

Overcoming Cross Cultural Communication

In global companies, effective cross-cultural communication enables companies to work more smoothly. By acknowledging the potential problems that can occur and taking proactive steps to reduce conflicts, you can help your employees work better together. Adjustment of Behavior takes time, so be sure to provide opportunities for your employees to get to know each other's cultures and customs before problems arise.

Nowadays, diversity is typical in most workplaces. As technology advances, it is not easy to engage with clients and clients from all over the world. While this may be the new standard, the potential challenges of diversity cannot be ignored. Language barriers may make it difficult to communicate effectively, or cultural differences may prevent internal and external clients from being comfortable enough to open up, mix with others or relate.

These potential issues may hinder relationships in the workplace; therefore, if you are planning to do business on a global level, you need to find solutions to break down any barriers. Here are some of the methods that will help.

1. Learn a few key phrases.

Since clear communication is essential to achieving effective performance, it is essential that each of your employees understands what your customers and clients need. Depending on the number of clients or clients you work with and the amount of diversity, you may not be able to learn all languages, but learning some greeting and key phrases can go a long way.

2. Learn your client's culture

Spending time researching or inquiring about other people's culture can go a long way to make them feel comfortable. Learn what your customers love and value: their food, habits, protocol, business practices, and what they do for fun. Because there is a bunch of information available online, you can easily discover the basic principles of their culture. Due to your extra effort, the people you work with will feel appreciated and will be more willing to recommend you and do business with you in the future.

3. Run meetings

Hold meetings to expose your employees to other cultures. Defining employees who will work together in a non-threatening environment allows a good business relationship in the long run. Knowing another language, grammar, and culture norms about acceptable behavior helps prepare your employees for handling situations when they arise. Changing preconceptions can lead to more suitable business relationships.

4. Promote appreciation of cultural differences

Set aside a special day where you ask some employees or coworkers to share aspects of their culture or customer culture with everyone. Make it fun. Ask staff to make a "lunch and learn" offer that includes foods, celebrations, and other aspects of this culture. Not only will this enhance socialization, it will give everyone the opportunity to get to know and appreciate the culture of the other. Also, you can invite your employees to write an article in your newsletter or your internal communications about a specific culture.

5. Be open to trying new things

While traveling to visit customers in other countries, be open to trying new things - like food - at least once. Even if you don't like anything, it will be appreciated for the effort. If you are allergic or prefer not to participate in anything (such as drinking alcohol), do not disturb your own values, however, to accommodate their values. You are allowed to refuse with respect. The idea is not to create borders, but to build bridges and open the door to cultural differences.

6. Be accommodating

If your employees, clients or co-workers have cultural requirements, like prayer times or religious holidays, accommodate their needs into your work schedule. You would certainly want someone to respect your culture if the tables were turned.

Regardless of your business type, keep an open mind. Know that your way is not the only way. You don't need to change your culture or convince others to change theirs, but rather, find

common ground where everyone can understand each other and respect and embrace cultural differences.

7. Coach employees

Training staff to mediate disputes related to cultural misunderstanding. Provide opportunities for employees to respond to positions from different perspectives from theirs. Divide a group of people into pairs to perform role-playing exercises that allow participants to acknowledge cultural differences. Encourage each spouse to think about a conflict he recently went through because of cultural differences. Have each participant describe what they might find offensive or unusual. Let each participant suggest how the problem will be dealt with in their own culture. Together, ask participants to develop a solution to the problem. Have each pair report to the larger group about their experiences.