

Eastern University, Sri Lanka

Faculty of Commerce & Management

Final year- First Semester Examinations in BBA

Specialization in Human Resource Management- 2009/2010 (Dec 2010)

HRM 4143-Employee Health and Safety

Answer all questions

Time - 03 Hours

Q1. How Nissan Laps Detroit

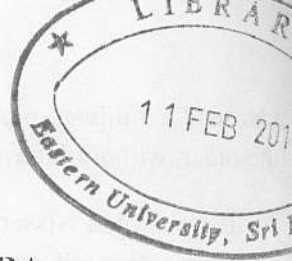
Jonathan Gates slaps a wide slap of tan-colored, hard foam rubber on his workbench. He fastens a numbered tag in one corner and attaches black foam insulation at the edges. As soon as he puts a number on the piece of foam, which will become the top of a dashboard for a Nissan quest minivan, the vehicle has an identity. All of the parts for a big chunk of the minivan's interior, decked out with the customer's choice of colours, fabrics and options, will come together in the next 42 minutes.

Gates and his coworkers fill a crucial role at Nissan motor company's new canton, Mississippi, assembly plant: almost everything a driver touches inside a new quest, titan pickup, or armada spot-utility vehicle is put together in a single module, starting at Gate's workbench.

This is the most important job," he says. And yet, amazingly, Gates doesn't even work for Nissan, he works for Lextron/Visteon automotive systems, a parts supplier that also builds the center console between the front seats and a subassembly of the car's front end. The finished modules pass over a wall to be bottled into a car or truck body rolling down the assembly line, Lextron/Visteon does the work faster than Nissan could and pays \$3 an hour less than the car maker pays assembly workers. Nissan is using a similar strategy for its vehicle frames, seats, electrical systems, and completed doors.

The canton plant was designed with the same flexibility, shop-floor smarts, and management dominated work rules that made Nissan's 20 year old plant in Smyrna, Tennessee, the most productive factory in North America year after year. The Smyrna plant builds a car in just under 6 labour hours, 6 fewer than the average Honda or Toyota plant, 8 fewer than Ford. Its profit per vehicle is the best in North America.

The canton plant, which opened in 2003 will almost certainly top that .Nissan's secret? Sure, its plants use cheaper, nonunion labour. Besides lower wages and benefits, outsourcing offers huge savings. And Nissan's plants are far more flexible in adjusting to market twists and turns. Canton



can send a minivan, pickup truck, or sport utility vehicle down the same assembly line, one after the other, without interruption.

At first glance, a Nissan factory does not look much different from one you would see in Detroit or St. Louis. But talk to the workers, and it soon becomes clear how relevant less the company squeezes mere seconds out of assembly process. "There's no silver bullet," says Emil E. Hassan, Nissan's senior vice president of manufacturing. "It's really just following up every day with improvement."

On the Smyrna passenger-car line, for instance, a worker stands on a moving platform, called a lineside limo, that inches along the body of an Xterra SUV. The limo carries all the tools and parts he needs. The assembler grabs a seat belt from a bin next to him, bolts it in, then moves along and install the rear struts – all without having to make what used to be a 20-foot walk back and forth, three times per car.

Nissan runs a tight ship and works its employees harder than Detroit's Big three auto companies. During the United Auto worker's failed attempt to organize Smyrna in 2001, workers told the union that line speeds were too fast and people were getting injured, says Bob King, the UAW's vice president of organizing. The union says that in 2001, Nissan reported 31 injuries per 1000 workers-twice the average at Big three plants – according to logs reported to the occupational safety and health administration.

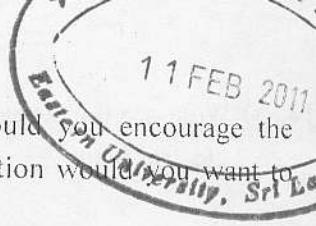
Nissan does not dispute the OSHA figures, but it denies its assembly lines are any less safe than Detroit's. Although the company won't release current numbers, executives do say that they have taken steps to reduce injuries. For instance, the company has workers do four different jobs during a typical eight hour shift, to try to cut down on repetitive motion injuries. Nissan claims that injury rates have fallen 60 percent in the past two years.

As for the finished product, the real test is still to come for Nissan. The company has yet to prove that the popularity of its Altima and G35 infiniti sedans can carry over to minivans, big pickups, and big SUVs. But at least in terms of efficiency, each new Nissan is rolling off the line with a huge head start.

Questions

- a) Why are the fast assembly lines important for achieving Nissan's goals? Can a company that cares about speed also care about safety?

(10 Marks)



b) If you worked in the HRD for the canton facility, how could you encourage the company to improve its safety record? What kinds of information would you want to present to support your ideas?

(10 Marks)

C) As the HR manager in Nissan motor company what has he to do now as his part of the job arising out of the accident?

(08 Marks)

(Total 28 Marks)

Q2. a) What does "Risk" mean? And briefly explain types of Risk.

(05 Marks)

b) "It is possible to ensure occupational health and safety of employees by preventing occupational accidents and occupational diseases" do you agree? Justify your answer.

(06 Marks)

C) Why has violence in the workplace become larger problem for organization? What recommendations would you offer to a company to ensure that it does not experience violence?

(07 Marks)

(Total 18 Marks)

Q3. a) What is a cumulative trauma disorder (CTD)? Identify some ways for reducing the incidence of CTDs?

(05 Marks)

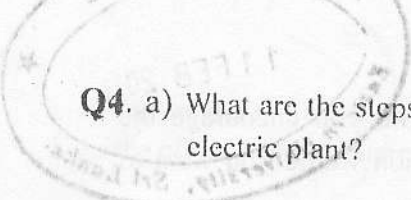
b) "Employers with poor safety records often have poor written safety policies," do you agree or disagree? Discuss your answer.

(06 Marks)

C) In several states employers can require an employee to take a drug test only if there is a "reasonable cause" for testing. What are some behaviors that would indicate that worker may be under the influence of drugs?

(07Marks)

(Total 18 Marks)



Q4. a) What are the steps that should be taken by concerned authorities to ensure safety in the electric plant?

(04 Marks)

b) For each of the following occupations, identify at least one possible hazard and at least one action employers could take to minimize the risk of injury or illness related to that hazard.

I. Worker in a fast-food restaurant

II. Computer programmer

III. Truck driver

IV. House partner

(08 Marks)

c) Which theory is a tool for the investigation of accidents? Explain with example.

(06 Marks)

(Total 18 Marks)

Q5. a) Briefly explain how training can improve occupational health and safety?

(03 Marks)

b) What is an “employee wellness program”? Why do such programs fail to meet their goals? Suggest how they can be improved?

(05 Marks)

c) Write short notes on the following

I. Organization Hygiene

II. Intermediate safety audit

III. Hazardous substance register

IV. Safety device

(10 Marks)

(Total 18 Marks)