

Cultural Competence

Culture could be described very simply as the way we “do” things here

What Does Culture Give Us?

- A sense of who we are (and were)
- A sense of belonging
- A sense of how to behave
- A sense of their duty, what they must do
- A sense of the values we hold

- Behavior
- Morale
- Productivity
- Patterns of responses
- Attitudes toward yourself
- Attitudes toward others

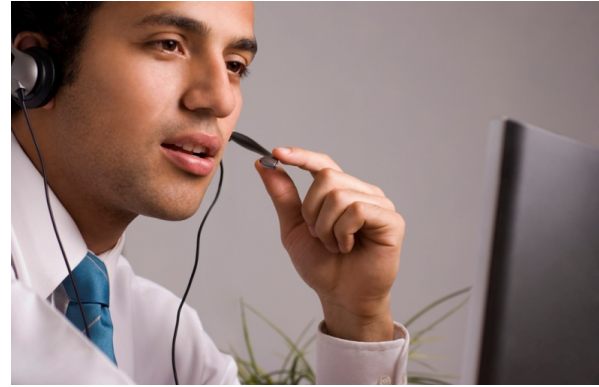
The World Today

- If there were only 1000 people in the world
- 584 are in Asia
- 150 are in Europe
- 124 are in Africa
- 84 are in Latin America
- 52 are in North America
- 6 are in Australia and
New Zealand



Of those 1000 People

- For their 1st language
 - 165 speak Mandarin
 - 86 speak English
 - 83 speak Hindi/Urdu
 - 64 speak Spanish
 - 58 speak Russian
 - 37 speak Arabic
 - 507 don't speak any of the above
- China will soon have the largest number of English speakers



Do You Realize?

- Technical information doubles every 2 years
- ½ of those in the U.S. working for a company have worked there < 5 years
- Most of the top 10 jobs in high demand didn't exist 10 years ago
- Intellectual work can be done anywhere by anyone
- Diversity is valued by engineering companies

What is a Global Person?

- They do not assume that their culture is always best
- They realize that other cultures don't always want to adopt theirs
- They are interested in what is going on around the world, not just things directly affecting their own culture
- They know that you can easily offend and sometimes mis-communicate with those from other cultures



Cultural Competence Can be Learned

- Knowledge of your own culture and of other cultures
- Skill in relating to other cultures
 - Showing respect/not offending
 - Accurately interpreting what is said and done
- Attitude toward those of other cultures

Cultural Competence Can be Difficult

“They are so irrational and illogical, I never know what to expect or where I stand.”

This is a common response when someone attempts to understand and embrace another culture:

This is because our culture may organize our experiences in different ways that are meaningful to us, but not to other cultures.

10 Keys to “Cultural Due Diligence”

1. **Sense of Self and Space**

humble macho
independent & creative cooperative & conforming
close distant sense of space
structured/formal flexible/informal
direct & argumentative subtle & “too nice”

2. Communication

- Spoken & written language differences – no direct translation, regional differences
- Jargon and idioms
- Acceptable topics of conversation are different
- Gestures are different

3. Dress and Appearance

- “Dress & blouse” OR “slacks & polo” OR “jeans & T-shirt” OR “uniform & cap”
- Tattoos, piercings, jewelry, etc.
- Hair cuts and hair styles
- Hats, briefcase or backpack, umbrella, headscarf, sarong, dashiki, etc.



4. Food & Eating Habits

- Delicacies around the world
- Silverware vs. chopsticks vs. fingers
(Europeans hold the fork in a different hand)
- Food – is the floor “clean” or “dirty”
- Forbidden foods – meat, pork, etc.

5. Sense of Time

- Seasons differ – 4 (fall winter, spring, summer) or 2 (dry and monsoon) – opposite in southern hemisphere
- Time zones
- What's on time?
- When do you eat?
- When do you sleep?



6. Relationships

- Authoritarian family figure – matriarchal, patriarchal, etc.
- Respect for elders
- Who does family include?
- Respect for women – shown differently
- Treatment of those with disabilities
- Class system – 1%/99%, Dalit/Brahmans



7. Values and Norms

- Food, clothing, house, land, things, titles, money, law & order, cars, companion(s)
- Generosity vs. frugality
- Manners
- Work ethic
- Vacation – amount and when
- National values (get together with 1 or 2 other people and discuss what the U.S. seems to value from your perspective. How does that differ from other cultures?)

Values and Norms cont.

- How are children raised – obedient, permissive, spoiled, earn their way, etc.
- Roles of husband and wife – who provides, what type of leadership, who handles the finances
- Honesty – with your family, with others in your culture, with those outside your culture



Values and Norms cont.

- What's expected when you are born, when you marry and when you die
- When is something wrong?
- What's offensive? – words, actions, gestures, modesty
- What is an appropriate gift, tip, bribe?
- What is being “hospitable” in a culture?

8. Beliefs and Attitudes

- Religious beliefs – respect for/protection for those of other beliefs
- Many gods or one god or none
- Respect for traditions and holidays
- Respect for other religious books and figures
- Philosophies espoused by others
- Taboos and myths



9. Mental Processing/Learning/ Decision Making

- Slow or quick response – what do you prefer, what do you attribute to different speeds
- Logical or holistic/intuitive
- Abstract/conceptual vs. rote learning/memorization/well-trained
- Self taught vs. formal education



10. Work and Work Habits

- What occupations are valued most?
- Are occupations like artists, musicians and philosophers valued?
- Who should do the work around the house, at the office?
- Should we work cooperatively, individualistically?
- Work incentives – how is praise conferred?

Cultural Competence Paper

Choose a culture that is unfamiliar to you and write a paper that covers 5 of the 10 “due diligence” categories. Cover **two categories in greater depth first**. Use and cite within your paper at least 3 references and list them at the end of your paper. See detailed instructions in the assignment.

