

FEATURES OF DOING BUSINESS AS A WAKARESASEYA

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Avoidance of conflict, from the point of view of psychology, is one of the protective reactions of our body to adverse events. At best, conflict is unpleasant, at worst – painful. To find the proper moment to talk, to withstand counterarguments are only some of the difficulties. That is why many peo-

ple do not want to be engaged in a conflict, even if they are not satisfied with the relationship.

In a country like Japan conflicts are treated with particular caution. Since ancient times Japan has been considered a country where they do not say the word «no». The Japanese always avoid confrontations and do not accept public displays of excessive emotionality. Many residents of this country find it extremely difficult to break any relationships: both in private and professional life. That is why wakaresaseya firms which take on the role of relationship destroyers have become very popular in Japan.

Wakaresaseya workers, literally «breakers», are professional agents who specialize in breaking up relationships (whether marriages, affairs, friendships, professional relationships, etc.) for a fee. Having signed a contract with their clients, wakaresaseya will stop at nothing to achieve their goal which includes such extreme measures as lying, involvement in fake business deals, creating a certain trap, financial burden, involving one of the partners in an affair and the like. In Japan Wakaresaseya is considered to be an immoral business but it has existed for decades and nowadays these services are more popular than ever [1]. For some Japanese the discomfort connected with the nature of this business is less than the pain caused by direct confrontation.

The activities of these agencies first became widely known around 2000, and in 2001, Fuji TV aired the eponymous drama series «Wakaresaseya». After that, the demand for such services began to grow and now such enterprises receive an annual income of several hundred million yen [2].

Most of the clients of these firms are men and women who want to save their marriage, stop an extramarital affair or, on the contrary, seek to dissolve marital relations. Wakaresaseya services are also used by parents who do not like the person their son/daughter is dating. Managers of enterprises hire such wakaresaseya agents to dismiss an employee, or there are cases when employees do not dare to apply for dismissal personally and therefore also resort to the services of wakaresaseya.

To fulfill their tasks, wakaresaseya companies often hire attractive models, actors, usually of different body type and backgrounds.

The popularity of these firms in Japan is also determined by the legislation of this country. If a partner is contesting a divorce in Japan the party seeking the divorce must prove that there is a reason why it should be allowed. Under Japanese law the reason may be evidence of domestic violence, failure of the partner to pay standard living expenses or evidence that the partner is having an extramarital affair.

For many wealthy men in Japan who want a divorce but know that their partners will never agree to it wakaresaseya becomes the only way out of the situation. If they can get evidence that their wife is cheating them, or if they make her fall in love with someone else, they have the desired path to divorce.

Also in Japan there are «consolation payments» for the party who provides evidence of infidelity of his partner in court [3]. The existence of such a payment system means that using the services of wakaresaseya can have not only emotional but also monetary benefits.

Usually the wakaresaseya process starts with a call or email from a client. First, firms try to weed out the unpleasant ones, such as indecisive clients. «I deliberately wait four to five days to see if the client is serious before starting work», says Hiroyuki Yoshida, president of a wakaresaseya company called Office Shadow.

After receiving the initial payment from a client, the wakaresaseya agent begins the investigation, studying the details of the case: it is determined why the client's husband has a mistress, or what prompted the wife to cheat, why the client wants to leave her boyfriend, etc. Next, neighbors, colleagues are interviewed, surveillance is conducted regarding the preferences of the object, his lifestyle.

Having found out everything necessary, wakaresaseya comes up with a «scenario» to trap the target and eventually

convince or force him or her, for example, to end the relationship with a certain person.

Wakaresaseya services also include service after the main work is done. Of course, for an additional fee, to be firmly confident in the results of their work, firms can provide some psychological advice, for example, how to keep a partner who recently wanted to leave the family because of an extramarital affair [4].

As you might expect, such work is not cheap. Clients of wakaresaseya firms are usually wealthy people. A relatively simple case where a lot is known about a person can cost 400,000 yen (\$3,700). Rates can reach 20 million yen (189 thousand dollars) if the client is a politician or celebrity and a high level of secrecy is required.

Wakaresaseya firms guarantee a high level of probability of successful outcome of their activities. However, a consulting company on the activities of «divorce» agencies warns that in fact such guarantees should be treated with a certain degree of skepticism and be prepared for the fact that the agents may fail in the performance of the task [5].

For example, ten years ago a wakaresaseya case that ended in murder became known. This case led to some reforms in the wakaresaseya industry. The need for agencies that perform such work to operate only under license was introduced. Online advertising of wakaresaseya services was also restricted and public distrust of the sector increased. But 10 years have passed since the murder, and advertisements have returned. The business is booming again, despite high rates and ongoing public controversy over its ethics [3]. An Internet search revealed about 270 companies currently engaged in relationship destruction.

Current laws in Japan that deal with harassment, extortion or coercion are not applied to this profession. There is no law that explicitly prohibits what wakaresaseya agents do in Japan [2].

As for the spread of this business in other countries, in many cases people of other nationalities than Japanese can usually dare to say directly what they want. That is, wakare-

saseya firms have become so popular in Japan precisely because of the specific features of the national mentality. Therefore, it is unlikely that such business will have the same relevance elsewhere as in Japan.

So, a wakaresaseya agent is a separator who helps to avoid certain confrontations or awkward situations between people. There will always be a certain number of people who cannot take matters into their own hands and want to entrust it to outsiders. Using the services of these companies for some people, in particular for residents of Japan, is probably the only way to get out of a difficult situation without entering into conflict with the person with whom it is time to divorce.

Divorce legislation, social norms regarding adultery in Japan and the complexity of conflict with a once close person – all this is unlikely to change in the near future. Therefore, we can predict that the services of wakaresaseya companies will undoubtedly be in demand.

References:

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