

Abstracts

The Necessity of Employee Representatives from the Perspective of Industrial Relations:
Utilizing the management resource of employer-employee communication

Hak-Soo Oh (The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training)

The workers of Japan comprise the longest continuously working labor force in the world. They build the longest relationships with their employers, and have the greatest need for employer-employee communication. However, there is no comprehensive law in Japan covering employer-employee communication in individual companies. Given falling labor union membership ratios, the decline of the number of majority unions, and occurrences that are making majority representatives less effective, Japan now has need of a legally established employee representative system much like those in European countries such as Germany. This will be necessary if companies are going to avoid management crises and utilize the management resource of employee-employer communication to enhance employee motivation, techniques, efficiency, teamwork, and cooperation with the company. In creating a legal framework for such a system, it would be best to have the system established as a permanent organ. Its operation costs should be covered by companies, and prior and post-negotiation training for employers and employees should be offered in order to make sure that the system functions. Furthermore, the representatives should be fairly elected from among all employees.