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AGAINST BACKDROP OF JAPAN BASHING, AMERICAN WORKERS ADOPTING JAPANESE BUSINESS METHODS

DAYTON, Ohio -- "Japan bashing" amidst new cries for protectionism and isolationism may be on this rise this election year, but a growing number of American workers are learning and adopting business techniques used by the Japanese to compete better in the marketplace.

"KAIZEN"--the Japanese word meaning gradual, incremental and constant improvement--and "Just in Time" (JIT)--the Japanese inventory concept--are no longer indecipherable alphabet-soup concepts for American manufacturers. Consider:

- More than 120 executives and other professionals from across the U.S. and two other countries are expected to take part in University of Dayton-sponsored KAIZEN workshops next week in Ft. Mitchell, Ky.

- By adopting Japanese techniques following an in-plant KAIZEN and JIT intervention last summer, Shopsmith Inc. reduced floor space by 30 percent and its work-in-process inventory by 50 percent--permitting the company to move a 35,000-square-foot distribution facility into the factory.

"If Americans are going to win, we have to look at other winners," contends Steve Tattershall, director of the KAIZEN program for the University of Dayton's School of Engineering. "The people doing the Japan bashing have already given up. They've lost but are still looking for a way to lose gracefully by making excuses and looking for protectionism," he said.

During UD's weeklong hands-on, how-to workshop at Shopsmith Inc. last July, Japanese consultants taught manufacturers how to implement KAIZEN and JIT on the shop floor. The workers wore hats with an embroidered "Do It."

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