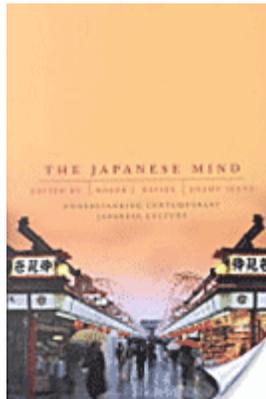


More than 30 years have passed since Japan turned from a source of cheap products to a global economic player, in much the same way that China does now. Yet, doing business effectively with Japan and the Japanese remains a major challenge, owing to the country's unique business climate and practices.

The Japanese Mind - Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture is not a business book. In fact, it is easy to overlook this collection of essays, written by students of Ehime University and edited by their linguistics professors. No "Japan for Dummies"-type advice here. The merit of *The Japanese Mind* goes deeper: it facilitates a thorough understanding of the Why of core values and essential practices of this culture.



If you never visited Japan, you may not get much value from this book. If you have some first-hand experience with the country, though, reading it might become your key to gaining a much deeper understanding of Japanese motivations, enabling you to conduct business in and with the country more successfully.

Each of the 28 essays included in the book discusses a different Japanese concept. Some of

them, like *Ikuji* (child rearing practices) or *Sōshiki* (funeral rites) probably have little relevance to the business world. Reading about others, however, among them fundamental aspects such as *Aimai* (ambiguity), *Amae* (interdependence), *Gambari* (patience and determination), *Haragei* (communication style), *Nemawashi* (laying the groundwork) or *Shūdan Ishiki* (group orientation), could be a true eye opener: what you experienced in business meetings, negotiations, celebrations and business entertainment might suddenly make sense where before it did not. Projecting yourself in ways that nurture the all-important business relationships, influencing Japanese decisions, building lasting business success: the book may help you become more effective in all of these areas.

A few reviewers complained that *The Japanese Mind* describes century-old concepts rather than the vibrant and dense culture of contemporary Japan. Interestingly, such criticism seems always to come from Westerners, possibly misled by the sophistication and glitziness found all over Japan and especially in Tokyo. In contrast, the essays in the book, written by young Japanese students, are evidence that underneath that modern surface lies a core set of values that have changed little and still define the essence of Japan.

Anyone looking to do business in the country better has a really good understanding of these values.

Leadership Crossroads™ 10865-B Hazelhurst Dr. #11793, Houston, TX 77043
469-522-3389

info@leadershipcrossroads.com www.leadershipcrossroads.com

This book review solely represents the opinions and conclusions of its author. It does not claim to be accurate, complete, or objective.

© Leadership Crossroads™, 2011



Lothar Katz is the founder of Leadership Crossroads. He has a wealth of experience in achieving productive cooperation across cultures and driving business success on a global scale.

A seasoned former executive of Fortune 500 company Texas Instruments, he regularly interacted with employees, customers, outsourcing partners, and third parties in numerous countries around the world, including many parts of Asia. Mr. Katz is the author of "Negotiating International Business – The Negotiator's Reference Guide to 50 Countries Around the World".

