**Cross-Cultural Communication Assignment**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this assignment is to identify

* differences in communication customs and practices between individuals from different cultures, and
* the implications these differences might have on effective communication within a workplace or organization.

You have been hired by a company that is preparing to send a delegation of local employees to different countries to investigate the potential of opening offices in each location. The employees being sent need information about communicating effectively with individuals in these countries and, particularly, in keeping with their cultural norms. The delegation will be meeting with several business people. Arrangements have been made for interpreters.

Your main task is to ensure that the delegation understands enough about the cultural communication practices, habits, and actions common to each country, so they can communicate effectively and avoid confusing, alienating, or offending the people they meet. You need to provide the delegation with details about communicating in these new cultures to help them adjust and succeed in their mission.

**Procedure**

This is a team assignment activity. Teams should consist of no more than three students. Once team members have been identified, no changes to team membership should be allowed.

Select a country other than the United States, Canada, United Kingdom (or other country where English language customs prevail) to use for your investigation on cultural communication customs and practices. You need not be fluent in the official language(s) of this country, since your focus is on communication practices and not on the words used in a communication.

Research the customary communication practices of the chosen countries and, in particular, those practices directly related to business communications. Consider the types of business interactions that might be particularly important to the delegation. Here are a few examples of business interactions to get you started, but this list is only a small sample.

* A negotiation between a worker and a manager or supervisor
* Communication between coworkers
* A meeting in which an important decision must be made
* A conflicting situation between two employees

Your goal is to help the delegation understand the underlying cultural norms, values, and communication patterns and misconceptions of a specific culture and how they may affect specific types of workplace interactions. Consider that communication patterns can include verbal and non-verbal characteristics.

Be cautious about negative stereotyping or using other insensitive or improper references to a specific cultural group in your presentation. These types of categorizations toward ethnic or nationality groups are inappropriate. On the other hand, stereotyping when used appropriately, can be positive if one considers that it should never be used to describe individual behavior; rather, the focus would be on the behavioral norms for members of a particular group. For example, when describing characteristics of a Canadian, negative stereotyping might include “Canadians all say ‘eh’” to end sentences or statements, inferring that they have poor grammar or communication skills. A positive stereotyping of a Canadian might be that “Oh yes, Canadians are so polite,” inferring a higher degree of politeness, even though there is little evidence that Canadians are any more polite than other groups.

To offset the potential for negative stereotyping when conducting your research, keep in mind that simply “Googling” for information may yield inaccurate or misleading results. Your presentation must be evidence-based, meaning that the sources of information for your presentation need to be legitimate and credible. Make sure you are presenting good-quality and correct information.

**Required**

1. **Cultural Communication Frameworks**
   * Working as a team, research the cultural customs, practices, and norms of communication related to the particular countries selected for this assignment.
2. **Presentation**
   * Prepare a short presentation of your findings to be delivered to the delegation and company officials.
   * Make sure you that your presentation is not simply disparate facts. It should follow a logical design process.
3. **Participation**
   * Your presentation may include a variety of media, such as short videos, graphical representations, team member role plays, and short text. The goal here is to use a combination of media that will best present the points you are making.
   * Each team member needs to actively participate in this presentation.
   * Your team will have up to 10 minutes for the presentation.