

# managing worldwide

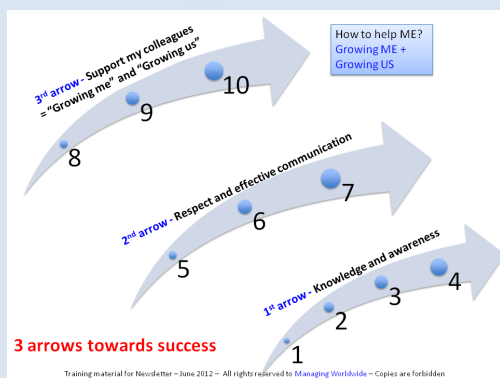
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## Editorial

Off-shoring to India is a solution that has been widely used for the last 20 years by the Western world and Japanese corporations have started using it too. The more it goes, the more elaborate are the missions to be taken care of by India. In the experience we want to share with you today, ATJ a Japanese company is an IT infrastructure specialist catering to an internal Japanese customer (Axa Japan) and subcontracting internally to the Indian IT entity. The Indian team, called ATI, is not only supposed to develop wide parts of technical software and infrastructure under Japanese close supervision but also to provide direct assistance to the final Japanese customer.

For our customer ATJ, the purpose of the training was to be able to convey the high sense of quality of service to the Indian team (ATI). Once one has lived or worked in Japan, one knows intimately how strong the sense of quality of service in Japan is. In addition, the extreme degree of attention given to the customer penetrates Japanese Society at large, each business or organization and each individual, from the senior management to lowest level of employee. Conveying these deep values to the Indian environment can sometimes be a major ordeal.

The training brought all ATJ participants through a journey that I would like to summarize here. The numbers refer to the **"3 arrows towards success"** methodology that we use in similar situations. Please see the simplified graph below and the detailed one next page.



Most of participants travelled with us through the following steps:

### Knowledge and awareness

- 1 - Getting to know more about the Indian ways to do things, preferences and values in the corporate environment
- 2 - Being aware of our own collective preferences and values (as Japanese managers and engineers)
- 3 - Same for my own individual preferences and values (not much challenge at that time, each participant assessing him/herself in general terms)
- 4 - Understanding some of the deep causes of issues at stake

## JAPAN-INDIA: Communicating effectively with our Indian colleagues Developing their sense of Quality of service

"At a personal level, this cross culture course gave me an opportunity to put my experience into a different perspective, enabling me to synthesise fragmented and empirical information into organized knowledge. I began to apply some of the know-hows to coach my team members, especially when they should have looked at issues from different value perspectives, and it did work!"

"As head of HR, first of all, I was glad to know that the course was the most highly rated one since we started to record the feedbacks from the participants. The feedback we received was that the course contents were very practical with a lot of insight into culture difference and that it gave us a lot of practice sessions on how to apply knowledge on an actual situation. Because of its practical benefits, we plan not only to extend the course to the other half the employees but also to conduct a refresher course with emphasis on UK and Switzerland."

"I should say thank you to my previous regional HR head who introduced me Laurent who really catalyzed cultural change in us."



Mr. Nobuo Takayama, the head of HR department of ATJ

## Respect and effective communication

- 5 - Building some respect about the Indian preferences  
6 and 7 - Identifying the most essential elements of an appropriate communication with the Japanese customers in simple, concrete and acceptable terms to the Indian team

### Support my colleagues = the “Growing me” and the “Growing us”

- 8 - Making the following question acceptable and relevant to the Japanese team: How to help the Indian team? How to train them? How to support from Japan them when necessary? How should the expatriates do it over there?  
9 and 10 - Being aware of when and how my own lack of flexibility (values, strong preferences, self confidence...) could be an obstacle? Here a given participant does not see himself/herself as the “perfect me” of step 3”. He or she is ready to see room for improvement on his/her side too. He or she is ready for another journey of growing their skills in the future. He or she is ready to see himself/herself as a “Growing me”  
11 - Deciding to work on it, deciding on an individual action plan. That is clearly when the development of participants’ soft skills get an effect on the team at large. The “Growing me” is fostering the “Growing us”

To say it simpler, in the past, some degree of distrust between several managers on both sides had started to interfere and could occasionally end in some unproductive confrontational situations. With the training, most individuals changed their mindset and were able to evolve towards a cooperative mode. As far as group dynamics are concerned, it seems that the seminar has contributed to a real cultural change of image of ATI within the ATJ’s team, which in turn has had a very positive change within the Indian managers and engineers involved in working with the Japanese team. I must say that we were lucky to be able to **impact on half of the whole staff** of ATJ. Not only the Japanese expatriates to India were trained but also the resident teams, which happened to be crucial to the cultural change.

It should also be added that some participants now feel that they have been transformed to a certain degree in their personal managerial style. As one Japanese participant put in his written assessment of the training “What we’ve learnt here works really well with our Japanese colleagues too”.

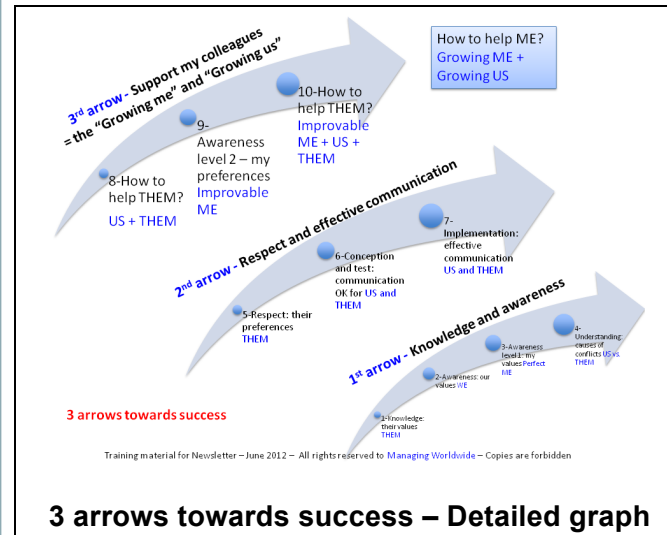
Indeed, after one full year now, we know that the team seen as an entity has grown dramatically and is now ready to tackle more complex challenges of other multicultural projects and international assignments.

But let’s hear what our customer have to say. **We are sincerely very pleased and honored that Mr. Nobuo Takayama, the head of HR department of ATJ and Mr. Hironori Goto, expatriate from ATJ to ATI accepted to testify of their experience.**

Enjoy the reading!



Laurent Lepez, Associate Partner



### 3 arrows towards success – Detailed graph

“In the Tactics of Sun Tzu, who was a great Chinese strategist, he says, ‘If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles’

I have learned a lot of their culture / way of thinking, conversation way, work trend ..... And I also could become aware of our Japanese culture.

After the training, I can change my communication way, and improved communication gaps.

For instance, I used say like “You need to do this” , “I will review your performance”..., just change “I” and “You” to “We”. Example “We need to do”, “Let’s review our performance”....

Our relation became more close, lowering psychological barrier.”



Mr. Hironori Goto, expatriate from ATJ to ATI