



Working for the Japanese: Inside Mazda's American Auto Plant

Joseph J. Fucini

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This book is an exploration into the relations between Americans and Japanese at the Mazda-Flat Rock plant.

The presence of Japan Inc. looms larger than ever for millions of American managers and workers, as hundreds of Japanese companies open plants and offices in local communities across the United States. What is it like to work for the Japanese? Can Americans, with their strong tradition of individualism, adjust to a Japanese "team system" that emphasizes harmony and close cooperation? How do Americans and Japanese resolve the misunderstandings that arise from differences in language and culture? Journalists Joseph and Suzy Fucini sought the answers by studying relations between Americans and Japanese at the Mazda plant in Flat Rock, Michigan, the first wholly-owned Japanese auto plant to employ a unionized American workforce. For three years, the Fucinis followed events at the plant, interviewing more than one hundred workers, managers and outside suppliers. The authors conclude that for all its strengths, the team system requires the sacrifice of individual interests to the good of the group, and that no matter how hard an individual tries to become part of the Mazda team, advancement for both managers and workers will be limited by the fact that they are not Japanese.

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