



IDONEITA' LINGUA INGLESE ENGLISH – EM

Master's Degree in Management
Faculty of Economic, Law and Political Sciences
Department of Business and Economics
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MARIA ANTONIETTA MARONGIU

RICEVIMENTO: SU TEAMS
VENERDÌ ORE 18:00-19:00

STUDIO 3, 1° PIANO
FACOLTÀ DI SCIENZE ECONOMICHE, GIURIDICHE E POLITICHE
SANT'IGNAZIO, 84 (BIBLIOTECA ECONOMIA)

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IDONEITÀ LINGUA INGLESE

CdL magistrale Economia Manageriale



MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY	
LESSONS		LESSONS		LESSONS		TUTORATO	
TEAMS		TEAMS		TEAMS		TEAMS	
26 April	18:30-20:00	27 April	18:30-20:00	26 April	18:30-20:00		
3 May	18:30-20:00	4 May	18:30-20:00	5 May	18:30-20:00	6 May	15:00-16:30
10 May	18:30-20:00	11 May	18:30-20:00	12 May	18:30-20:00	13 May	15:00-16:30
				T 19 May	15:00-16:30	20 May	15:00-16:30
				T 26 May	15:00-16:30	27 May	15:00-16:30
		T 1 June	15:00-16:30			3 June	15:00-16:30

Working Across Cultures

MARKET LEADER



Business English

Adrian Pilbeam

UNIT 6

The importance of understanding the local culture

This unit looks at the serious problems that can arise when a company is operating in a foreign country and fails to understand the local culture.

ML p. 24

BEFORE YOU READ

Discuss these questions.

- 1 In your own country, what action should a company take if one of its products is found to be faulty and may cause injury to users?
- 2 If a company's products are found to be faulty in Japan, how do you think the company should react?

LEXICON

Match the definitions

- a. the stunning views
- b. the world's leading elevator suppliers
- c. denies responsibility
- d. has started legal action
- e. malfunction
- f. a gross misjudgment
- g. took extensive measures

- 1. an overt mistake
- 2. defect, break down
- 3. the main elevator manufacturers
- 4. took substantial actions
- 5. has prosecuted
- 6. impressive panorama
- 7. declines liability

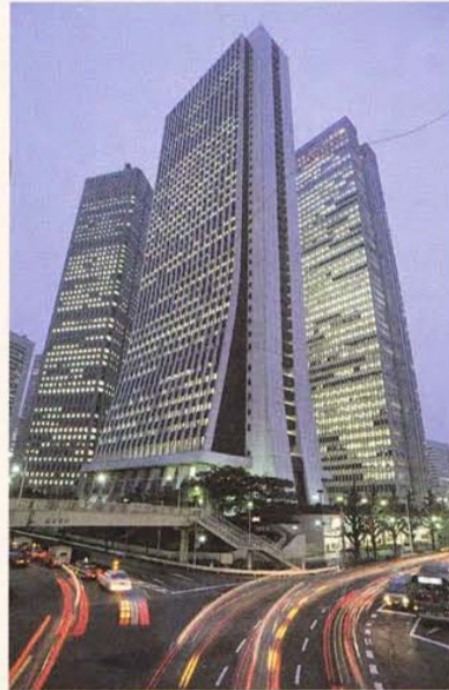
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Case of the 'killer elevator'



by Sundeep Tucker

- A** The sight of a group of Japanese in suits on a recent visit to Hong Kong's International Commerce Centre is striking. Even stranger, the group has not come to admire the stunning views across Victoria Harbour, but to experience the state-of-the-art elevators.
- B** They are here to see the latest equipment of Schindler, one of the world's

10 leading elevator suppliers. But they have also been invited to Hong Kong by the Switzerland-listed company as part of an attempt to rebuild its image in Japan after the apparent malfunction of one of its elevators resulted in a teenager's death.

C 'We want to show that we are not bad guys,' says Alfred Schindler, Chairman of Schindler Holdings. The company has struggled to sell its elevators and escalators in Japan since the incident in June 2006 in a Tokyo housing complex.

D The company, which denies responsibility for the incident, remains under police investigation. The teenager's family has started legal action against Schindler and at least two unconnected maintenance providers who serviced the elevator after March 2005.

E Japanese public opinion was inflamed by a series of mistakes in the days after the death, when Schindler decided not to co-operate fully with local investigators, or even offer apologies, until it had identified the cause of the malfunction. Since then, it has received not one elevator order, although it has since apologised often.

F The lack of an immediate apology constituted a gross misjudgement in a culture in which corporate executives are expected to apologise quickly and argue about fault later. In Japan, showing remorse is not taken as a legal admission of guilt, as in the West.

G 'The mass media and public took the Schindler response as cold and repugnant ... and the "killer elevator" image was established,' says Professor Nobuo Gohara, of the Center of Corporate Compliance at Toyo University.

H Professor Gohara says the 'Schindler

bashing' of the past two years was due to several factors, not least its inadequate decision-making process and its lack of appreciation of a company's social responsibility in Japanese society.

I Apologies may have been offered, but what are Schindler's chances of redemption? Jochen Legewie, Head of the Toyko office of CNC, a PR consultancy, has experience of helping rebuild corporate reputations in Japan. He says any company in a situation such as Schindler's will have to perform many 'purification rituals' to show it is a model corporate citizen.

J He acted for Mitsubishi Fuso, a leading truck maker majority owned by Germany's Daimler, when public anger arose over deaths and injuries linked to faulty parts in 2005. In that case, the truck maker took extensive measures to display remorse. Wilfried Porth, the unit's President, even publicly visited a cemetery to lay flowers.

K Another important step for Schindler will be to focus on gaining the support of journalists who cover social issues rather than technical and business subjects. Only when Schindler has re-established its reputation in the social press can it hope for fair coverage from the business and political media.

L Meanwhile, the company has learnt a hard lesson about operating in a different culture from its own. As Mr Schindler observes: 'Genetically, Westerners are pre-programmed not to apologise unless you are guilty.'

A

Understanding expressions

Choose the best explanation for each phrase from the article.

- 1 'The company has *struggled* to sell its elevators ...' (lines 19–21)
 - a) made a lot of effort
 - b) found it difficult
- 2 '*Japanese public opinion was inflamed* ...' (lines 32–33)
 - a) The Japanese public became very angry.
 - b) The Japanese public became very sad.
- 3 'The lack of an immediate apology *constituted a gross misjudgement* ...' (lines 41–42)
 - a) caused the company to commit a criminal offence
 - b) was a big mistake
- 4 '*... showing remorse is not taken as a legal admission of guilt* ...' (lines 46–47)
 - a) Apologising is not the same as admitting liability.
 - b) If a company apologises, they will be forgiven.
- 5 'The mass media and public *took the Schindler response as cold and repugnant* ...' (lines 48–50)
 - a) The media and the public were angry with Schindler.
 - b) Schindler's action gave the impression that the company had no sympathy for the death of the teenager.

- 6 ‘... the “*Schindler bashing*” of the past two years ...’ (lines 55–56)
- a) strong criticism of Schindler
 - b) legal cases taken out against Schindler
- 7 ‘... *not least its inadequate decision-making process* ...’ (lines 57–58)
- a) One of Schindler’s most important mistakes was not to take a decision fast enough.
 - b) The least important mistake was that it took Schindler a long time to take a decision.
- 8 ‘... *what are Schindler’s chances of redemption?*’ (lines 62–63)
- a) How easy will it be for Schindler to start to make money again in Japan?
 - b) How easy will it be for Schindler to restore its good name?
- 9 ‘... any company in a situation such as Schindler’s will have to *perform many “purification rituals”* to show ...’ (lines 67–69)
- a) make sure that it operates in an honest way in future
 - b) give public examples to show that it is sorry
- 10 ‘... *the company has learnt a hard lesson about operating in a different culture from its own.*’ (lines 89–91)
- a) Schindler has found it difficult to learn how to operate in Japan.
 - b) It cost Schindler a lot to learn how to operate in Japan.

Find words or phrases from the article which fit these meanings.

- 1 extremely modern, with all the latest technology (paragraph A)
s.....-o.....-t.....-a.....
- 2 one of the best in its field (paragraph B)
l.....
- 3 restore its good name (paragraph B)
r..... its i.....
- 4 faulty operation (paragraph B)
m.....
- 5 refuses to accept that it was at fault (paragraph D)
d..... r.....
- 6 a process through the law courts (paragraph D)
l..... a.....
- 7 the important role that a company plays in society (paragraph H)
s..... r.....
- 8 company that fully accepts its responsibilities to society (paragraph I)
m..... c..... c.....
- 9 the opinion people have about how good or bad someone is (paragraph I)
r.....
- 10 automatically made to think or act in a particular way (paragraph L)
p.....- p.....

1. State-Of-The-Art
2. Leading
3. Rebuild its Image
4. Malfunction
5. Denies Responsibility
6. Legal Action
7. Social Responsibility
8. Model Corporate Citizen
9. Reputation
10. Pre-Programmed

READING**A Understanding the main points**

Read the article on the opposite page and answer these questions.

- 1 Which of these statements best summarises the main idea in the article?
 - a) The way a company responds to product failure or problems needs to be adjusted to the local cultural norms and expectations.
 - b) If a company wants to sell its products on the Japanese market, it needs to make sure that the products are as technically perfect as possible.
 - c) Japanese consumers prefer products made in Japan.
- 2 Why is the Japanese delegation visiting Hong Kong?
- 3 Was Schindler eventually proved to be at fault for the elevator malfunction?
- 4 Why did Schindler executives not apologise for the accident immediately?
- 5 Why does Japanese society expect executives to apologise for mistakes made by their company?
- 6 What lesson has Schindler learnt from this incident?

READING

A

- 2 They have been invited by Schindler, which wants to demonstrate its latest elevators to show how modern and safe they are.
- 3 As far as we know, the accident is still being investigated by the police.
- 4 Because in their eyes, to apologise before they had investigated what caused the accident would have been an admission that the company was legally at fault.
- 5 Because a company in Japan has a social responsibility to the whole of society.
- 6 When doing business in a foreign culture, the local rules and customs may be different; and if you ignore them, it can be very expensive.

READING**B Understanding details**

Read the article again and answer these questions.

- 1 Why has Hong Kong's International Commercial Centre been chosen for the visit by the Japanese group?
- 2 In which country is Schindler based?
- 3 Where and when did the accident with the elevator happen?
- 4 How was the maintenance of the elevator handled?
- 5 What has the family of the dead teenager decided to do?
- 6 How did Schindler executives react immediately after the accident?
- 7 Has Schindler apologised for the accident and the death of the teenager?
- 8 How does the case of Mitsubishi Fuso compare to Schindler's case?
- 9 Why are journalists who report on social issues important in this case?

READING

- B**
- 1 Because it has some of the latest elevators built by Schindler.
 - 2 Switzerland
 - 3 In 2006, in a Tokyo housing complex
 - 4 It was carried out by two maintenance operators unconnected to Schindler.
 - 5 They are taking legal action against Schindler and also against the two maintenance providers who serviced the elevator.
 - 6 They did not cooperate with the local investigators, nor did they apologise for the accident.
 - 7 Yes, the company has since apologised many times.
 - 8 Mitsubishi Fuso is a truck maker owned by Daimler. Faulty parts on the trucks caused deaths and injuries in 2005. But the company apologised publicly, and the company President took flowers to a cemetery as part of this apology to show sympathy for the victims.
 - 9 Because Schindler needs to re-establish its reputation in the social press before it can expect good treatment by the business and political press.

- 1 Imagine you work for a PR consultancy, specialising in communication for crisis management. Schindler executives call you immediately after the elevator accident. They want your advice on what action they should take and how they should communicate with the media. Discuss your ideas and prepare a presentation to give to your client.
- 2 Do you remember some of these cases of faulty products? How did the companies react? Do you know what effect it had on their sales and their reputation?
 - Perrier's bottled mineral water was found to be contaminated with benzene in the US and later in Denmark and the Netherlands.
 - Tyres produced by US tyre manufacturer Firestone and fitted on Ford Explorer vehicles were thought to be the cause of accidents.
 - Some laptop computer batteries made by Sony caught fire.
 - Toys sold by US toy manufacturer Mattel were found to contain traces of lead.

Can you think of any other examples?

- 3 Based on the information in the article and on your own knowledge and experience, what are some of the important cultural values in Japanese society? What recommendations would you give to Western companies doing business in Japan?