

Consensus Building: Persuasion, Evaluation, and Productive Disagreement

Module: Consensus Building

Learning Path: Workplace Success - Cultural Intelligence

Key Concepts

Persuasion Styles

Principles-first (deductive) versus applications-first (inductive) reasoning.

- Principles-first: Start with theory, derive conclusions
- Applications-first: Start with examples, build to principles

Neutral vs Affective

How cultures express emotion in professional settings.

- Neutral: Emotions controlled, calm seen as professional
- Affective: Emotions show engagement, passion valued

Disagreement Norms

Confrontational versus harmony-preserving approaches to conflict.

- Confrontational: Open debate sharpens ideas, conflict builds respect
- Avoids confrontation: Disagreement threatens harmony, happens indirectly

The BRIDGE Model

Framework for building consensus across cultural differences.

- Baseline: Establish shared facts
- Rotate: Alternate persuasion styles
- Invite: Create culturally appropriate dissent channels
- Decode: Translate cultural signals
- Ground: Connect principles to actions
- Echo: Confirm understanding in multiple styles

Summary Points

1. Different cultures don't just argue about different things—they argue in different ways.
2. Evaluation styles (direct vs indirect feedback) don't align predictably with other dimensions.
3. True consensus means everyone understands and commits, not necessarily agrees.
4. The BRIDGE model helps navigate different persuasion and disagreement styles.
5. Unexpressed disagreement doesn't disappear—it sabotages implementation.

Practical Application

Facilitating multicultural decisions

Use the BRIDGE model systematically to ensure all voices are heard.

Delivering feedback

Tailor to cultural style: feedback sandwich for Americans, direct for Germans, indirect for Japanese.

Reflection Questions

- How do the concepts in this module apply to your current work environment?
- What cultural patterns have you observed but not previously understood?
- Which framework from this module will be most immediately useful to you?
- How might you adapt your approach based on what you've learned?