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CIS 3317:  E-Commerce, Byron Morgan

Assignment #3: (individual) “Interntational Project Teams (Workplace Diversity)”

Our organization, Relations, wants to create a dating App for travelers and business men/women who need to know what to expect of the culture, food, and other aspects of the country they will visit as well as people using the app. Our current project is to connect users with Mexico. Relations only knows of the culture of the United States and little bits of information we Google here and there. As the designated Project Manager for my firm I am to create the best bridge of communication for my International Firm and collaborate ideas together. Our deadline to accomplish this must be done before the next month.

The Mexican IT Partner Firm, a division of our Relations, is located in the heart of Mexico City. Their team is comprised of students who live in Mexico City where the culture reflects the progressive(left) nature of the political climate. Our firm in the United States has a few similar characteristics in our culture to the culture of our IT partner firm. When it comes to Masculinity, Mexico is considered a masculine society. A masculine society indicates that competition, achievement, and success drive them. These drivers are defined as being the best in your field. These traits in masculinity are encouraged and taught throughout their schooling and into the work force. As most of the IT partner firm is comprised of students, this reflects on their drives to focus and produce the best products for us. In the U.S., we have a similar masculine society. With Long Term Orientation, like the Western Culture, the Mexican culture is normative. That is, they exhibit great respect for traditions in their culture, have a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and focus on achieving quick results. As for the biggest difference in our culture to theirs is the Individualism. This is the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members. In Mexico, they are considered a collectivist society. We in the U.S., we are the polar opposite and are considered an Individualist society. They perceive employee/employer relationships as extensions of family. When managing their employees, they are managing groups instead of the individual. Next, we have Power Distance where Mexico ranks high as a hierarchical society. The people accept there is a clear place for everybody and it needs no further justification. They see their subordinates to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat. In our western culture, we are almost in the middle where we see that there is a hierarchy but we push harder to distribute the power more evenly to the lower levels in organizations and society. Here everyone has a voice and is respected at higher standards. Uncertainty Avoidance is high in Mexican culture where the people have a high preference for avoiding uncertainty. They maintain a rigid code of belief and behavior and push away unorthodox behaviors and ideas and innovation may be resisted. They do this because they want to know that the future will be the same throughout their life and not to be changed. This goes along with their way of maintaining the normative. In western culture, we have a low avoidance to the uncertainty. We value innovation and new ideas. We accept the future for what it is, unpredictable (to an extent), and have policies protecting ourselves from harm. Lastly Indulgence in Mexican culture ranks the highest of all dimensions. Their culture allows for their people to express their impulses and desires with regard to enjoying life and having fun. They tend to be more optimistic and place importance on leisure time where they act as they please and spend money as they wish. This type of indulgence goes similarly to the western culture as we are the land of the free and as such we are free to do what we legally please. We all want to be happy and not have anyone prevent us from doing so as long as it is in a safe manner. It seems that the Mexican culture has a higher level of indulgence compared to the U.S. but not too much.

With these differences and similarities in mind will have a major issue coming up when it comes to Brainstorming ideas with the IT partner Firm. When we want to discuss our ideas with the IT firm they will become yes men to every idea we throw. If we want to be a global organization with multicultural backgrounds, we can’t have them agree to all of our western culture ideas. Their Power Distance hierarchical society expects their subordinates to be told what to do by their boss. I want them to challenge our ideas and speak their thoughts on what they think should be done for each topic. That way we can find a balance between our cultures and get a good mix of the two.

What we can implement is the use of Blogs throughout our company and our IT partner firm. Throughout the hiring and collaborating process we have each member in our team and theirs build themselves a webpage or profile blog where they can describe themselves and their likes and dislikes. We then propose our goals and ideas for them and ourselves online with private and anonymous commenting on each one. This way they won’t be identified or shunned from speaking their thoughts or ideas and can remain anonymous if they think their ideas are dumb or severely negative. We will highly encourage our members to post many ideas and comments to the blog posts we create and develop a community of our own within the two firms. We can incentivize our members with free gifts or time off for posts we see from them. We only keep track of the number of posts and not the specific one’s they leave or make. As in Mexican culture they value highly of their leisure time and this will be our way of rewarding them for their input and help.

My original beliefs for international project teams used to always think that if the company originated from the United States they would just pass the work over to another country without care for their culture. Because they are hiring them to do a specific task, all they need is that task to be done and done to their specifications. In my research, it changed that assumptions I had. International multi-cultural project teams have a much higher sensitivity to the cultures they work with. They must respect each culture they work together with as they need the respect from their members. To do this they need to find some sort of middle ground of communication to advance this project they are working on. In my case, it was using a Blog, but in others it can be translators and other forms of Web 2.0 solutions. Technology is a big driving force between cultures, especially social media, and it brings each of us closer together.