Economic globalization and trade liberalization have become recurring well-known phenomena of life. Large companies, as well as medium and small enterprises, are increasingly moving towards globalization. The globalization and liberalization of the market place have brought about more emphasis on efficiency, productivity and quality, with firms converting to leaner, more flexible structures that can respond more readily to the pace of change in the global markets. This means, global competition requires countries and industries to adjust, and adjust well, to the changed business environment or suffer the consequences of not doing so.

In the case of the Philippines, it is very apparent that it lacked the readiness to face global competition when the world trade barriers went down as a consequence of the GATT-WTO, AFTA, and APEC trade agreements and arrangements. There were a lot of discussions in the mid-90’s on safety nets for the various affected industries, including financial and human resources strategies to enable the Philippines industries to make adjustments, but very minimal action have been done in these areas. Employers even claim that the country has good human resources but there are still no concrete programs to mobilize resources to push for higher types of industrialization to lessen dependence on domestic and export industries that are losing out in global competition. By the same token, the multi-faceted economic and social crisis facing the Philippines today has also pushed back the firms’ ability to compete globally.

As an aftermath of these complex and interrelated dynamics of globalization/regionalization, trade liberalization, economic restructuring, and economic crisis, profound impact on the firm’s labor utilization, productivity enhancement schemes, skills and compensation programs, work organization, and industry governance is undeniably being felt, particularly by labor, in terms of downsizing, restructuring, retrenchments, freeze hiring, smaller salaries increases, suspension of some benefits, reduced workdays, budget cuts on training and contracting out of services.

It is an acceptable fact that the success of an enterprise is tied to the competence and effectiveness of the people who work in and with the organization. And therefore, if people are genuinely to be a sustainable source of distinctive competitive advantage of Philippine companies in the next millennium, the underlying principles that management must adhere to in the strategic planning and implementation of approaches in resolving the issues in human resources management are: (1) respect for the rights and dignity of workers; (2) concern for the general welfare and security of workers; and (3) recognizing that people are valued stakeholders of the enterprise. There is no “one best” approach for any given industry or firm. The greatest challenge for businesspeople is to understand the, and use a nexus of, diversified approaches which are labor-friendly and concomitantly focused on achieving organizational goals through technological (production processes), structural (roles or relationships), managerial (administrative actions), and people (human resources can be educated, trained, coached, and counseled) transformation or renewal. This is the RENEWAL-DRIVEN HRM paradigm shift that Filipino managers/owners can seriously consider to address core issues and problems in human resources management that have impeded Philippine industries and deterred them from pursuing appropriate and doable approaches that will enable such firms to be globally competitive at the turn of the millennium.

Using the four-pronged RENEWAL-DRIVEN model in addressing HRM issues, the following recommendations are hereby presented for discussion:

1. LABOR UTILIZATION. It has always been the concern of management to effectively use labor as a resource of the firm at the least cost. Very often, this is done through cost cutting measures, because of which labor is the first to suffer when they are laid off, retrenched or rotated. In today’s global competition, coupled with the present economic and social crisis,
business strategies should be developed around the real sources of competitive advantage and not around low cost and low wages. Firms must develop and optimize workers toward higher levels of competency, creativity, and fulfillment. Workers need to be motivated to contribute to the attainment of company goals to the limits of their improved abilities. Based on these general guidelines, here is a list of doable options in support of effective but socially responsible labor utilization strategies:

1.1. Recruit and hire people who are multi-skilled and who possess the skills required by the jobs and not based on nepotism or political connections. This will also solve the growing mismatch between emerging jobs requiring higher-level skills and the skill levels of the people available to fill them.

1.2. Comply with the ILO labor standards and Labor Code provisions on giving equal employment opportunity regardless of gender, race, age, and religion. Today, more and more women are entering the workforce. These women are equally competent and committed like men. If this valuable segment of the workforce is to be effectively utilized, enterprises must fully recognize the importance of addressing work/family concerns, like child care services, and benefit plans, and work practices, like flexitime and telecommuting. Employment of more handicapped or disabled workers should also be done. Studies have shown that they do as well as the unimpaired in terms of productivity, attendance, and average tenure. Moreover, older workers should be permitted to work under a modified retirement scheme, within which they work fewer than regular hours for a certain period of time before retirement. This will enable them to have a smooth transition towards retirement. At the same time, the company is able to utilize their talents and skills which will give these workers a feeling of being valued in the organization in spite of their age.

1.3. Retain and develop people who are adept and comfortable in multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multilingual contexts. These are the people with broader global outlook and will facilitate global competitiveness. They are the right people who should be placed in the right jobs at the right time, and accorded with the right compensation or reward.

1.4. Create a corporate culture in which each worker has the opportunity to contribute to and advance in the company based on excellent performance and not just on seniority or political alliance in the organization. This means that the
organizational climate should be characterized by openness, trust, support, teamwork, fairness, result-orientation and fun. The traditional Filipino company culture that we are one big family where paternalism is treasured should be reviewed.

1.5. Use of various work schedule options like: (a) compressed workweek when workers work for 10 hours a day in a four-day week; (b) shorter workweek when workers work for a 32-hour workweek or a 20% cut in the workweek; (c) flexitime when workers work during a common core time period each day but have discretion in forming their workday from a flexible set of hours outside the core; (d) job sharing when two or more workers split a 40-hour-a-week job; and (e) telecommuting when workers do their work at home on a computer that is linked to their office. However, the use of any or a combination of these options should not result to lower salaries and benefits for the workers.

1.6. Use of other types of contingency workers such as freelancers (e.g. artists, musicians, writers, etc.) and independent professionals (e.g. lawyers, accountants, architects, doctors, etc.) to perform or complete a job or service within a defined period, whether done within or outside the premises of the firm. However, there should be strict compliance with the provisions of the Labor Code on the use of external market flexibility to restrain abuses that have come to be associated with its practice which adversely affect the interests of workers, especially the unskilled ones, and lead to dislocation, job insecurity, lower wages and benefits, among others.

1.7. Seek the support of the union in making choices on industrial adjustments, such as downsizing, restructurings, flexibilization and other rationalization programs, through consultation, information sharing and dialogues. This will reduce conflicts (strikes and other hardline posturing) and foster better-labor management relations. Workers, through their union, will actively participate in a process of structural adjustments if management will explain in advance the objectives and its commitment to implementing a positive strategy, decisively and fairly, to build a stronger company, not just a smaller one.

2. PRODUCTIVITY ENHANCEMENT SCHEMES. Globalization and the economic crisis have resulted in the downsizing, cost-cutting, and restructuring of firms in many industries in the country. The adverse impact of these moves are job losses resulting in the displacement of thousands of workers. What is needed is to develop productivity enhancement programs aimed at saving jobs. Moreover, these programs should be intended to increase the level of efficiency and productivity of the workers. This means that high productivity and work quality are valued in the company. Management should also be very concerned with high levels of worker satisfaction which can lead to success in terms of both goal attainment and quality of worklife. Based on these parameters, here are some options in pursuing responsive and labor-friendly productivity enhancement schemes:

2.1. Retain and develop friendly and supportive co-workers. Workers feel more secure, comfortable, and at ease in the workplace when their colleagues are friendly and supportive, not only on work matters, but especially on their family concerns. This friendly and supportive atmosphere increases the workers’ motivation to become more productive and happy in their jobs.

2.2. Match worker’s personality type with the demands of the job. This is the scheme of assurance of personality-job fit or best fit. The psychological test and interview conducted by management to assess the workers’ personality and abilities should be properly administered and interpreted in order to have a successful match between worker personality and the requirements of the job. Studies have shown that the proper matching of worker personality with the demands of the jobs result in high productivity, job satisfaction, and morale.

2.3. Adopt a total quality management (TQM) approach for improving productivity. TQM attempts to effect continuous organizational, product and service improvement by using both process and product control techniques. Unlike other strategies, this approach takes a systemwide focus that includes not only the firm but also its customers and suppliers. It is also important to note that computers obviously play a major role in enabling companies to adopt TQM practices effectively. In the Philippines, TQM has been adopted in various forms by many companies, ranging from manufacturing to banking services, and even from social services to business services.

2.4. Redesign work through: (a) job rotation/cross-training to increase variety in the worker’s job through periodic shifting from one task to another of the same level and similar skills requirements; (b) job enlargement/horizontal job loading to change the scope of the particular tasks that a worker performs, resulting in jobs with more diversity; and (c) job enrichment/vertical job loading to increase the degree of control that the worker has in the planning, execution, and evaluation of one’s job. These are several ways various companies use in achieving job enrichment: Give workers responsibility for advising or training less-experienced personnel. For instance, have bank tellers take new hires through the procedures, providing both a learning opportunity for the new workers and a guiding or coaching experience for the experienced tellers; provide workers increased freedom to manage their own time, including deciding when to start and stop work, when to take a break, and how to assign work priorities. Encourage workers to do their own troubleshooting and to handle their work crises; provide workers increased control over budgetary matters that affect their own work. Allow the manager to assign workers as he or she sees fit, for example, as long as all of the work gets done correctly, on time, and within budget. Work redesign also includes (d) employee-centered changing of job relationships where workers are encouraged to become involved in rede
signing their work in terms of the relationship of the workers to the range of their job activities, to the job’s customer or client, and to the evaluation of the work. This can be done by forming meaningful task clusters, by establishing client relationship for the worker, or by opening feedback channels, which means giving the workers better data about his/her performance.

2.5. Conduct an aggressive and proactive campaign on the promotion of productivity enhancement programs, especially for small and medium-scale companies. In this regard, the Social Accord for Industrial Harmony and Stability which was signed by the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) for the employers and the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) and the Labor Advisory Consultative Council (LACC) of labor, should be advocated nationwide through conferences, dialogues, and other fora. The most important contribution of this accord is in raising the awareness of both labor and management on alternatives in saving industries and the necessity for the parties to cooperate in undertaking cost-cutting and productivity enhancement programs aimed at saving jobs. Similar accords or more comprehensive agreements with other national labor organizations could also be explored.

3. SKILLS AND COMPENSATION PROGRAMS: Education and training play vital roles, and have become probably the most widespread form of intervention in organizations, towards upgrading people’s knowledge, skills, attitudes, and even beliefs, and enabling them to avail of opportunities to learn, grow, and change that arise in fast-growing markets over the long-term period.

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which can be done through education and training. This is premised on the assumption that people can be educated, trained, coached, and counseled. On the other hand, compensation is a form of primary tangible reward in all enterprises for the purpose of inducing a high level of individual, group or organizational performance, and effecting change. This scheme is based on a straightforward assumption that people are motivated to behave in ways that are rewarded: “what gets rewarded gets done”. Therefore, both skills and compensation programs should be geared toward improved efficiency, better quality and higher productivity of the workers and the company as a whole to gain competitive advantage.

Cost-cutting in these aspects might have more negative effects in the long-run for the company, like high labor turnover, inability to develop new workers in case of recovery, and demoralization. Admittedly, there will be huge investments in the short-term, but these investments are expected to pay-off in long-term sustained competitiveness with the expectation of more and higher value-added jobs. Here are a number of specific schemes which are now commonly implemented by globally competitive firms in the market:

3.1. Conduct regular “soft” (behavioral) and “hard” (skills) training for both managerial and rank-and-file levels to respond to the challenge of industrial competitiveness. These training programs must be aimed at: (a) upgrading to make them multi-skilled, versatile, and highly motivated; (b) having them acquire skills needed to cope with the requirements of the job and address the mismatch between employee competencies versus competencies required by the firm at the time of hiring; (c) preparing workers for higher level responsibilities/tasks; (d) empowering employees to act; (e) enhancing productivity; (f) promoting organizational participation; (g) instilling a broader global perspective; and (h) developing corporate values characterized by openness, trust, support, teamwork, fairness, results-orientation, and fun.

3.2. Network with private and public institutions of learning and convince them to revise their curricula to meet the skills demands of the industries for global competition. And encourage them to sponsor regular retraining or retooling programs for those who have already graduated but are not yet employed and for those who are displaced from their jobs by the companies.

Support of the colleges/universities in term of curriculum revision/updating and the retraining/retooling of the workforce in the Philippine labor market is imperative. This is because workers who either lack the right skills for the new jobs created or lack the basic education necessary to learn new skills are the most vulnerable during major transformations. Poorly-educated and unskilled workers often get stuck in unemployment or are forced to compete in a shrinking set of low-skilled and insecure jobs even when there are unfilled vacancies elsewhere. The worldwide trend for greater demand for workers with general skills and higher education is reinforced in this globalization and trade liberalization era.

Support of government agencies mandated with the task of manpower development is also necessary. These agen-
cies can strengthen and focus their training and education services to those who are out-of-school and now need urgent skills upgrading and improvement of their adult basic education in literacy and numeracy. Simultaneously, these agencies can provide information on training programs which the workers can avail of through company postings and media.

3.3. Assist and support the establishment of training programs aimed at upgrading skills, values, knowledge and even beliefs. A more realistic and economically viable retraining program would involve the participation of the private sector either through its associations or direct company involvement. As the German experience shows, a Dual-tech training program, where industry and skills providers work together, is an effective program to transmit appropriate skills needed by industry. At the same time, incentives can be granted to firms which provide training to its workers. As the Australian experience demonstrates, cooperation with trade unions is possible in designing training and working arrangements within the framework set at the industry or occupational level.

3.4. Develop global performance appraisal. Performance appraisal criteria and their application should now be based on global standards of performance. The appraisal process is crucial to a company. Installing a company-wide appraisal system has dramatic implications for labor-management relations, job satisfaction, authority relationships, power distribution, training, employee commitment, effects of their work, compensation, promotion, and a host of other organizational concerns. If the firm would like to be successful in the global market, the new performance appraisal's objectives, procedures, and criteria must be realistic, understandable, acceptable to all parties, and anchored on measurable global standards.

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their job titles. This is one of the fastest growing innovation in highly successful firms in the world; (d) flexible benefits plan, where workers can tailor their benefit program to meet their personal needs by picking and choosing from a menu of benefit options, such as vacation and sick leaves, health care, retirement, disability, insurance, hazard pay, employee services, premium pay, and other benefits; and (e) employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), usually a companywide incentive plan whereby the firm provides its workers with common stock, and workers obtain a stake in the business and become more closely identified with the firm, a relationship that theoretically increases motivation.

These options are gestures which give recognition to the value of the work done by workers through higher compensation. In fact, there are many companies that are consistently following the principle underlying the efficiency wage concept, that states, "a higher-than-the-market rate of compensation enables a company to get the best workers and develop their loyalty". The thinking is that a high-wage, high-productivity worker contributes more to the profitability of the company than a low-wage, low-productivity worker. It could also be noted that pay and bonuses generally are important to both managers and rank-and-file especially in a developing country like the Philippines where prices of commodities are high and therefore, inflation is high. It is important for managers to keep in mind that the company reward system is doing its job when rewards are (a) tied to performance; (b) awarded in a timely manner (c) in sufficient number and diversity (d) allocated based on clear and complete criteria; (e) distributed equitably; and (f) favorably comparable with those in similar organizations.

4. WORK ORGANIZATION: The other consequences of globalization/regionalization and trade liberalization on firms are the structuring of new organizational relationships and the defining of the basic character of the firms. This means that management at the firm level will have to modify roles or relationships in order to restructure and develop a revitalized firm that is positioned for the future and staffed with the best qualified and motivated people who can propel the firm to become competitive in the global market. Since the early 1980s, senior managers in a number of organizations have been working to develop new structural options towards this goal. It has been noted that the restructuring process must be directed toward positioning the organization for the coming millennium, not just on implementing a downsizing or a cost-cutting measure. In planning and implementing any restructuring, managers need a link between the reor-
organization and the company's on-going revitalization, a link that traditional methods of downsizing fail to provide. That link requires a strategic approach that enables management to focus on making sure that the organization has the right people in place after the reorganization is completed which is a people-based approach referred to as redeployment or zero-based staffing. Based on this approach, a number of alternative options for realigning an enterprise's human resources are here discussed:

4.1. Adopt the following measures (CRSS, 1997) in effecting any restructuring or rationalization program: (a) consultation with and involvement of workers in the design and implementation of industrial adjustments to reduce conflicts and foster better labor-management understanding of the nature and necessity of making the adjustments; (b) cooperation between the company and public and private educational and technoc institutions in undertaking upgrading and re-skilling programs for displaced workers; (c) making retrenchment as the last, not the first, option in any cost-cutting program; (d) wider use of Labor Management Committees (LMCs) in consulting employees on how to save the company and save jobs; (e) if retrenchment is unavoidable, putting in place a program to ease the pains of the affected and facilitating their transfer to new jobs or careers; (f) promotion of collective bargaining based on mutual interests and stakes in the future growth of the company; (g) full respect of labor laws and labor rights even if companies seek more flexible work arrangements under a globalized economic order; and (h) organizing Crisis Management Workshops, including seminars for workers on how to do household budgeting and how to stretch the value of the peso.

4.2. Engender Empowerment by putting employees in charge of what they do. In so doing, managers have to learn how to give up control and employees have to learn how to take responsibility for their work and make appropriate decisions. The empowering manager's role is to show trust, provide vision, remove performance-barriers, offer encouragement, motivate, and coach employees.

4.3. Develop Followership by ensuring that workers possess these qualities to become effective subordinates: (a) able to manage themselves well; (b) committed to a purpose outside themselves; (c) capacity to build up their competence and focus their efforts for maximum impact; (d) courageous, honest, and credible; and (e) capable of being team players.

4.4. Enhance Quality of Work Life

Since business/industry governance has three major players, namely, the government, labor and employer, there is a continuing struggle for power particularly between the labor and employer sectors.

4.5. Introduce Team Structure/Self-Managed Team as the central device to coordinate work activities. This approach breaks down departmental barriers and decentralizes decision-making to the level of the work team. Team structures also require employees to be generalists as well as specialists which is now the trend in the global market. Teams basically manage themselves, handling scheduling, quality control, hiring, and other duties normally performed by supervisors. There are no first line supervisors and only two tiers of management.

4.6. Create a Virtual Organization/Network or Modular Organization which is typically a small, core organization of executives, whose job is to directly supervise activities that are done in-house and to coordinate relationships with other organizations for the outsourced major business functions. This structure is highly centralized, with little or no departmentation (grouping of jobs either by function, product, process, customer, or geographic regions). It allows maximum flexibility since it creates a network of relationships that enable them to contract out manufacturing, distribution, marketing, or any other business function that management feels others can do better or more cheaply.

4.7. Evolve a Boundaryless Organization which seeks to eliminate the chain of command, have limitless spans of control, and replace departments with empowered teams. Forming cross-hierarchical teams (which include top executives, middle managers, supervisors, and operative employees) is an example of breaking down vertical boundaries. Making cross-functional teams that organize activities around processes is an example of how to reduce barriers of horizontal boundaries. Networked computers is the one common technological thread that makes the boundaryless organization possible. There allow people to communicate across intraorganizational and interorganizational boundaries which is very much needed for global transactions.

4.8. Undertake Reengineering or a fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in critical contemporary measures of performance, such as cost, quality, service, and speed. It emphasizes the radical redesign of work, in
which companies organize around process, instead of by functional departments. It focuses on the overall aspects of job designs, organizational structures, and management systems. It stresses that work should be organized around outcomes as opposed to tasks or functions.

4.9. Form Quality Circles where groups of workers voluntarily meet regularly with their supervisors to identify production problems and recommend solutions. These recommendations are then presented to higher level management for review, and the approved actions are implemented with employee participation. In order to implement a successful quality circle program, the firm must set clear goals for the program, gain top management's support, create a climate conducive to participation, select qualified managers for the program, communicate the program's goals to all concerned, and train the participating people on the quality circle scheme.

5. INDUSTRY GOVERNANCE—This involves the exercise of control and capacity to direct the establishment and administration of policies and actions which will affect the business/industry. Since business/industry governance has three major players, namely, the government, labor, and employer, there is a continuing struggle for power particularly between the labor and employer sectors. This affects the relationship in terms of issues such as labor utilization, compensation, productivity, worker unionization, collective bargaining, and dispute settlement. Management’s desire is to continue to improve its power base in relation to organized labor and the government so that it can remain profitable and competitive in the global market. Approaches that have been tried with varying degrees of success and could be further explored are as follows:

5.1. Develop Innovative Forms of Employee Participation—Including novel worker-management relationships that will involve a new structure that furthers constant experimentation, development, and the flexibility to respond quickly to new ideas and needs providing incrementally better products.

5.2. Implement Participative Management as a process through which subordinates share a significant degree of decision-making power with the employer. Some of these approaches are: (a) representative participation where workers participate in organizational decision-making through a small group of representatives from the employees; (b) works councils where groups of nominated or elected employees must be consulted when management makes decisions involving personnel; and (c) staff board representation wherein employees sit on a company's board of directors and represent the interests of the firm's workforce.

5.3. Build International Alliances—Before doing business in another country or entering into international agreements or joint ventures in the global market, it is important to understand the characteristics of the industrial relations system in the country or countries involved. Find out if the workforce is highly represented by unions or not. Determine the extent of government control in the business industry. These can be done through formal networks of alliances among and with business sectors in other countries.

5.4. Remain Union-Free—According to a report published in Unions in Transition, certain similar characteristics help organizations remain union-free. These are competitive pay and excellent benefits, a team environment, open communication, a pleasant work environment, and the avoidance of layoffs. The union-free approach is basically a human resource system that bypasses the union and deals directly with the individual worker and his or her needs, and one that could prove to be quite expensive to sustain.

5.5. Form Regional Management Council/Caucus to strengthen the bargaining power and influence of the owners/managers vis-à-vis labor and the government within the industry and the region. Management groups (per industry, or as an entire management sector in the region) will have to be formed. This regional management council/caucus should serve as a consultative and feedback mechanism on issues concerns of the business sector.

5.6. Strengthen Participation in Tripartite Bodies created by the government where employer representation is provided. The representative's of the employers must be qualified and have the political acumen to influence the government and labor towards seeing the perspective of the employers. Strategies such as power bargaining, accommodation, cooperation, collaboration, and scame tactics should be considered without leaving a negative image of the business sector. For this alliance to succeed, there is a need to develop a clear agenda of reform to unite the parties. For instance, both government and labor have to support the initiatives of management to undertake an upgrading and modernization program to make their products world-class. On the other hand, management has to make such upgrading adjustments with labor as a partner. The Philippines can also learn from the recent success of Japan and Australia which tried to develop consensus on their respective economic recovery programs.

5.7. Engage in Advocacy Work—where more aggressive promotional strategies to further the interest of the firms must be developed. Lobby groups of management to influence contents of legislation that will protect the interests of the employers will have to be formed and actively pursue issues such as the following: (a) reform of wage setting mechanisms by abolishing the regional wage boards; (b) inclusion of poor performance as a valid ground for termination which the Labor Code at present does not specifically indicate as a just cause for termination; and (c) creation of an industry adjustment fund instead of GATT safety nets. The focus of government intervention should be on the adjustment process itself rather than the outcomes of the adjustments. A program on safety nets, which does not seem to have
worked too well, suggests that there is already acceptance of the inevitable collapse of some industries and the displacement of workers. A better alternative may be to change the law and create instead an Industry Adjustment Fund that is more specifically defined to help companies either upgrade their operations, shift into a new or more promising business or find suitable market niches. Another issue is the thorough review of jurisdictional lines, roles of agencies involved in the various types of dispute settlements, and power to hear of non-judicial and quasi-judicial bodies. The review should explore approaches to devolve and strengthen dispute settlement functions at the regional office levels, and simplify the appeals system through the creation of only one appeals body; (e) scrapping of the Productivity Law (RA 6971). When RA 6971 was passed in 1990, it was intended to encourage higher levels of productivity among enterprises and the sharing of the benefits of productivity to workers through a system of tax incentives. Reportedly, however, only five to seven companies participated in the program.

5.8. Help establish minimum standards in HRM practices at the global level — as a way of leveling the competitive playing field. One way could be by revisiting the propose to have a social clause for the observance of core International Labor Organization (ILO) standards included in international trade agreements. Possible adoption of mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) for different professions should also be pursued.

As a final note, in the choice of any or a combination of the approaches or options, management has to consider its size of employment, form of ownership and level of profits in determining the magnitude of the HRM strategies that it will employ. If the firm intends to gain a more competitive advantage in this global/ regional era, there must be a realignment of resources and a refocus of management philosophy towards one that reflects a bias for excellence and concern for the welfare and protection of labor in the management of its human resources. Organizational renewal need not be a painstaking process as long as there is a strong commitment both on the part of labor and of management to mutually cooperate to facilitate the transformation for the sake of the workers and the success of the firm.

References
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NOTES
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