The CEO's World Tour

You are part of the executive team for a high-tech company. The CEO has just announced he will undertake a world tour that will introduce the company to a host of potential customers. Since the CEO is generally ignorant of any customs, mores, or beliefs in cultures other than his own (and he's pretty vague about those as well!), there is a lot of help that you, as members of the executive team, can (and must) provide. Because this is a typical organization, you are also fully aware that you will be blamed for any mistakes the CEO makes.

You realize it is up to you to tell the CEO what you know about any culture with which you are familiar, whether from your upbringing, travel, or acquaintance.

Using the list of "Questions to Ask About Culture," ask the "informant" in your group to tell you about the norms and beliefs in his/her country. Think about how those norms and beliefs might impact: business meetings, negotiations, sales, social events, visiting colleagues in their homes, etc. Use that information to create a 10-minute oral report you will deliver to the CEO.

SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT CULTURE

Here are the questions to ask your informant so you can create the report for the CEO.

Concrete Expressions

1. What are typical foods served in the culture?

2. Are there any typical styles of dress?

3. What do people do for recreation?

4. Do buildings have identifiable features?

5. How is public space used? For example, do people tend to "hang out" on
    the street, or are they in public because they are going from one place
    to the next?

Recognized Behaviors

1. How do people greet one another?

2. Describe how a holiday is celebrated.

3. How would a visitor be welcomed to someone's home?

4. What are the norms around weddings? births? deaths?

Explicit Beliefs

1. How important is hierarchy?

2. How are gender roles perceived?

3. How do people view obligations toward one another?

4. What personal activities are seen as public? What activities are seen as private?

5.   What are the cultural attitudes toward aging and the elderly?

Deeply Embedded Beliefs

1. How important is the individual in the culture? How important is the group?

2. How is space used (e.g., how close should two people who are social acquaintances stand next to one another when they are having a conversation?)

3. How is time understood and measured? (e.g., how late can you be to a business appointment before you are considered rude?)

4. Is change considered positive or negative?

5. What are the criteria for individual success?

6. What is the relationship between humans and nature? (e.g., do humans dominate nature? does nature dominate humans? do the two live in harmony?)

7. How is divine power viewed in relation to human effort?

8. Is the culture a high-context or low-context one?

9. What is humorous?

10. How do individuals "know" things? (e.g., are people encouraged to question things? are they encouraged to master accepted wisdom?)

11. Are people encouraged to be more action-oriented or to be more contemplative?

12. What is the role of luck in people's lives?

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