore is contributing the expansion and development of EC by providing comprehensive services for the EC for the corporation.

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