

Chapter 2: Current and Previous Jobs

Now we will look at the current jobs and positions of expatriates employed by foreign companies in Japan and their jobs and positions before they were assigned to Japan.

1. Current and Previous Jobs

Table 2-1 shows all the current jobs that the expatriate respondents mentioned. The most numerous category was top management, a career which 63.8% of the total were pursuing. Although there was some variation in the figures, the number of expatriates engaged in top management decreased in proportion to the increase in the size of the company. Top management was followed by sales, at 30.9%, international operations at 29.3%, and planning, at 27.4%. At small organizations with fewer than 10 employees, nearly six-tenths of the expatriates were engaged in sales. We believe that this is because most sales offices have relatively few employees.

Table 2-1: All current jobs (by number of employees in the local organization, all selected)

	General affairs	Accounting	Personnel	Planning	Sales	Production	Technology	Research and development	International operations	Top management	Other	N.A. (No Answer)	Total %	Actual number
Number of employees in the local organization														
Fewer than 10	32.1	17.9	25.0	30.4	57.1		10.7	16.1	28.6	60.7	12.5		100.0	56
10–29	26.3	8.8	12.3	22.8	38.6	5.3	7.0	5.3	35.1	68.4	14.0		100.0	57
30–99	27.7	21.5	26.2	27.7	18.5	7.7	15.4	13.8	38.5	70.8	12.3		100.0	65
100–499	9.6	18.1	10.8	27.7	30.1	3.6	7.2	3.6	22.9	65.1	21.7	0	100.0	83
500–999	25.0	8.3		33.3		8.3		16.7	25.0	41.7	33.3		100.0	12
1,000 or more	9.1	21.2	9.1	27.3	12.1		3.0	9.1	21.2	54.5	15.2		100.0	33
N.A.							100.0						100.0	1
Total	21.2	16.9	16.3	27.4	30.9	3.9	9.1	9.4	29.3	63.8	16.3	0	100.0	307

Next, we asked them to name their principal job, as shown in Fig. 2-2. Here, too, “top management” turned out to be the largest category, at 44.3%, followed by “other” at 12.7% and “sales” at 10.4%. Expatriates whose local organization was in a manufacturing industry were 10% more likely to be in top management than those at workplaces engaged in a non-manufacturing industry.

By location of headquarters of the dispatching organization, expatriates whose employers were headquartered in Asia or Oceania were less likely than those whose employers were headquartered in North America or Europe to be engaged in top management, and the difference was 10 percentage points to 20 percentage points or more. However, this may be due to the small size of the sample from Asia and Oceania.

Table 2-2: Current principal Job (by industry and number of employees in the local organization and location of the headquarters of the dispatching organization)

	General affairs	Accounting	Personnel	Planning	Sales	Production	Technology	Research and development	International operations	Top management	Other	N.A.	Total %	Actual number
Industry of the local organization														
Manufacturing		2.6		4.3	12.2	0.9	0.9	1.7	7.8	51.3	7.8	10.4	100	115
Non-manufacturing	2.1	4.2	1.6	2.1	9.0			4.2	10.1	40.7	15.3	10.6	100	189
N.A.					33.3		33.3				33.3		100	3
Number of employees in the local organization														
Fewer than 10				3.6	33.9			7.1	7.1	28.6	7.1	12.5	100	56
10–29	3.5	1.8		5.3	10.5			1.8	8.8	42.1	10.5	15.8	100	57
30–99	1.5	3.1			1.5			3.1	13.8	53.8	10.8	12.3	100	65
100–499		7.2		3.6	4.8	1.2			7.2	53.0	18.1	4.8	100	83
500–999		8.3						16.7	8.3	25.0	25.0	16.7	100	12
1,000 or more		6.1	9.1	3.0	6.1		3.0	3.0	9.1	42.4	12.1	6.1	100	33
N.A.							100						100	1
Location of headquarters														
North America		3.3	2.2	4.3	6.5			3.3	10.9	47.8	10.9	10.9	100	92
Europe	2.3	1.7	0.6	2.9	12.1	0.6	0.6	3.5	6.9	46.2	12.1	10.4	100	173
Oceania		25			8.3			8.3		33.3	8.3	16.7	100	12
Asia		4.3			13.0				21.7	26.1	26.1	8.7	100	23
N.A.		14.3			14.3		14.3		14.3	28.6	14.3		100	7
Total	1.3	3.6	1.0	2.9	10.4	0.3	0.7	3.3	9.1	44.3	12.7	10.4	100	307

We wondered what kind of work the expatriates were pursuing before being assigned to Japan. Table 2-3 shows the results of asking the respondents to list all the jobs they had been engaged in before their assignment to Japan. We found that “top management” was the largest category, at 39.1%. This was followed by sales at 31.6% and international operations at 30.6%. This order was similar to the listing of all current jobs in Table 2-1.

Table 2-3: All Jobs before assignment to Japan (by number of employees in the dispatching organization, all selected)

	General affairs	Accounting	Personnel	Planning	Sales	Production	Technology	Research and development	International operations	Top management	Other	N.A.	Total %	Actual number
Number of employees in the dispatching organization														
Fewer than 500	16.2	5.4	10.8	29.7	45.9		5.4	16.2	51.4	40.5	10.8		100	37
500–999	28.6	21.4	14.3	35.7	50.0	7.1	14.3	7.1	28.6	35.7	7.1		100	14
1000–4999	20.0	17.5	12.5	28.8	32.5	8.8	7.5	13.8	31.3	48.8	12.5		100	80
5,000–9,999	10.5	13.2	10.5	21.1	31.6	5.3	2.6	5.3	15.8	36.8	23.7		100	38
10,000–19,999	11.8	2.9	2.9	26.5	32.4	5.9	5.9	8.8	32.4	38.2	17.6	0	100	34
20,000 or more	8.0	14.9	6.9	17.2	20.7	9.2	9.2	4.6	26.4	32.2	24.1	2.3	100	87
N.A.	5.9	17.6	11.8	11.8	35.3	11.8	17.6	5.9	35.3	35.3	17.6		100	17
Total	13.7	13.4	9.4	23.8	31.6	7.2	7.8	9.1	30.6	39.1	17.6	0.7	100	307

Now we will take a look at the respondents’ principal job before assignment to Japan, as shown in Table 2-4. “Top management” was still the largest category at 27.7%, but it accounted for only about 1/4 of the total, followed by “sales” at 16.9% and “other” at 16.0%. This order is no different than that for current principal job, as shown in Table 2-2.

There were slightly more expatriates engaged in top management in the non-manufacturing industries than in the manufacturing industries. By location of the headquarters of the dispatching organization, there were a slightly lower percentage of expatriates from Europe who were engaged in top management than from North America, Asia and Oceania.

Table 2-5 shows the relation between the expatriates’ principal jobs before assignment to Japan and their current principal jobs. From these, we may note two points.

First, more than half of the expatriates working in general affairs, accounting, or personnel before their assignment to Japan were currently engaged in the same job. That is, there was a great deal of consistency in the careers of persons involved in general affairs, accounting, and personnel. Moreover, 81.2% of the persons who were in top management positions are currently in such positions.

Second, many of the expatriates who had been working in planning, sales before their assignment to Japan, were currently working in the same job, but the percentages were less than half in all cases. More than half the expatriates formerly engaged in international operations were currently in top management.

When Japanese are dispatched overseas, there are only a few Japanese at the overseas workplace, so each one is responsible for several jobs. In other words,

Table 2-4: Principal job before assignment to Japan (by industry and size of the dispatching organization and location of the headquarters of the dispatching organization)

	General affairs	Accounting	Personnel	Planning	Sales	Production	Technology	Research and development	International operations	Top management	Other	N.A.	Total %	Actual number
Industry of the dispatching organization														
Manufacturing	1.4	6.3		9.2	21.1	0.7	4.2	5.6	13.4	23.2	14.1	0.7	100	142
Non-manufacturing	2.5	6.3	1.9	2.5	12.5	2.5	1.9	3.8	11.9	31.3	18.1	5.0	100	160
N.A.					40.0					40.0	0.0	20.0	100	5
Number of employees in the dispatching organization														
Fewer than 500				8.1	27.0		5.4	8.1	21.6	16.2	8.1	5.4	100	37
500–1,000	7.1				21.4		7.1	7.1	14.3	28.6	7.1	7.1	100	14
1,000–5,000	3.8	10.0	1.3	3.8	15.0	1.3	2.5	5.0	10.0	33.8	11.3	2.5	100	80
50,000–10,000		10.5		2.6	21.1	2.6		5.3	5.3	28.9	23.7		100	38
10,000–20,000	2.9		2.9	11.8	17.6			5.9	11.8	32.4	14.7		100	34
20,000 or more	1.1	5.7	1.1	6.9	10.3	2.3	3.4	2.3	14.9	25.3	21.8	4.6	100	87
N.A.		11.8			23.5	5.9	5.9		5.9	23.5	17.6	5.9	100	17
Location of headquarters														
North America	1.1	5.4	3.3	6.5	16.3		2.2	4.3	7.6	31.5	19.6	2.2	100	92
Europe	2.9	5.2		5.2	19.1	2.9	2.3	4.0	16.8	25.4	13.3	2.9	100	173
Oceania		25.0			16.7			8.3		33.3	16.7		100	12
Asia		4.3		4.3	4.3		8.7	8.7	8.7	30.4	21.7	8.7	100	23
N.A.		14.3		14.3	14.3		14.3			14.3	14.3	14.3	100	7
Total	2.0	6.2	1.0	5.5	16.9	1.6	2.9	4.6	12.4	27.7	16.0	3.3	100	307

Japanese cover more jobs in their overseas workplace than they do in their Japanese workplace. Let us then take a look at Table 2-6, which shows how the number of jobs changes for foreign expatriates. Most expatriates had one job, both before assignment to Japan (56.4%) and currently (48.2%). However, the slightly larger percentage of expatriates had one job before their assignment to Japan.

On the average, expatriates currently had 2.4 jobs and 1.9 jobs before their assignment to Japan, so that their current number of jobs was slightly larger.

Comparing the number of jobs currently and before assignment to Japan, we also looked at the figures for individuals, and the results are shown in Table 2-7. A decrease in jobs (from 6 fewer to 1 fewer) was shown by 14.6% of expatriates, and for 53.9%, the number of jobs did not change, but 31.5% saw an increase of one or more jobs.

Table 2-5: Current principal job (by principal job before assignment to Japan)

Current principal job	General affairs	Accounting	Personnel	Planning	Sales	Production	Technology	Research and development	International operations	Top management	Other	N.A.	Total %	Actual number
Principal job before assignment to Japan														
General affairs	50.0										16.7	33.3	100	6
Accounting		57.9						5.3		26.3		10.5	100	19
Personnel			66.7							33.3			100	3
Planning			5.9	11.8	29.4	5.9		17.6		17.6	5.9	5.9	100	17
Sales				3.8	32.7			3.8	9.6	28.8	7.7	13.5	100	52
Production								40.0		20.0	20.0	20.0	100	5
Technology				11.1	11.1		22.2	33.3		22.2			100	9
Research and development	7.1				14.3			35.7	14.3	21.4	7.1		100	14
International operations				2.6	7.9			28.9		57.9	2.6		100	38
Top management				1.2	3.5			3.5		81.2		10.6	100	85
Other				4.1				2.0		28.6	53.1	12.2	100	49
N.A.					10.0					10.0	40.0	40.0	100	10
Total	1.3	3.6	1.0	2.9	10.4	0.3	0.7	3.3	9.1	44.3	12.7	10.4	100	307

Table 2-6: Number of Jobs (Currently and before assignment to Japan)

Number of jobs	Current number of jobs (%)	Number of jobs before assignment (%)
1	48.2	56.4
2	18.2	19.5
3	12.1	9.1
4	4.9	5.2
5	5.9	4.6
6	4.9	2.3
7	3.3	1.0
8	1.3	1.0
9	0.7	0.7
10	0.7	0.3
Total (actual number)	2.4	1.9
Mean Value	100 (307)	100 (307)

Table 2-7: Change in the number of Jobs between the period before assignment to Japan and the present

Difference between number of jobs currently and before assignment to Japan	%
7 fewer	0.3
5 fewer	0.7
3 fewer	2.6
2 fewer	4.2
1 less	6.8
No change	53.9
1 more	15.3
2 more	6.5
3 more	3.6
4 more	2.9
5 more	1.6
6 more	1.3
8 more	0.3
Total	100 (307)

Note: (Number of current jobs)-(number of jobs before assignment to Japan)

2. Current and Previous Positions

Table 2-8 shows how the expatriates' positions changed between the time before their assignment to Japan and the present. Since most of the expatriates were in top management, the most common position was chairman or president at 39.4%, as we might guess, followed by department manager class at 21.2% and executive class at 18.9%, so more than eight-tenths of respondents were at the department manager level or higher.

By industry of the receiving organization, the percentage of chairmen and presidents was slightly higher in the manufacturing industries than in the non-manufacturing industries. By number of employees in the receiving organization, the percentage of respondents stating that they were either a chairman or a president was highest at the companies with the smallest number of employees. For example, 32.2% of respondents at companies with more than 20,000 employees were chairmen or presidents, but 48.6% were at companies with fewer than 500 employees. By location of the dispatching organization's headquarters, the percentage of chairmen and presidents was highest at the companies headquartered in Europe at 43.4%, but in the Asian region it was a mere 21.7%.

Table 2-9 shows what position the expatriates held before being assigned to Japan. The common response was "head of department class" at 29.0%, followed by "executive class" at 20.8%, while only 7.2% responded with "chairman or president". There were no clear differences based on the industry of the dispatching organization or the number of employees. However, by region where the headquarters of the dispatching organization is located, the largest group for North America was "executive class" at 31.5%, while the largest group for Europe was "head of department class" at 32.4%.

Table 2-8: Current position (by industry and number of employees in the local organization, by location of the headquarters of the dispatching organization)

	Chairman, president	Executive class	Head of department class	Head of division class	Section chief class	Non- managerial/ staff	Advisors, etc.	N.A.	Total %	Actual number
Industry of the local organization										
Manufacturing	43.5	14.8	21.7	7.0	4.3	3.5	4.3	0.9	100.0	115
Non-manufacturing	37.6	21.7	20.1	7.9	4.8	4.2	3.2	0.5	100.0	189
N.A.			66.7			33.3			100.0	3
Number of employees in the local organization										
Fewer than 500	48.6	24.3	10.8	5.4			10.8		100.0	37
500–1,000	42.9	7.1	21.4	14.3		7.1	7.1		100.0	14
1,000–5,000	43.8	23.8	15.0	6.3	7.5	3.8			100.0	80
50,000–10,000	36.8	7.9	28.9	13.2	5.3	2.6	2.6	2.6	100.0	38
10,000–20,000	41.2	14.7	26.5	5.9		5.9	5.9		100.0	34
20,000 or more	32.2	20.7	24.1	8.0	6.9	4.6	2.3	1.1	100.0	87
N.A.	35.3	17.6	29.4			11.8	5.9		100.0	17
Location of headquarters										
North America	37.0	21.7	16.3	8.7	5.4	3.3	6.5	1.1	100.0	92
Europe	43.4	20.8	19.1	5.8	3.5	4.6	2.3	0.6	100.0	173
Oceania	33.3	8.3	25.0	16.7	8.3	8.3			100.0	12
Asia	21.7	4.3	43.5	13.0	8.7	4.3	4.3		100.0	23
N.A.	42.9		57.1						100.0	7
Total	39.4	18.9	21.2	7.5	4.6	4.2	3.6	0.7	100.0	307

Table 2-10 shows whether the expatriates' current positions represent a change from the ones they held before assignment to Japan. As we can see from the differences in the distribution of their current positions (Table 2-8) and their previous positions (Table 2-9), or, in other words, the fact that their current positions represent an upward shift from their previous positions, most expatriates held a higher position than they had before assignment to Japan. Of the expatriates who had been chairmen or presidents before their assignment, 86.4% still held those positions. In addition, 53.1% of the executives, 39.3% of the head of department, and 37.9% of the head of division had become chairmen or presidents. Even among the former non-managerial/staff, 9.5% had assumed the position of chairman or president. The situation with other positions was similar. For example, 21.3% of the expatriates who had been head of department before their assignment to Japan were currently working as executives. Since 39.3% of the expatriates were former head of department had become chairmen or presidents, as many as 60.4% of head of department had risen one or more steps in rank.

Table 2-9: Position before assignment to Japan (by industry and number of employees in the dispatching organization, by location of the headquarters of the dispatching organization)

	Chairman, president	Executive class	Head of department class	Head of division class	Section chief class	Non- managerial /staff	N.A.	Total %	Actual number
Industry of the local organization									
Manufacturing	4.9	17.6	28.2	12.7	19.0	14.1	3.5	100	142
Non-manufacturing	8.8	23.8	30.0	6.9	13.1	13.1	4.4	100	160
N.A.	20.0	20.0	20.0		20.0	20.0		100	5
Number of employees in the dispatching organization									
Fewer than 500	5.4	29.7	18.9	18.9	13.5	5.4	8.1	100	37
500–1,000		14.3	42.9	14.3		28.6		100	14
1,000–5,000	8.8	25.0	27.5	2.5	17.5	16.3	2.5	100	80
50,000–10,000	7.9	18.4	15.8	13.2	23.7	18.4	2.6	100	38
10,000–20,000	14.7	11.8	26.5	11.8	14.7	17.6	2.9	100	34
20,000 or more	3.4	19.5	39.1	8.0	17.2	8.0	4.6	100	87
N.A.	11.8	17.6	29.4	11.8	5.9	17.6	5.9	100	17
Location of headquarters									
North America	7.6	31.5	23.9	10.9	12.0	9.8	4.3	100	92
Europe	7.5	16.8	32.4	8.1	15.6	16.8	2.9	100	173
Oceania	16.7	8.3	16.7	25.0	25.0	8.3		100	12
Asia		17.4	26.1	8.7	30.4	8.7	8.7	100	23
N.A.		14.3	42.9		14.3	14.3	14.3	100	7
Total	7.2	20.8	29.0	9.4	16.0	13.7	3.9	100	307

Table 2-11 shows to what degree the expatriates received promotions due to their assignment to Japan. Current positions included the classification “advisor, coordinator, consultant”, but we have converted them into their corresponding ranks. Of the expatriates, 4.6% lost rank due to their assignment to Japan, while 32.9% saw no change in their position, but 58.0% of the expatriates experienced a promotion of one or more ranks, an average of 1.2 ranks. Incidentally, Japanese dispatched abroad experience an average promotion of 1.6 ranks*.

Table 2-10: Current position (by position before assignment to Japan)

Current position									Total %	Actual number	
	Chairman, president	Executive class	Head of department class	Head of division class	Section chief class	Non-managerial/staff	Advisors, etc.	N.A.			
Position before assignment to Japan											
Chairman or president	86.4	4.5	9.1						100.0	22	
Executive class	53.1	39.1	6.3				1.6		100.0	64	
Head of department class	39.3	21.3	30.3	4.5	2.2			2.2	100.0	89	
Head of division class	37.9	6.9	27.6	17.2				10.3	100.0	29	
Section chief class	22.4	16.3	20.4	14.3	18.4	2.0		2.0	4.1	100.0	49
Non-managerial/staff	9.5	7.1	28.6	11.9	7.1	28.6		7.1		100.0	42
N.A.	58.3		16.7	16.7				8.3		100.0	12
Total	39.4	18.9	21.2	7.5	4.6	4.2		3.6	0.7	100.0	307

Table 2-11: Change in the number of jobs between the period before assignment to Japan and the present

Difference in rank between current position and position held before assignment	%
2 ranks lower	1.3
1 rank lower	3.3
No change in rank	32.9
1 rank higher	24.1
2 ranks higher	17.3
3 ranks higher	10.4
4 ranks higher	4.6
5 ranks higher	1.6
N.A.	4.6
Total	100 (307)

Note: Current position-position before assignment

The computations were made on the basis of numerical values assigned to the ranks: chairman or president (6), executive class (5), head of department class (4), head of division class (3), section chief class (2), non-managerial/staff (1). The positions of advisor, coordinator, and consultant were converted to the corresponding rank.

3. Summary

The most common work job that the expatriates were engaged in was “top management,” at 44.3%, followed by “other” at 12.7% and “sales” at 10.4%. As far as the relations between their current jobs and their jobs before assignment to Japan were concerned, more than half of persons in general affairs, accounting, and personnel were engaged in the same job.

On the average, the current number of work jobs was 2.4, compared to 1.9 before assignment to Japan, so the expatriates currently had a slightly larger number of jobs.

The largest percentage of respondents (39.4%) were chairmen or presidents, followed by head of department at 21.2% and executives as 18.9%, so that more than eight-tenths held positions as head of department or higher. Most expatriates held a higher position now than they had before their assignment to Japan. The percentage of expatriates who lost rank through their assignment to Japan was 4.6%, while 32.9% saw no change, but 58.0% of expatriates experienced a promotion of one or more ranks, an average of 1.2 ranks.

- (*) See the report that I co-authored, Japan Institute of Labour, Results of the Third Survey on Work and Life among Japanese Expatriates at Japanese-affiliated Companies Abroad, December 2001, P. 33