

MULTINATIONAL MANAGEMENT





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LEADING ACROSS CULTURES: NAVIGATING LEADERSHIP STYLES IN

If the Leaders want to be successful in this century and have a positive impact on the international corporate world, they need to learn cultural variances and adapt to various leadership styles across globe. “The core ingredients of leadership are universal (good judgment, integrity, and people skills), the full recipe for successful leadership requires culture-specific condiments” (Chamorro-Premuzic & Sanger, 2016). "Being the Boss in Brussels, Boston, and Beijing" by Erin Meyer provides helpful cultural context for understanding the nature and scope of authority and power. Examining two nations' leadership cultures and talking about how to manage a diverse team with members from Russia, France, and India, this article delves into these aspects.

A Tale of Two Leadership Cultures: United States vs. Japan

THE AMERICAN WAY: EGALITARIAN YET TOP-DOWN

If we look at the American style, its more of an egalitarian atmosphere, where bosses try to implement equality among all. They believe in the principle that all humans have equal rights and encourage their subordinates to call their first names and speak their concerns confidently.

“American CEOs tend to use one of five leadership styles: directive, participative, empowering, charismatic, or celebrity” (Mills, 2005). However, decision-making remains firmly top-down.

The boss solicits input but ultimately makes the final call. This approach aligns with the American preference for quick, decisive action and flexibility. However, employees expect that leaders will efficiently make the desired decisions, even if that means neglecting their opinion or bypassing the consensus.

THE JAPANESE WAY: HIERARCHICAL AND CONSENSUAL

Contrastingly, Japan represents a hierarchical yet cooperative leadership style. Japanese society is strongly structured on respecting one's rank and status. But decisions are achieved by painstakingly working toward a consensus. Before a decision is completed, there are long conversations and agreements at several levels. Ultimately when the decision is taken, it is a common practice to implement it immediately and it is made sure that there are no further discussions or arguments.

PERCEPTION OF POWER AND AUTHORITY

In the U.S., power is viewed as a tool for swift decision-making. Authority figures are respected for their ability to take charge and direct the team effectively. In Japan, power and authority are associated with the ability to guide the group towards a collective decision. Respect is earned through patience, inclusivity, and the ability to navigate complex consensus-building processes.

Leading a Diverse Team: India, France, and Russia

UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Whenever a global team is gathered, it is of utmost importance to learn and understand their leading styles. Each culture perceives power and authority differently. For example, if teams are from India, France, and Russia, then Indian and Russian team will expect and exhibit hierarchical and top-down leadership, however French team despite preferring hierarchical approach will lean more towards all-inclusive decision-making process.

ADAPTING TO TEAM EXPECTATIONS

1. India: Hierarchical and Directive

Indian culture places significant emphasis on hierarchy and clear directives from superiors. Leaders are expected to provide specific instructions and make decisions without extensive consultation. To align with Indian team members' expectations, I would adopt a more directive approach, providing clear, detailed guidance and ensuring that my authority is visible and respected.

2. France: Hierarchical Yet Inclusive

French leadership culture is also hierarchical but places a higher value on inclusive decision-making. If a time comes for me to make decision, my French team expects me to include their opinions and concerns before reaching any conclusion. Hence, I would engage in

more extensive discussions with my French team members, seeking their input and ensuring they feel their opinions are valued, even if the final decision rests with me.

3. Russia: Authoritative and Commanding

In Russia, leadership is highly authoritative, and the higher authorities are expected to be firm, confident, decisive and hold a commanding position. Russian team members respect leaders who display strength and decisiveness. Therefore, I would adopt a firm, clear approach when leading Russian colleagues, making swift decisions, and providing direct instructions.

Leadership Culture for a Diverse Team

To lead and effectively manage a diverse team from India, France, and Russia, I would devise a hybrid leadership approach that should consider and combine the elements of all respective cultures.

1. Clear and Direct Communication

Given the hierarchical nature of Indian and Russian cultures, I would maintain clear and direct communication. This approach ensures that instructions are understood and followed, respecting the cultural expectations of decisiveness and authority.

2. Inclusive Decision-Making Process

For the French team's engagement, I would incorporate the element of inclusive decision making. To foster a sense of collaboration I would hold regular meetings to discuss strategies and solicit input from the team so that everyone should feel heard and valued.

3. Flexibility and Adaptability

Flexibility is key in navigating cultural differences. I would be prepared to adjust my approach based on the team's feedback and the specific context of each decision. This adaptability would help balance the need for directive leadership with the benefits of inclusive decision-making.

Performance and Motivation Strategies

1. Setting Clear Objectives

Setting clear, achievable objectives is very important to keep a culturally diverse team focused and motivated. I will provide specific goals and expectations, so that I can ensure that all team members understand their roles and responsibilities, which is particularly important in hierarchical cultures.

2. Recognizing Achievements

Recognition and reward systems should be tailored to cultural preferences. In India and Russia, public recognition from a superior can be highly motivating. In France, acknowledging contributions during team discussions can foster a sense of inclusion and appreciation.

3. Providing Support and Resources

I will personally ensure that team members have the necessary resources and support to achieve their objectives is essential. This will include regular check-ins to address any concerns and provide additional guidance or training as needed.

Leadership Success

A sophisticated awareness of cultural variations in leadership styles is essential for global team leadership. Leaders may successfully manage these complications by comparing the leadership cultures of Japan and the US and adopting tactics to lead a varied team from Russia, France, and India. The secret is to be responsive to the cultural norms of the team while maintaining a balance between direct, authoritative communication and open, collaborative decision-making procedures. A worldwide team that is collaborative, motivated, and produces high-quality work may be created when leaders follow these steps.



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