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HOME ECONOMY

Interview: Shimada Takashi, India-Japan Business Advisor

| Published: Nov 02 2014, 12:00 IST

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SUMMARY

In Japan; if any company th inks of India Market Entry – th eir first reach would be...

In Japan; if any company thinks of India Market Entry – their first reach would be to Shimada Takashi to seek advice or opinion. Out of 1200 companies that are in India now, at least 300 companies were in his advisory belt during early stages. He has written total of 11 books on India; and consistently features in Media as commentator on India Topics.

Shimada's India experience dates back in 1991 when he was first stationed in New Delhi Branch of Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi UFJ. From his Initial experience in India till date; there is no looking back; a passionate India business supporter and critic. We listen to him in this article on recent developments in India-Japan business, his ideas and suggestions for Japanese companies in India and also for Indian companies to work with Japanese.

Q1. Shimada san, Please provide us glimpse of your Initial experience in India; that is when you were heading Japanese Bank operations in India.

Through Shakespeare, as we know that Masterpieces are born in chaos, similarly when I stationed in India at first ; I saw many chaotic situation, however it did not take much time to understand that India is world`s Masterpiece. Has lots potential to be world's center. Even though people are poor; Indian people always have glowing eyes; Indian people have lots of hope, optimism and dream for future. I had Hired lots of Indian people who were very talented and they have in-turn helped us in getting our operations smoothly done. All I needed to do was to give them a clear instruction learnt a lot including difference between Japanese society and Indian Society. The Time I spent in India was gorgeous period for my life time.

Q2. How do you see the transformation of India from 1991 to 2014 and how would you foresee the change for next 20 years

IN THE NEWS

Well, to narrate it we can say like Indian economy and growth from all dimensions has gained 50 % in an exam; and From now on, it needs to ensure itself to gain another 50% to reach its full potential. In other words for past 20 years after initial economic reforms we can see services led growth bringing 50 % GDP and here in after to attain full growth including manufacturing and agriculture. The time from now on is important for Indian economy sustainability.

Q3. What is the major challenge when you advise Japanese companies for India Market?

Japanese companies face lots of challenges when they do global operations not specific to India; and in particularly adapting to Indian local society and working styles is daunting. Many of Japanese companies are not fully aware of India and they travel with their own perception and that leads to gap. Also acceptability of differences in styles, cultures is very less among Japanese, therefore Japanese people face immense challenge when they carry their style of work in India, however there are people who quickly manage with help of Indian counterparts.

Q4. What are the challenges you would find in India – rather the challenges faced until now

India is vast country, To advise my clients in their requirements towards India; knowledge on location, target, and segmentation is very important which is very puzzle . India also has very adhoc governmental process that differs from state to state and sometimes we do face communication challenges. Especially differences in English language and non-verbal communication styles. Keeping aside the decision making process that is very different in India and Japan, One specific point to identify is that silence is gold in Japan and silence is almost like weakness in India, Those who don't speak in India they lose opportunity. Rather Japanese people should learn how to communicate with Indian business people.

Q5. You have hired Indian people, also have partnered with Indian company; what is your impression working with Indian people

Like Both sides of Coin; there are both Merit and Demerits of working together sometimes. From Japanese perspective Japanese people need to learn to globalize more and engage Indians more. At the same time Indians have to come out of Individualism point of view to Common point of view or to see other dimensions. As Suzuki company`s Chairman mentions – There is no point in arguing over split milk- need to go further and find solution. Therefore case by case we need to move beyond survival zone and comfort zone to achieve next goal.

Q6. As a Veteran in this field; being in India Japan business domain for more than 2 decades; how do you rate the market potential.

Re-using India`s Prime Minister`s Word Demography, Demand are huge factors and potential for Japanese companies. Manufacturing and Agriculture sector can be utilized by Japanese companies not only to grow for themselves but also to contribute to India`s economy growth. We hope that Japanese companies can use Indian Talents also very well in upcoming days.

Q7. I see many articles written by you, includes comments that are very critic on India but also supportive. Please help to understand.

In Japan we need to be clear and transparent on any role we take. Therefore as an advisor, we are required to convey them what is perceived from Japanese point of view. At given any time, situation and according to trends in India; I convey those points for companies in the same manner.

Q8. There many Japanese consultants who travel to India once or twice and become expert on India and start advising Japanese companies for India Market; in most of the cases without even Indian partner associated with them; How do you see these kinds challenges.

First of all India is like a full published book, just because one person reads one page of book he/she cannot assume they read the whole book, we do not know what is written in other pages. With the little knowledge how can one advise other or even share info? Therefore these kinds of challenges are normal in any market so as in the advisory roles; Japanese companies will come back after failure to seek expert's advice. On the other had Japanese companies take step by step information and pursue their goals in broader ways by not jumping into one single window of information.

Q9. How often you travel to India and your travel excerpts

I travel to India twice in a quarter, almost 8 trips per year along with clients; have travelled different parts of India; including all locations where Japanese companies have located in India. I adapt to the society when I travel and India is place where I get to learn always. In Future I hope to make money by




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GALLERIES

contributing to this sector.

Q10. Any comments for Indian Readers.

In Japanese character we say [人-Hito] for person, it also represents the meaning of Human, A Human or person is always supported by other person and human being, therefore we represent the Kanji character by two lines leaning to each other, With any line falling down the other will not be able to stand, will not be called as human or person, rather it has no meaning. Thus Unity brings prosperity; India and Japan togetherness has great potential in many perspectives. And let's start anything from scratch without pride and prejudice.

Writer Profile: Junko Nirmala is a Tokyo resident with 15 years of experience in technology and business consulting services mainly focusing on India-Japan Market and cross border related services. Her diverse background even includes a short stint as a Venturepreneur. During the last few years she has helped several Japanese companies with their India market entry strategies. Writer can be reached at junkonirmala@gmail.com

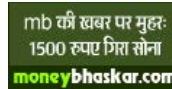
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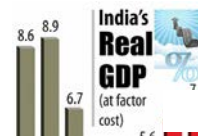


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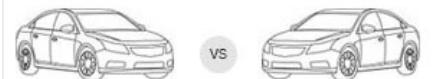
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