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defect per 100 units while the product was still on the assembly line, compared to 64 among the U.S. manufacturers. Once the air conditioners were sold, only .6 percent of the Japanese models but 10.5 percent of the American-made units required service calls.

The overall failure rate for the *worst* performing Japanese firm was only half that for the *best* U.S. company.

Management makes the difference, Garvin believes. Top Japanese executives convinced workers and supervisors that quality was the top priority. Company leaders set general goals for improved quality that were then fixed (e.g., "improve compressor reliability by 10 percent") by workers and foremen in shop floor quality control circles. Detailed reports on defects discovered on the assembly line and by field repairmen allowed the Japanese to pinpoint problems; top management met daily to discuss the reports.

Some U.S. air conditioner makers, by contrast, kept virtually no records on product failures, and none collected data as precise as the Japanese did. In the factory, quality almost invariably came second to meeting production schedules, and only three companies set specific goals for cutting failure rates. These three also recorded the largest U.S. reductions in product failure (25 percent or more). On average, American senior managers reviewed reports on defects only once a week.

Worker training also plays a part in ensuring quality: Most Japanese firms set aside six months to teach each employee every job on the line. American workers typically receive from a few hours to several days of instruction, and then only for one job.

There is a silver lining to all this bad news, according to Garvin: Better work habits or other cultural traits have little to do with the Japanese edge. American companies that adopted some Japanese management methods outperformed their domestic rivals. U.S. managers could close the quality gap if they really wanted to.

The Work Ethic Is Not Dead Yet

"Job Commitment in America: Is It Waxing or Waning?" by Janice Neipert Hedges, in *Monthly Labor Review* (July 1983), Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Like chastity, respect for authority, and the corner grocery store, the work ethic is widely described as an endangered species in America. But, argues Hedges, a labor economist, there is little solid evidence that shows employee zeal is fading.

Some statistics that seem to show a waning commitment to work turn out, she notes, to reflect not long-term trends, but temporary economic slowdowns. For example, during recessions, many companies simply cannot afford to pay premium wages for overtime. Thus, paid overtime fell several times between 1960 and 1979, hitting a low of 2.1 hours per worker per week; but it also rebounded, reaching a high of 3.9 hours. Overall, overtime showed no long-term trend, up or down.

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Other trends that do hold up in the long run may only *appear* to signal a weakened commitment to work, Hedges argues. For example, the fact that job turnover is higher today than it was in the 1950s may mean merely that information about job opportunities is being disseminated more efficiently to a better-educated work force.

Married men are now less inclined to hold more than one job—about six percent did in 1979, down by nearly a percentage point from 1973—but mostly because more wives are bringing home a second paycheck. During the same period, the percentage of *women* with two or more jobs grew from 2.7 to 3.5, as a rising divorce rate made more women their household's chief breadwinner.

Overall, leisure time has actually decreased. When domestic chores—shopping, house-cleaning, home repairs—are added to work-for-pay, both men and women work about 57 hours per week, compared with 56 in 1975.

Meanwhile, some five million part-time workers were looking for full-time jobs in 1981, and the number appears to be growing. "If the data show major cause for concern," Hedges concludes, "it is that the desire for hours of work seems greater than the hours available."

SOCIETY*Recycling the American Family*

"The American Family in the Year 2000" by Andrew Cherlin and Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., in *The Futurist* (June 1983), World Future Society, 4916 St. Elmo Ave., Bethesda, Md. 20814.

During the past two decades, the American family changed so rapidly that its very future sometimes seemed in doubt.

From 1960 to 1980, the U.S. divorce rate doubled and the birthrate dropped from a 20th-century high to an all-time low. Cherlin and Furstenberg, sociologists at Johns Hopkins and the University of Pennsylvania, respectively, report, however, that the pace of change has now slowed; since the mid-1970s, the divorce rate has risen only modestly, and the birthrate has actually increased. The family will survive, they write, though "the 'traditional' family will no longer predominate."

The standard nuclear family—husband, wife, and kids—is no relic. But, thanks to high divorce rates, the typical Mom and Dad of the year 2000 will be almost as likely to be in their second marriage as their first. Half of all marriages beginning in the early 1980s probably will end in divorce—half of all today's children will live in single-parent families, at least for a time, before they reach 18. But 75 percent of all divorced people will remarry.

Most first marriages will yield only one or two children. Indeed, demographer Charles F. Westoff predicts that 25 percent of all women