

Intelligent Business

Recruiting

A Before you read - Discuss

1. When your company recruit new employees, do they prefer to recruit highly qualified people or young people who can be trained within the company?
2. What would be the advantages and disadvantages if each approach to recruiting?
3. Do many people from your country attend universities in foreign countries? Why? Why not?
4. In which month does your company usually recruit young staff from university?

B Comprehension

1) Read the first paragraph. Tick the correct statements.

- a) Ryosuke Kobayashi is a graduate from Harvard University.
- b) Ryosuke Kobayashi is studying at Harvard University. ✓
- c) Ryosuke Kobayashi is going to apply to study at Harvard University.
- d) At the moment he is in a hotel in Tokyo. ✓
- e) He is speaking at a seminar. ✓
- f) The seminar is for Harvard students.
- g) The seminar is for high-school students. ✓
- h) He is telling the students they should go to Harvard.
- i) The students feel they should stay in Japan. ✓

2) Read the second paragraph. Tick the correct statements.

- a) More and more Chinese students are going to Harvard. ✓
- b) The number of Harvard students from all Asian countries is increasing at the rate.
- c) The boss of Pasona says Japanese universities do not prepare students for global industries. ✓
- d) He says Japanese universities do not prepare students for traditional Japanese businesses.
- e) Traditionally, Japanese businesses favoured recruits who had studied in Japan. ✓
- f) Now companies want to recruit young Japanese who have been educated outside Japan. ✓

3) Read the third paragraph. Tick the correct statements.

- a) A Jobs Fair is an exhibition where businesses advertise for new recruits. ✓
- b) A Jobs Fair is an exhibition where students apply to foreign universities.
- c) Mynavi sponsors Job Fairs. ✓
- d) Mynavi is looking for recruits who have studied outside Japan.
- e) One of the problems for Japanese students who are studying abroad is that Japanese firms usually hire new recruits in April. Students at American and European universities are still studying. ✓

This PHOTOCOPIABLE worksheet has been downloaded from www.intelligent-business.org

1



Intelligent Business

- f) The University of Tokyo is thinking of changing its academic year from April > March to September to July. ✓
- 4) **Read the fourth paragraph. Tick the correct statements.**
- a) Japanese students who are studying at universities in the USA or Europe often miss the April deadline for recruitment in Japan, because they are still studying. ✓
 - b) They usually study an extra year in Japan to catch the next recruitment period. ✓
 - c) This extra year of study encourages students to choose foreign universities.
 - d) "On the job" training encourages students to introduce the new ideas they have learnt during their studies.
- 5) **Read the fifth paragraph. Tick the correct statements.**
- a) The big earthquake, which took place in March, prevented Japanese firms from employing new recruits in April.
 - b) The population of Japan is not increasing as fast as in other countries. ✓
 - c) Japanese businesses must find new markets outside Japan. ✓
- 6) **Read the last paragraph. Tick the correct statements.**
- a) Corporate culture in Japan favours innovation and new ideas.
 - b) Japanese students from overseas universities may choose not to work in Japan. ✓
 - c) It is difficult for new recruits to get rapid promotion in companies with a rigid hierarchy. ✓

C Vocabulary

Look carefully at the words and phrases in the box. Choose one to complete each sentence below. Use your dictionary if necessary.

rickety	inward	roughly	lost ground	churns out	shrinking
courting	hobble	mulling	footloose	steady	hierarchy

- a) As a result of the strike at our warehouse, we _____ to our competitors.
- b) Dad says I should stop dancing and get a _____ job.
- c) I've got few links with my home country, so I'm _____ and can travel anywhere.
- d) My department head is _____ the owner's daughter.
- e) Our business is _____ because we cannot find cheap supplies of copper.
- f) She says she works _____ eleven and a half hours every day.
- g) She's got offers from three universities and now she's _____ over her choice.
- h) Steve Jobs is no longer at the top of the _____ of Apple.
- i) The computer _____ spam email to everyone on the database.
- j) The pain started at my fingers and toes and moved _____ towards my torso.
- k) They tried to drive the heavy truck over a _____ old bridge.
- l) We decided to _____ the horse to prevent it from getting too far away.



Intelligent Business

D Corporate Culture – Discussion

- 1) Does your company have a rigid hierarchy?
- 2) Are new recruits encouraged to introduce fresh ideas?
- 3) Can new recruits rise quickly in your business if their ideas prove profitable?
- 4) Does your corporate culture encourage or discourage innovation?

E Discussion

If the rigid hierarchy and corporate culture in Japan lead the best recruits to look for work outside Japan, this will lead to a “brain drain”. In Britain, lack of investment in scientific research and arts projects encourage many of Britain’s best young graduates to look for work outside Britain.

Is there a brain drain in your country? Is this a problem? What should be done to stop it?



This **PHOTOCOPIABLE** worksheet has been downloaded from www.intelligent-business.org

3



Japanese firms are waking up to the merits of hiring globe-trotting recruits

Aug 27th 2011 | TOKYO | from the print edition

RYOSUKE KOBAYASHI is the only Japanese undergraduate in his year at Harvard University. When he applied, he knew no one who could advise him on how to get in. So this week, in a rickety wooden inn in Tokyo, sitting cross-legged on *tatami* mats with Apple Macs on their laps, he and fellow Harvard students conducted seminars for Japanese high-school students on subjects ranging from *anime* to Thomas Hobbes. He was not encouraging students to go to America, he insists, just offering them an alternative to *uchimuki*, or the culture of looking inward, which pervades Japan.

For example, in 1997 there were roughly equal numbers of Japanese, Korean and Chinese students at Harvard, including postgraduates. Now there are five times as many Chinese as Japanese, and three times as many Koreans. The story is similar at other foreign universities. Meanwhile, Japanese firms have lost ground to their Chinese and South Korean rivals. Some say this is no coincidence. Yasuyuki Nambu, the boss of Pasona, a Tokyo-based recruitment consultancy, says Japanese universities churn out students for old-fashioned businesses, rather than fast-growing global ones such as IT and retail. Japan Inc needs more creative thinkers and linguists. So several firms are courting young Japanese who have been abroad.

Jobs fairs for those who have studied abroad are suddenly popular. Mynavi, the sponsor of one, says the number of participating firms soared by almost 50% since last year, to 188. Keidanren, Japan's big-business lobby, has promised to hold a special jobs exchange for students returning from abroad next summer, tacitly admitting that Japan's traditional hiring schedule hobbles them: people are recruited in Japan to start work in April, which is during the academic year in America and Europe. The University of Tokyo, Japan's best, is mulling starting in September instead, to fit in with the rest of the world.

In other countries there has long been a market for footloose talent. But in Japan students usually have just one shot at securing a steady first-time job: in their third year at university. If they are abroad, they miss it, and may have to study an extra year in Japan to earn their chance. That has discouraged people from studying abroad. And corporate culture in Japan has tended to favour those who follow the rules: training is done "on-the-job", which implies little respect for what was learned at college.

Pasona reckons the change has accelerated since March, when Japan was hit by an earthquake that disrupted the nation's supply chains and power plants. The population is ageing and shrinking; to avoid shrinking with it, Japanese firms must expand overseas. Recent months have seen a surge of foreign mergers and acquisitions.

But while hiring trends may have started to reflect this shift, corporate culture has not. Hierarchy and pay remain rigid in many Japanese firms—you do what you are told and get what you are given. Well-travelled recruits may not like this. And if they don't, they can go elsewhere.



This PHOTOCOPIABLE worksheet has been downloaded from www.intelligent-business.org

4

Copyright © Pearson Education Ltd 2011. Publishing as Pearson Longman. All rights reserved.



Intelligent Business

Teacher's notes and Key

To help comprehension of this text, it might be useful to tell students that Japanese universities start their Academic year in April.

Whilst focussing on comprehension of the text, encourage students to think about their own recruitment schedule and corporate culture.

- A Open answers.
- B 1) b), d), e), g), i). 2) a) c), e) f). 3) a) c) e) f). 4) a) b). 5) b) c).
- C a) lost ground, b) steady, c) footloose, d) courting, e) shrinking, f) roughly, g) mulling, h) hierarchy, i) churns out, j) inward, k) rickety, l) hobble.
- D Open answers
- E Open answers



This **PHOTOCOPIABLE** worksheet has been downloaded from www.intelligent-business.org

5

