

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Communicating Across Cultural



Overview

- The Importance of Cross-cultural Communication in Business
- Problems of Cultural Differences
- Problems of Language
- Some Solutions for Improved Communication

Why is communicating across cultures important to business?

- Technological advances have made doing business more global.
- Understanding those who buy and use a company's products or services helps you design ones that fit your customers' needs.
- Successful communication improves productivity and creates a comfortable workplace.
- Communicating with those from other cultures enriches your business and personal life.

Dimensions of Cultural Differences

Three major factor that affect culture

- Topography of the country
- Country's history
- Role of religion in the culture

Problems of Cultural Differences

- Body positions and movement
- Views and practices concerning factors of human relationships
- Effects on business communication techniques

Body Positions and Movement

□ Body Parts

□ Gestures

□ Eye Contact

□ Touching and Handshaking

□ Facial Expression

Some Gesture Differences

<i>Gesture</i>	<i>Meaning 1</i>	<i>Meaning 2</i>
Hand up, palm out, wrist stiff, back and forth motion	Good-bye (America)	No (Europe)
Raised hand with index finger extended, head high	Come here (America)	Rude to point a finger (Japan)
Raised hand, fingers in "V" position	Victory or peace (with palm out) (America)	Double, sexual, insulting (with palm in) (England)
Vertical horns	Hook'em Horns (Texas)	Your spouse is unfaithful (Italy) Good luck (Brazil and Venezuela)
Thumbs up	Fine, Good going, Everything is okay (America)	Strong, sexual insulting (Nigeria and Australia)

Attitudes Toward Factors of Human Relationships

- ☐ Time
- ☐ Space
- ☐ Odors
- ☐ Frankness
- ☐ Intimacy of Relationships
- ☐ Values
- ☐ Expression of Emotions

Effects on Business Communication Techniques

- Our communication techniques are not universally acceptable.
- Our techniques do not work with all English-speaking people.
- Problems can be overcome by learning about other cultures.

British English vs. American English

Spelling Differences

Meaning Differences

<i>British</i>	<i>American</i>
Labour	Labor
Generalise	Generalize
Mum	Mom
Lift	Elevator
Blokes	Guys
Phones	Called
Chips	Fries
Billion (12 zeros)	Billion (9 zeros)
Tights	Panty hose
Trousers	Pants
Bin	Trash

Problems of Language

- Lack of language equivalency
- Difficulties in using English
 - Multiple meanings of words
 - Two-word verbs
 - Culturally derived words

Language Equivalency Examples

- No such word
 - The Japanese have several words to define fine shadings of dependence, obligations, and responsibility that are difficult to translate to English because our culture has not learned to experience them.
- No need for the word
- No equivalent grammatical form

Examples of Multiple Meanings

□ run			
□ fast			
□ ring			

Substitutes for Two-word Verbs

<i>Two-word Verb</i>	<i>Substitute</i>
cut up	clown
keyed up	excited, nervous
live down	remove, overcome
put away	kill
shut out	prevent
tie down	hold
track down	search

Avoid Culturally Derived Words

- Slang expressions
- Shifted use (sports, computer, science)
- Idioms and colloquialisms

Some American Idioms to Avoid

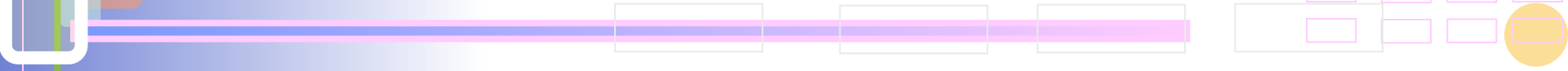
- burn your bridges
- cold turkey
- doggie bag
- fat chance
- gravy train
- have your cake and eat it too
- in a nutshell
- let the cat out of the bag
- pot calling the kettle black
- pull no punches
- stick in the mud through thick and thin
- tie the knot
- tighten one's belt
- up a tree
- walk on air
- wheel and deal
- worth one's salt

Suggestions for Communicating Across Cultures Successfully

- Do your research
- Know yourself and your company
- Be aware-and wary-of stereotypes
- Adapt your English to your audience
- Be open to change

Suggestions for Communicating Across Cultures Successfully

- Talk or write as simply and clearly as possible
- Word questions carefully
 - Avoid double questions
 - Avoid yes/no questions
 - Avoid negative questions
- Use continuous confirmation
 - Use back translating when possible
 - Use technology to assist with written and oral communication



“More than technical or infrastructure problems, cultural problems will be the biggest issue that merchants will face in the global marketplace.”

**--Bruce Guptill, Analyst
*The Gartner Group***

