

Bias: stereotype and people

Society



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Living in the world, we face different kinds of people every day, which means we need to communicate with others and make decisions upon others. Naturally, the attitude and method in dealing with diversity becomes a basic skill for people. It is important to know how to communicate and make decisions in a proper way.

Facing diverse people and objects, people usually classify them. The advantage people gain from classification is organizing and making things easier to understand. However, when it comes to communication and decision-making, classification may cause some problems. As the name indicates, the topic of the book goes around stereotype, and it provides the readers a better understanding of stereotypes: what the stereotypes are; how stereotypes impact people and business; and what to do when stereotypes happen. It also provides a lot of useful information and skills about how to communicate with people respectfully to gain profit for our business and us.

After this book, I realized that classification becomes stereotype occasionally, and stereotype is a crucial part that makes us failed from communicating and making decisions successfully. Either as a normal person or a businessman, we need to be cautious not to let stereotypes become the reason of making us failing. In a diverse society, the advantage is that we can always get new and different information from those we have already had, but the challenge is how to treat people around us who are different from us equally.

People bias naturally, and we all tend to let some of the stereotype come into our communication (Aguilar, 2006). In my opinion, stereotype is the kind <https://assignbuster.com/bias-stereotype-and-people/>

of definition that depends on the trend that most people think instead of the truth. It makes all people who have the same characteristic into one group without really knowing about their individualities. Sometimes we stereotype people unknowingly by not taking what we say as stereotypes, and sometimes we think the stereotypes we say are good ones. For example, it is often heard that “ Young people today do not work as hard as the older generation.” And “ European girls are always more beautiful than the girls in other area.” However, any kind of stereotype may turn out to hurt people whether by intention or not.

There is research shows that there are increasing chance that negative stereotype could activate the people who are stereotyped to become members of the stereotyped group (Campbell & Mohr, 2011). After reading the book, I understood that the stereotypes, which people use to help them understand or sort something they do not really know about, may turn our to lead them to the wrong places. In business, the main inefficiency of stereotype is in management, which is always considered to be a barrier that prevents people from making the right decisions. There is research shows that when the perceived positive stereotypes are brought into the forefront of people, the stereotypes can affect people by making them do worse on something that they can do better (Killermann).

In fact, there are some people we do not know very well that are always stereotyped by us. We tend to judge them by their “ groups”, which seems easier for us to classify them without taking much time to understand who they really are. Especially when facing people with different skin tones, religions and nations, it seems that we will easily get into stereotypes. For

example, I used to think and say that African American people are good at sports and Asian people are good in math. When meeting an African American or Asian person, I judge them automatically by the stereotype which was already formed in my mind without knowing much of them.

Actually, the African American can be good at math, and the Asian can be really good at sports. In the “ Managing Diversity” lecture, I learned in Foundation of Business, which indicates that everyone is unique and not just a representing a demographic group. If the same stereotype I just mentioned happens in a company, sometimes it causes problems, because there will be a great possibility that managers will misjudge a person and put them in wrong working places and positions. “ People use stereotypes to make decisions about coworkers, managers and customers with little or no information about the person. A stereotyped person is not seen for who she is and what she can contribute to the business.”

The people who are stereotyped will be discouraged because their abilities and talents are covered as well. Both the person who holds the stereotype and the person who is stereotyped will be affected. If you see a group of people the same way, you will miss the individuality of them. It is important to communicate against stereotypes that have a great influence on business. Also, it is necessary to know what to do if things have already gone wrong. There is another important thing in this book—how to make up the loss caused by stereotype. The first important thing we need to know is what to do when we realize the mistakes is already made.

Before reading this book, sometimes I could not confront the mistake I made because I felt guilty and shy to make it up. Sometimes I just ignored it, and

sometimes I switched to another topic if I found myself saying things wrong. However, I realized that it could only make the situation worse by running away from the mistakes after reading the book. It is the same in business. At first, we should admit the mistake as soon as we realize it, and then find a way to make it up.

If we ignore the mistake, both the reputation of the company and customer satisfaction will be influenced. By admitting mistakes in time and finding ways to make up, we sometimes get better result than we think. I had a personal experience of being stereotyped. When I was trying to find a foundation in a cosmetics shop, the shop assistant kept recommending me a color that was much whiter than my skin color, and it was until I showed my dissatisfaction did the shop assistant apologize to me. She explained that she thought most Asian women like foundations that are whiter than their original skin color, and that was the reason she put on a lot of foundation on my face that I did not like. Then she chose a color in terms of my true skin color instead of what she thought Asian women would like.

Actually, I was satisfied with the one she picked for me at last. Even though I was stereotyped, by using a sincere apology, letting me know the reason of her mistake and making the right choice eventually, the shop assistant fixed the problem she made successfully. In this case, if the shop assistant did not admit the stereotype mistake she made, I probably would leave the cosmetic shop and never go back again. Inversely, I think the most important thing she did was to admit she stereotyped me with a sincere attitude. In this way, she gained my understanding and forgiveness. It is the same in many stereotype cases as the book *Ouch, The Stereotype Hurts* mentions.

An insincere apology or shifting the blame to your speaker gains nothing for your mistake (Aguilar, 2006). The best way to limit the damage made by stereotype is to admit what you have said and tell people your real thoughts.

In order to study and understand better in business, it is necessary to know not only the fixed knowledge that will be taught in class. The skill of communication, which is extremely important for business people, is also a necessity but relatively more difficult to learn, because it requires much experience to comprehend. The book *Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts* offers a useful guide of some business skills and experience that may not be found in textbooks. From this book, I understood that stereotype does not only have a great impact on our daily communication, the more important negative influence it has is on business. As a student who studies in business major, this book helped a lot on my major.