

# Essay on cultural differences roles and core values

[Business](#), [Company](#)



In order to understand the rationale behind creating certain team structures in Toyota and Ford, it is necessary to consider the differences between Japanese and American cultures. It is possible to evaluate these differences using the dimensions suggested by Hofstede: Power Distance Index (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS) and Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI). Firstly, the two countries differ according to their level of Individualism, with American culture being more individualistic than the Japanese one. This fact led to the acceptance of hierarchy for the sake of common victory of the Japanese team, where 8 people were rowing and only one was steering. In America, on the other hand, people are highly motivated by individual achievements, that is why it was important to create multiple steering positions, thus empowering people and giving them an incentive to work harder. Moreover, Americans are much more willing to take risks, therefore Ford team was continuously trying to adjust its strategy according to that of the competitors. This cultural divergence shows that the original structure of the teams was created with the consideration of the cultural peculiarities of each company. At this point, it is possible to suggest that the main mistake of the Ford team was not in their inability to design a superior team structure, but in pursuing the structure of the other team, which was misaligned with the cultural traits of the American company.

The second mistake of the Ford team was to base their strategy on copying their competitors, rather than on trying to improve their own. Such approach did not consider the strengths and weaknesses of the American team, but tried to accommodate the Japanese model within the Ford rowing team.

Thus, they did not have the necessary resources and capabilities for

outperforming Japanese rowers using the Toyota team model, and they did not manage to differentiate themselves from the competitors by creating their own strategy. Eventually Ford's strategy turned into a "catch-up" exercise, which left them always one step behind their rivals. Furthermore, it led to the creation of a long chain of command, which aimed to accommodate the need for incentivizing team members, but instead it increased costs and decreased information transparency and team's focus.

The model of the rowing team can be easily applied to many American companies, in particular to Ford. Unless U. S. organizations start building their competitive advantage on the existing resources and capabilities, rather than chasing successful competitors, it is reasonable to expect that they will continue losing market share and profitability to their international competitors.