Matthew Linehan

Assign4

July 7, 2020

1. Which country from the simulation will you base your following responses on?

Responses for the selection were based on China

1. What advice did you give Kalie? Based on the feedback in the simulation, did it work out favourably for Kalie? Why or why not?

As shown in the course notes, China is typically a risk averse culture. This means Chinese employees are likely accustomed to ensuring they have everything clear and correct before submitting any work. Chinese culture also maintains a very strong respect for authority. Because of the combination of these factors means the best course of action would likely be to play it safe and request further information from the supervisor.

The fact that china is a group-oriented culture means there may also be value in requesting help from a co-worker. In general though, requesting help from a co-worker risks introducing a source of misinformation into the task, and offending the supervisor by circumventing their authority.

1. Identify a country in which the advice you gave Kalie would a) work out favourably and b) not work out favourably. Discuss some reasons for any similarities and/or differences you observed.

If the workplace was in Denmark, there would be a significantly different ‘best approach’. Danes are more likely to value initiative and individualism, a key cultural factor discussed in Unit 8. This means that it would be a good option to attempt to figure out a solution individually and take the small risk of mixing up some information. Denmark is also a more egalitarian and less hierarchical culture, meaning it would be completely appropriate to discuss with a co-worker and seek advice. Asking the boss would likely seem as if the new employee is nervous and potentially somewhat incompetent.

1. Using evidence from the simulation and the course, **describe** specific cultural differences between Jean and Rafael that lead to the misunderstanding.

As discussed in Unit 08 of the course content, when direct and indirect communication styles converge, cultural clashes may occur. Jean is from France and Raphael is from Mexico. It appears that Jean falls into a cultural catgory of direct communication. His method of providing feedback involves saying what he means directly. Raphael on the other hand, appears to be accustomed to a more indirect method of communication. This means Rafael would be used to negative feedback appearing to be padded by positive feedback.

1. **Examine**how you think this situation—the miscommunication between Jean and Rafael—could have been avoided? Remember to link your response to the cultural differences outlined in Question 4 and the content in the simulation and the course.

Of the three choices Rafael could make, the option best capable of avoiding conflict was to talk to Jean directly while the least productive option was to send a report to HR. The situation may have been avoided if either party was aware of potential cultural differences in the workplace. If Rafael had been given the opportunity to read module 8 of the PD8 course, he would be aware that French are more likely to adopt a direct communication style, and perhaps be more self-aware that his own upbringing may make him more likely to communicate in an indirect manner. If Jean had taken the PD8 course, he may understand that given Rafael’s cultural background, he may be more likely to perceive direct feedback as a personal attack.

1. **Articulate your learning** by examining how you would handle the Jean and Rafael situation if you were involved. Be sure to reference a specific culture for the workplace, your cultural background, and course material in your response.

Being from Canada I am personally accustomed to operating on a premise of an open workplaces and would be likely to be offended if reported to HR, or if an employee felt the need to go directly to my colleague. That said, personally I am also very accustomed to an indirect method of providing feedback. In Rafael’s position, I would certainly have been taken aback by an overtly negative piece of feedback.

France is generally an egalitarian culture, where there should be no reason not to openly communicate with a supervisor. This means that for Rafael to report Jean to HR or go straight to his colleague would be quite confusing for Jean. As mentioned in unit 8 of the course notes, ‘The French culture values disagreement’. I would keep this in mind when providing advice to Rafael, and recommend that he reflect on the feedback given, and perhaps challenge Jean as to how best he could improve or on any feedback he felt may have been unfairly given.