

How would a multicultural workforce affect teamwork? essay sample

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In the ever-changing field of communications, telecommunication companies have decided to expand its market to many cultures. Some of the business is global and involve many people from all lifestyles. This change presents a need to research the traditions, laws, restrictions, languages, and time differences. Many forms of communication must be utilized to ensure teamwork and daily operation of the business. Involving other cultures in the business will increase revenue and save money on the workforce. Many changes will be needed to prepare the employees and management to deal with the people from different cultural backgrounds.

How will communications be affected throughout the company?

Throughout the company, communication will be more technologically intense. Translation software will help with language differences. The internet, e-mail, instant messaging, telephone, and teleconferencing resource are useful forms of communication with employees spread all over the world. The normal forms of communication will still be used, face-to-face and travel for instant. There will be a need to get used to a team member in another location. Coordinating times are paramount when there are time differences. " Some cultures also encourage significant sharing of one's personal life during business transactions. Such sharing may be difficult to accomplish effectively, and team members may feel uncomfortable sharing, when they do not meet in person." <http://answers.google.com/answers/threadview?id=357646>

Before doing business with another country the business must understand the way the people of that country interprets our phrases and ways. Hiring

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bilingual individuals is helpful for interpretation. Managers may manage a person he or she has never met in person.

Who will be affected by the multicultural workforce?

The challenge posed by diversity is to accommodate different groups by addressing his or her lifestyles, values, and work style without compromising the goals and operations of the organization. The phrase “ multicultural workforce” refers to the changing age, sex, ethnicity, physical ability, race, and sexual orientation of employees across all types and places of work in the United States. Multicultural workforce as a descriptive term or phrase has been supplanted by the term “ diversity” in describing the increasing heterogeneity of the workplace through the inclusion of different groups of people. While “ multicultural workforce” is still sometimes used in reference to employees of varying social, racial, and ability characteristics, the scope of diversity goes further and includes not only the personal characteristics of an organization’s employees but also the way an organization responds to a multicultural or diverse workforce.

Integration of minorities into the workplace, or the practice of suppressing cultural differences to conform to the majority culture, meant that many of these minority workers had to lose a part of their heritage in order to obtain employment. Stereotypes of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and women permeated the corporate and industrial culture until federal laws were created to prevent discrimination in the 1960’s.

What kind of cultural differences will affect the way business is done?

With multicultural work forces, white, black, and Hispanic there has to be an understanding of one's own values and openness to others' is essential if bridges are to be built between different groups. Interpretation of these differences and the search for common ground yields new rules so no one is offended. The process of understanding those who are different from ourselves is a difficult and challenging one as we can see when we realize that cultural values involve culturally mandated choices around how we are to conduct our lives.

These choices are clear and involve exclusion of certain other possibilities. Other cultures may order their priorities of similar values differently. If one group selects to value the individual over the family and the other the family over the individual, there will be many conflicts on the job as he or she each operate without awareness that the other is applying different rules. Each culture has rules for behavior and living which its members have been taught verbally and non-verbally by all the people who surround them as they are growing up.

Another example of misunderstanding that occurs between workers of a multicultural workforce takes place when a worker from a group that places a very high value on competition works with another from a group that values cooperation and team work. American values include all of these—the individual and family, competition and team work.

How will the time differences be handled?

It is difficult to handle multi-cultural businesses; however, there is also the time-zone factor. Most likely, the company's workforce is spread among different time zones. Although this is a difficult task to address, there are many options for companies in our ' world of technology'.

Collaboration tools offer numerous features to help teams function productively - whether the whole team is in one location or spread out across multiple time zones and locations. Most collaboration tools are suites of tools that all work together to help workers communicate and facilitate projects. Common functions include shared calendaring and contact information, instant messaging, task and project management, and document and information sharing. Some tools also offer Web conferencing and other similar features that allow team members to meet virtually and share their progress. (Hollis, 2005)

All of these tools are very necessary and very convenient when dealing with multicultural businesses. Once the company decides which of these tools to utilize, the business can go about dispersing information. Information can be sent via email and staff meetings can be held in a chat room. It is not the average way of going about business; however this is how it must be done under the circumstances. People would be able to post thoughts and ideas and add comments about any issues that may need to be addressed. And although everyone may have different time zones, messages will be read eventually. Urgent needs can be flagged by sending the message as urgent. A designated person can be in charge of handling these urgent matters when they arise.

With the growing number of business, the fast-paced work environment, and the integrating community it is important to find tools that can help build and keep a business going. Everyone works by different schedules when time zones come into the picture, but work can and will be done if collaboration tools are used. This will not only profit the employees but also the business as a whole.

How will this affect teamwork between same departments at different locations?

“ The ultimate state of continuous improvement is achieved when everyone in a company is personally managing, and continuously improving their own processes individually and in teams.” [http://www. saferpak.com/teamwork_art1. htm](http://www.saferpak.com/teamwork_art1.htm). By being located in different areas of the world, teamwork becomes difficult. Team members must be on the same thought process to keep teamwork held together. By being in different locations, information traveling between person to person, or location to location could be conveyed poorly or even become lost which could cause incorrect acknowledgment and break down the team. By transmitting poor knowledge makes it difficult to keep a topic intact.

The overall picture would become distorted and not hold the contexts that distant team members desired. By utilizing chat, telecommunication, video conference, internet, e-mail, or instant messaging helps keep a team held together. “...Geographically-dispersed teams should take time at the outset to create a shared electronic “ place” for the team, such as a team homepage or database.” [http://www. som2. gmu](http://www.som2.gmu).

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edu/cramton/orgworkshop/working_across_distance.html. By having a place the team can meet, each person can post his or her ideas and any dilemmas they may face, i. e. deadlines, criteria's, unavailability, and/or equipment used or needed for research and development. With everyone able to set a schedule and items needed, each team members should be able to stay on the same thought wave and keep ideas and development moving forward.

What role does technology play in multicultural workplace?

In the telecommunication field often the workforce is comprised of employees that are in the company through acquisitions and mergers. The many small companies come together to create a large company with many legacy systems. The staff from each individual acquired company needs to confer to make the transition as seamless as possible. The technology used for the employees has to be integrated so that the systems communicate and upgrade databases appropriately. To be effective the information technology (IT) staff has to access each system and create a computer network that is friendly to all employees. The transition should not have an impact on the consumers of the product. The help desk needs to be diverse to address the changing needs of the company.

How can managers help the company?

Several levels of management will help the staff. Each location needs an onsite manager and the onsite managers should report to a manager at the main headquarters. At least once a month a conference call should be held to ensure that each location is coordinated with the company strategies and

goals. At least twice a year a face-to-face meeting will help the managers collaborate.

What differences does the company need to overcome?

Differences are always difficult to overcome because people all have some personal biases that were instilled in them from their upbringing. A multicultural workforce comes with so many differences that often the difficulty is identifying the conflicts that arise. Religion, dialects, traditions, and holidays are all factors that need to be examined and agreed upon within the company.

Each culture has its own religious practices. Some require prayer several times a day. To accommodate those individuals, the breaks can be scheduled accordingly. The way people dress can vary from culture to culture and could cause concern to people who do not understand the reason for the chosen garb.

Within each language, individuals have different accents and dialects. This can cause miscommunication if the words spoken are interpreted incorrectly. To ensure proper operation of the company, if a word or phrase is misunderstood people should ask for immediate clarification to alleviate trouble.

Certain cultures work 40 hours a week and other cultures take entire seasons off from work. The company should establish policies about the hours and responsibilities of the employees.

Observations of holidays differ from culture to culture. Respect of each culture allows the management to vary holidays as appropriate.

Conclusion

No matter where each team member is located within the company, communication is a must to improve individual and team efforts. There are many ways that members located in different locations can meet one another, whether it is via a phone conversation, telecommunication, a group web page, or any other form of connection. Due to the diversity of the team, teamwork becomes difficult. Coordinating a meeting time is paramount no matter what time zone the members are located. The company must work within the different cultures and time zones to come to an agreement without compromising the objectives and operations of the association. The team is required to come to an agreement without offending anyone no matter the age, sex, ethnicity, physical ability, race, and sexual orientation of each team member.

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