

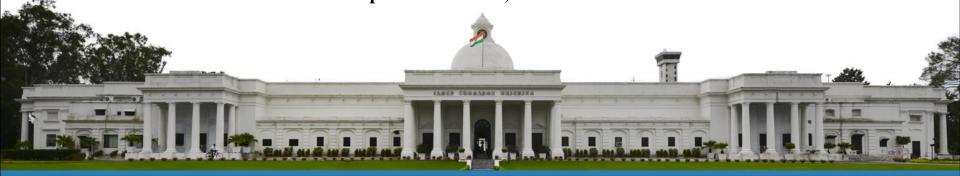


Soft Skills

Lecture 18

Culture as Communication

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Culture

- A common population sufficiently large enough to be self-sustaining, to produce new generations of members without relying on outside people.
- Totality of that group's thoughts, experiences and patterns of behaviour and their contact with other cultures.

The world today

- **❖**A global village
- Multicultural differences
- Culture affects people's behaviour
- Globalization of markets

Business Trends

- **>**Globalization
- ➤ Technological Revolutions
- > Multicultural Workforce
- ➤GATT (General Agreement on Tariff and Trade)
- ➤ NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement)

Technological Advancements

- New transportation and information technologies.
- Availability of fresh flowers and fruits.
- ➤ Choices to have our own pick.
- ➤Online store making business more smooth.

Multicultural Workforce

- > Prospects of peace, prosperity and education
- > Immigration on move
- ➤ Multicultural Communication
- ➤ Cultural Diversity

Culture as Communication

- > Complex system of values, traits, morals and customs
- ➤ Not all cultures are alike.
- Culture teaches people how to think, behave and react.
- > Humans are extra-ordinarily flexible.

Elements of Culture

- > Symbols, rituals, values, heroes. (Hofsted)
- To understand a culture one needs to understand things as language and gestures, personal appearance, social relationships, religion, philosophy and values, family customs, education and communication systems.

Characteristics of Culture

- ✓ Cultures can be learned.
- ✓ Culture norms are logical.
- ✓ Culture represents identity and community.
- ✓ It mixes both the visible and the invisible.
- ✓ Culture is dynamic.



Major Dimensions of Culture

- > Context
- > Individualism
- > Formality
- ➤ Communication Style
- ➤ Time Orientation



Formality

- ☐ Tradition, Ceremony and Social rules
- Americans: Casual, direct and coming to point soon
- Mexicans: Hurt when asked to "get down to business"
- Japanese: Exchange of cards and signing documents are treated as rituals.



Contd.

- Europeans: Never use first name without invitation
- Arabian, South Americans and Asians: Friendship first and business later
- Western Countries: Relaxed about social status and power

Communication Style

- ☐ Americans: Straightforward, uncomfortable with silence and delays
- Take words literally
- ☐ Arabs and South Americans: Poetic language
- ☐ Nigerians: Quiet and clear
- ☐ Germans: Direct but understated



Business Styles

- > Americans and Germans: Emphasis on words
- > Greek: Treat contract as formal statement
- ➤ Japanese: Contract as statement of intention
- Mexicans: Artistic exercises to be accomplished in an ideal world.
- > Arab: Contract as insulting



Time

- > Asians: Punctual
- ➤ North Americans: A Commodity
- ➤ Japanese: Take time to decide
- > Hispanics: More relaxed regarding time