

Research on Intercultural Business Communication

RECHERCHES SUR LA COMMUNICATION COMMERCIALE INTERCULTURELLE

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Abstract: This paper discusses the problem of intercultural business communication when a disaster hits. And also it focuses on the positive and negative experience and the pros and cons. And it suggests successful methods how to develop intercultural business communication skills which help business people improve communication with anybody in the workplace from a variety of cultures or subcultures.

Key words: intercultural communication, misunderstanding, bridge differences, social values, ideas of status, decision-making habits, attitudes toward time, use of space, cultural context, body language, manners, and legal and ethical behavior, language barriers, cultural biases, company image

Résumé: L'article présent traite le problème de la communication commerciale interculturelle lorsque qu'une catastrophe est survenue. L'auteur se concentre sur les expériences positive et négative ainsi que les avantages et désavantages, et puis propose des méthodes réussies de développer des techniques de communication commerciale interculturelle qui aident les hommes d'affaires à améliorer la communication avec quiconque dans le travail avec de diverses cultures ou subcultures.

Mots-Clés: communication interculturelle, compréhension, supprimer les différences, valeurs sociales, idées de statut, habitudes de la prise de décision, attitude envers le temps, utilisation de l'espace, contexte culturel, langage du corps, manières, comportement légal et éthique, barrières langagières, préjugés culturels, image de l'entreprise

When it comes to intercultural business communication, differences in background can give rise to a difficult communication to overcome. When the parties concerned come from separate cultures, the potential probability for misunderstanding is higher. So when people plan to communicate with people of another culture—no matter in another country or in their own country—it's important to be aware of cultural differences.

A case in point is that Mazda's managers faced the communication barrier when they opened a plant in the United States. Mazda management board passed out company baseball caps and told their U.S. employees that they could wear the caps at work, along with their mandatory company uniform like blue pants and khaki shirts. However, the employees assumed that the caps were a voluntary accessory, and many decided not to wear them. This upset the Japanese managers, who regarded failure to wear the caps as a sign of disrespect. Managers acknowledged that the caps were voluntary

but believed that employees who really cared about the company would want to wear the caps. But, the U.S. workforce had a rather different opinion: They resented being told what they should want to do, and they began cynically referring to all Mazda's orders as "mandatory-voluntary."

As people can see, communicating with people from other nations can be quite challenging. To overcome cultural barriers to effective communication, people must acknowledge and explore as well as bridge between the differences, and by doing so, people can successfully achieve effective intercultural communication.

Such problems arise when people assume, wrongly, that other people's attitudes and norms are similar to theirs. For example, a U.S. toy sales representative visited a client in China. Expecting to make a good impression, the salesperson brought an expensive grandfather clock as a gift. Unfortunately, the

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*Received 1 August 2006 ; accepted 9 December 2006

differences between the U.S. culture and the Chinese culture interfered with each other. Instead of being pleased, the Chinese client was deeply offended, because in China receiving a clock as a gift is considered bad doom or fortune.

Generally speaking, cultures are different in social values, ideas of status, decision-making habits, attitudes toward time, use of space, cultural context, body language, manners, and legal and ethical behavior. Without an understanding of these differences, businesspeople can, when abroad, hurt their own reputations along with company's image and that of their organizations.

For instance, as far as concepts of status go, most China executives send status signals that reflect materialistic values. The big boss has a large corner office, deep carpets, an expensive desk, and handsome accessories. In other cultures status is communicated in other ways. The highest-ranking executives in France sit in the middle of an open area, surrounded by lower-level employees.

While body language often helps business people clarify confusing information, differences in body language are a major source of misunderstanding during intercultural communication. An Arab man indicates a romantic interest in a woman by running a hand backward across his hair, which most Westerners would not understand.

As cultural differences are discussed above, business people should try to learn to overcome these barriers. First they deal with language barriers. Language shapes our worldview, which dictates our perception of the universe. Second, they should dealing with ethnocentric reactions. Ethnocentrism is the tendency to judge all other cultures according to our own norms and often to regard their group superior, who are often prone to stereotyping, attempting to predict individuals' behavior or character on the basis of their membership in a particular group or class. Third is business people have to learn about a culture. It's useful reading books and articles or seeing films or watch TV about the culture, talking to people who have done business with that culture's members and concentrating on learning something about the culture's history, religion, politics, values, and customs. And finally, developing intercultural communication skills is a very successful approach. Such are as follows, having these skills will help business people to improve their communication with their counterpart in the workplace

from a variety of cultures or subcultures.

- 1st. Without judgment.
- 2nd. Show respect and be polite.
- 3rd. Use "you" attitude.
- 4th. Emphasize the positive.
- 5th. Establish credibility.
- 6th. Protect one's own company image.
- 7th. Tolerate ambiguity.
- 8th. Look beyond the superficial.
- 9th. Be patient and persistent.
- 10th. Recognize one's own cultural biases.
- 11th. Be flexible.
- 12th. Establish common ground.
- 13th. Learn to negotiate across cultures.
- 14th. Recognize body languages different from one's own.
- 15th. Send clear message.
- 16th. Moderate enthusiasm.
- 17th. Use short concise words to express information.
- 18th. Make sure what two parties agree or disagree on at the end of the conversation.
- 19th. Adopt proper conversation style.
- 20th. Write a summarizing-or-thanking letter or memo, if appropriate, after the conversation.
- 21st. Make the train of thought easy to follow by using transitional words and phrases.
- 22nd. Make passages short and clear.
- 23rd. Eliminate abbreviations, acronyms, buzz words, jargon, slang.
- 24th. Use familiar words instead of unfamiliar words.
- 25th. Use short words instead of long words.
- 26th. Use more active voice and less passive voice.
- 27th. Keep subject and verb together.
- 28th. Stay away from unnecessary words and phrases.
- 29th. Avoid awkward pointers.
- 30th. Avoid dangling modifiers.
- 31st. Avoid hedging sentences.
- 32nd. Avoid starting sentences with "it", "there".
- 33rd. Avoid using words with negative connotations.
- 34th. Avoid camouflaged verbs.
- 35th. Avoid out-of-date words and phrases.
- 36th. Avoid language, disability, racial or gender bias.

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