

# Samurai values

Business



The Samurai meaning “one who serves” (Hays par. 14) appeared in Japan in the 10th century as guards of the Imperial Court in Kyoto under the command of local warlords (Hays par. 24). They were educated and took up different forms of art, the favourite one being calligraphy hence the concept of bushido “the way of life of the warrior” and bun “the artistic, intellectual and spiritual side of the Samurai (Hays par. 17).

A Samurai had one duty; to faithfully serve his master through the pledging allegiance to the emperor (Hays par. 28). The bushido code prescribed loyalty, devotion to duty, justice, courage, compassion, modesty, practical administration skills, and willingness to die for the honour and for one’s master (Hays par. 29). These attributes were imported into the men while undergoing military training. The warriors were taught to ‘unquestionably obey’ their parents and master-daimyo and ruler-shogun from the onset of the training (Hays par.

35). The Corporate Entities and Samurai Values Corporate entities should be able to undertake their line of businesses for the sustained periods of time so that they earn the profits while the customers enjoy the products or services offered. For businesses to do this they need a proper culture to work with (Watson and Burkhalter p. 401). Culture has been defined as “the energy that drives or fails to drive the organization” (Watson and Burkhalter p.

402). The elements of a Samurai warrior are in this sense the various forms of energy that drive Japanese companies and hence inform the companies’ culture in the conducting business. The managerial portion of these companies protect their employees, offer services to each other, accept their

places in the organisation and depend on the whole organization for the effective work to occur (Watson and Burkhalter p. 402). A Japanese company would offer a long term employment to workers, gradual promotion, efficient control mechanisms, collective decision making and show genuine concerns for the workers (Watson and Burkhalter p. 402).

These mirror the Samurai values. The Toyota Company has infused portions of the Samurai code of conduct in their business plan. One of them is through the target costing; this is “ a cost management tool for reducing the overall cost of a product over its entire life cycle with the help of other company departments” (Feil, Yook and Kim p. 11).

Toyota usually conducts seminars open to the public where the Toyota Production System is discussed; techniques, systems and philosophy (Feil, Yook and Kim p. 17). The talks detail the three elements such that one can copy i. e. the competitors but they cannot reproduce the philosophical underpinnings of the process where the mind has to be conditioned before such undertaking (p. 17).