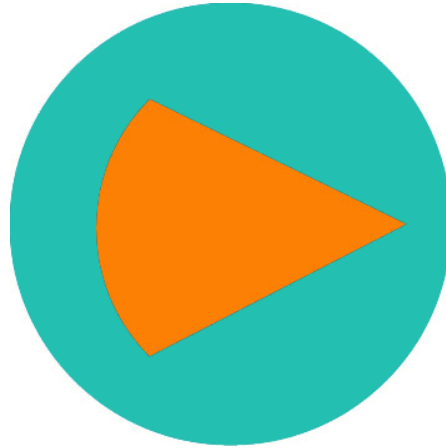


Project Management Webinar



Cross Cultural Communication in the Workplace

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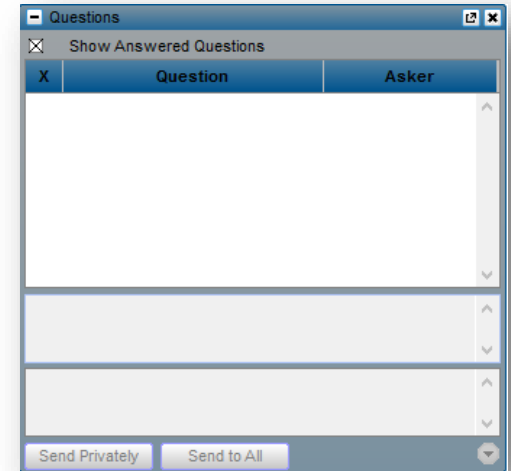
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Things to Know...



- ▶ All participants will be on mute.
- ▶ Questions are welcome.
- ▶ Use the question box to ask questions.
- ▶ PM training is valid for 1 PDU
- ▶ Must be in attendance
- ▶ PDU certificate sent by next week



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Importance of Cross Cultural Communication for Managers

- Global, diverse companies
- Improve communication across cultures
- Don't understand other cultures as easily as our *own* culture
- To prevent:
 - Ethnocentrism
 - Stereotyping

What is Culture?



- Learned system of knowledge, behavior, attitudes, beliefs, values, norms shared by group of people
- Shapes our perceptions of world
- Filters our experience and influences social behavior



Impact of Culture on Communication



- Language
- Nonverbals
- Social Values & Customs

Reflected in differences between high and low context cultures



Communication in High Context Cultures



- Rely heavily on nonverbals.
- Indirect, polite & ambiguous.
- Conveys little information explicitly.
- Message unclear and not specific.
- Viewed as means of engaging someone.



Examples:

Japan China Egypt Saudi Arabia

Communication in Low-Context Cultures



- Rely heavily on words.
- Direct and explicit.
- Expresses message clearly and specifically.
- Considers indirectness to be manipulative.
- Viewed as way of exchanging information, ideas, and opinions.

Examples:

U.S. Canada Denmark Germany Norway

Low- and high-context Communication



Low-context:

We “say what we mean,
and mean what we say”

- Leaves little space for interpretation of the explicit message

High-context:

- Nonverbal signals used to infer, imply, insinuate or deliver messages indirectly



Low and High-Context Culture



Low-context culture

- Individualist's culture
- Separates person and issue
- Concerned about themselves, prefer activities conducted alone, expect decisions be made by individual according to his/her judgment and anticipated reward

High-context culture

- Collectivist culture
- Merges person and issue
- View themselves as members of groups, prefer group activities -- expect decisions be made on consensual basis where effects on everyone considered

Cultural Intelligence



Your understanding about culture and how it shapes behavior. Your knowledge of how:

- Different cultures approach business.
- Cultures differ in values, social norms, and religious perspectives.
- Effective management differs across cultures.

What's acceptable in some countries often unacceptable in others.



Communication and Cultural Intelligence



- Successful communication occurs when message accurately perceived and understood
- Cultural differences make clear understanding more difficult
- Language and nonverbals have different meanings in different cultures

Nonverbals With Different Cultural Meanings



- Proximity (Distance)
- Touch
- Postures & Body Positions
- Gestures
- Facial Expressions
- Eye Contact



Nonverbals: Proximity



- **Proximity (Distance)**
 - Closeness when communicating
 - Face directly or stand beside them?



Nonverbals: Touching



- **Touching** – should you ever touch the person you are communicating with? If so, where and how much?
 - What is appropriate in business?



Nonverbals: Handshakes



United States: Firm

Asian: Gentle

British: Soft

French: Light and quick

German: Brisk & firm

Latin American: Moderate grasp; repeated frequently

Middle Eastern: Gentle; repeated frequently.

Handshakes in your culture?

Nonverbals: Body Position/Posture



Understanding Body Language



United States

- Tend to refrain from hugging and touching in business situations.
- When sitting, often look very relaxed. May sit with ankle of one leg resting on knee.

Arab Countries

- When sitting, keep both feet on ground.
- “Thumbs up” sign is offensive throughout Arab world.

Nonverbals: Gestures



A motion of the hands, head or body to emphasize an idea or emotion

- Some gestures carry more universal meanings
 - Pointing to indicate direction, a shrug to indicate incomprehension or lack of interest
- Gestures vary across cultures
 - Some gestures which are positive and humorous or harmless in some cultures may be hostile, offensive or obscene in others

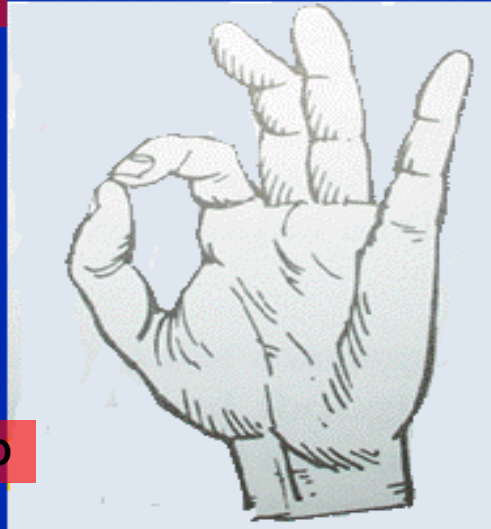


Cross-cultural Communication

An Example of Different Meanings of the Same Gesture

USA=OK

JAPAN=MONEY



RUSSIA=ZERO

BRAZIL=INSULT



Former President George W. Bush using the signature gesture of the Texas Longhorn football team, of which he is a supporter. This football gesture is recognized by most Americans.

Showing this American football gesture is a “jailable” offence in Italy. In Italy this gesture is used to tell a man that his wife is unfaithful.

What gestures in your culture have different meanings in other cultures?

Nonverbals: Facial Expressions



- Universally recognized emotions: happiness, surprise, disgust, fear, anger and sadness
- People often disguise emotions by adopting an expression that does not represent how they really feel

Facial Expressions



Nonverbals: Eye Contact



In some cultures, looking people in the eye indicates honesty and straightforwardness; in others it is seen as challenging and rude.

Presenting Business Cards



When travelling abroad for business **have one side of your business card translated into the appropriate language.**

Good business etiquette requires you present the card so the **recipient's language is face up.**



More on Business Cards



Business Card Etiquette in China.

- Have one side of your business card **translated into Chinese**.
- Hold the card in **both hands** when offering it.
- **Never write on someone's card** unless so directed.

Business Card Etiquette in Japan.

- Business cards are exchanged with great ceremony.
- Make sure your **business card includes your title**.
- The Japanese place emphasis on **status and hierarchy**.
- Business cards are always **received with two hands** but can be given with only one.

Business Card Etiquette in the UK

- Business card etiquette is relaxed in the UK and involves little ceremony.
- It is not considered bad etiquette to keep cards in a pocket.
- Do not feel obliged to hand out a business card to everyone you meet as it is not expected.

Business cards in your culture?



Question for Them:
What are some skills that would
be important for effective cross
cultural communication?



Cross Culture Communication Skills



- Tact
- Patience
- Flexible & open to change
- Sensitive to verbal & nonverbal behavior
- Aware of values, beliefs, practices of other cultures

Skills To Overcome Differences



Question for Them:
What would be some good
ways to overcome our
differences?



Don'ts About Culture



- Don't assume:
 - You know everything about another culture
 - Your way is the right way
 - People are slow or hard of hearing
 - People understand you
 - You know someone's language and identity
- Don't focus on differences
- Don't let differences frustrate you

Tips for Cross Cultural Communication

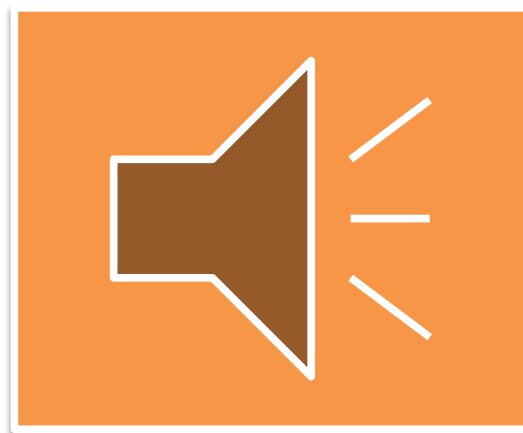
- Respect people's customs
- Clear up misunderstandings
- Have basic knowledge of someone's culture
- Work on relationships and professional goals





When Speaking:

- Slow Down
- Separate Questions
- Avoid Negative Questions
- Take Turns
- Check Meanings
- Avoid Slang
- Watch use of humor



Benefits of Intercultural Teams



- Increases range of viewpoints and approaches
- Creates processes that encourage diverse team members and capitalizes on differences
- Diversity provides groups with wider range of ideas, perspectives, and world views
- Wider range of ideas, better chance of finding good ones

Cultural Challenges with Teams



- Different cultures represented, which require different processes to deal with cultural differences
- Managers trying to deal with each employee individually to meet cultural needs

Cultural Distance in Groups



- How different each group member feels from each other group member
- Those who feel very culturally different may become alienated and withdraw

Making Multi-Cultural Groups More Effective



- Members need cultural knowledge
- Need to maximize the positive effects of cultural diversity while minimizing its negative effects
- Managers must be aware, adapt behavior, and train members to be Culturally Intelligent

Management Tips



- Avoid “be like me” approach to management
- Take time to learn in detail characteristics of new culture
- Spend time observing and talking to new subordinates
- Try to understand from their perspective why they act as they do
- Listen to staff (what saying and not saying)



- **ALL** Management must respect cultural differences and appreciate the potential diversity offers to improve the organization's creativity and performance

See you next time!



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