**Culture, Multi culture, cross culture and East versus West**

First let us see, what is culture, multi culture, cross culture and importance of culture in a professional or Business situation.

Culture: is the behaviour and norms found in human societies.

Culture is considered a central concept in anthropology, encompassing the range of phenomenon that is transmitted through social learning in human societies.

**Multiculturalism:** is the coexistence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious, or cultural groups, and is manifested in customary behaviors, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking and communication styles.

**Cross culture:** Dealing with or offering comparison between two or more different cultures or cultural areas.

How to communicate with people from other cultures?

One may never completely overcome linguistic and cultural barriers or totally erase ethnocentric tendencies, but you can communicate effectively with people from other cultures.

The best way to prepare you to do business with people from another culture is to study their culture in advance. If you plan to do business repeatedly, learn the language. Even if you transact business in English, you show respect by making an effort to learn the local language.

Concentrate on learning something about their history, religion, politics, and customs, but don’t ignore the practical side of life.

Seasonal business travellers suggest the following:

1. In Spain, let a handshake last for five or seven strokes, pulling away too soon may be interpreted as a sign of rejection. In France, however, the handshake is a single stroke.
2. Never give a gift of liquor in Arab countries.
3. In England, never stick pens or other objects in your front suit pocket; doing so is considered awkward or clumsy.
4. Allow plenty of time to get to know the people you are dealing with in Africa. They are suspicious of people who are in a hurry. If you concentrate solely on the task at hand, Africans will distrust you and avoid doing business with you.
5. In Arab countries, never turn down food or drink, it is an insult to refuse hospitality of any kind. But don’t be too quick to accept, either, A ritual refusal (“I don’t want to put you to an trouble”) or “I don’t want to be a bother”.
6. Stress the longevity (age, span of life) of your company when dealing with the Germans, If your company has been around for a while, the founding date should be printed on your business cards.

**Handling Written Communication:**

Intercultural business writing falls into the same general categories as other form of business writing.

Unless you are personally fluent in the language of the intended readers, you should write your letter in English or have them translated by a professional translator.

If you and your reader speak different language, be especially concerned with achieving clarity.

**Some useful tips for written communication:**

1. Use short, precise words that say what they mean.
2. Relay on specific terms to explain your points. Avoid abstraction altogether, or illustrate them with concrete examples.
3. Do not use slang, jargon, and buzz words. Such words rarely translate and also avoid idioms and figurative expressions and acronyms. These may lead to confusion.
4. Construct sentences that are shorter and simpler than those you use when writing to someone fluent in English.
5. Use short paragraph, each paragraph should stick to one point or topic and no more than eight lines to ten lines.
6. Use numbers, visual aids, and pre-printed forms to clarify your messages. These devices are generally understood in most cultures.

**Handling of oral communication:**

Oral communication with people from other cultures is more difficult to handle. Some transactions cannot be handled without face to face communication.

When engaging in oral communication, be alert to the possibilities for misunderstanding.

Be conscious of the non-verbal message that you may be sending or receiving.

To overcome the language and cultural barriers, follow these suggestions:

1. Keep an open mind. Don’t stereotype the other person or react with preconceived ideas. Regard the person as an individual first, not as a representative of another culture.
2. Be conscious of the others custom. Expect him or her to have different values, beliefs, expectations and mannerisms.
3. Try to be aware of Unintentional meanings that may be read into your message. Clarify your true intent by repetition and example.
4. Listen carefully and patiently, if you do not understand a comment, ask the person to repeat it.
5. Be aware that the other person’s body language may mislead you. Gestures and expressions mean different things in different cultures. Relay more on words then on non-verbal communication to interpret the message.
6. Adapt your style to the persons. If the other person appears to be direct and straightforward, follow suit, if not adjust your behaviour to match.
7. At the end of the conversation, be sure that you and the other persons both agree on what has been said and decided. Clarify what will happen next.
8. If appropriate, follow up by writing a letter or memo, summarizing the conversation and thanking the person for meeting with you.

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**The East versus the West**

Anyone who wants to deal with people from a particular country should prepare themselves by studying its culture and history, so that they can avoid at least the more serious problems of communication.

We shall consider some fundamental Indian values and compare them with western ones.

Primarily, because we have to communicate with them, since they control the world trade.

They control money matters, they control science and technology. They set the rules for the world and we have to play by their rules.

There another reason why we should take western culture seriously, western values is being adapted all over the world. The rest of the world is exposed to them through electronic media that is totally dominated by the west, and their multinational companies.

However it must be remembered that the west is not one whole culture, with uniform values. There are one many countries, cultures, languages, and people that makeup what we call as the west. There are differences, yet there are similarities that bind them together. For instances, America and Europe are westerners yet they are different in many ways. Hence, it is important that we make proper distinction and avoid over generalizations and simplifications.