

Managing across cultures



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Cultural influences in negotiations Discuss the stages in the negotiation process and how culturally based value systems influence these stages

A negotiation is discussion of a certain issue of conflict between two or more parties. Therefore, according to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turne (2012), intercultural negotiation is all about discussing issues of conflicting interests which are common between individuals who have different backgrounds of their culture. These individuals then try to reach to a mutual agreement that will be beneficial to both parties and put to an end the strategic alliances among the parties. In regards to this then, a negotiation follows a certain systematic process as discussed below.

a) Preparation

Preparation is the first step in the process of negotiation. According to Metcalf et al (2006), at this stage the parties involved in the negotiation get build some background to the negotiation. The individuals intending to enter into the negotiation try to get the necessary information that may be required to make the negotiation successful. Therefore, the individuals get to research and get to get enough understanding of what they are going to undergo. As part of their preparation the individuals try to analyze the appropriate methods of persuading the other party and how to bargain in the negotiation. Therefore, this can be influenced by some cultural aspects.

Decision on the method of bargaining and how to communicate will depend on the cultures of the different individuals involved in the negotiation.

b) Relationship building

This is the second stage in the process of negotiation. After preparing for the entire negotiation, individuals should take time to get to know each other before proceeding for the planned negotiation (Metcalf et al, 2006).

Therefore, how the different individuals will get to interact and relate in different occasions will be affected by their cultures. For example, the attitudes towards each other may differ as they get to interact due to different cultural mind-sets or the general national attitude towards time from the different individuals.

c) Exchange of task related information

After the different parties or individuals have prepared enough and have gotten to build their relationship, the next step to the negotiation is coming to the real negotiation where both sides exchange information. The different sides present the information it has and states its position concerning the issue or matter of negotiation. At this stage then cultural aspects can have an impact or great influence on the mode of present or how the parties will respond to each other (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turne, 2012). For example, if the parties are French nationals they will prefer to present their views in a debating forum but an American would prefer a factual approach to the issue.

d) Persuasion

This is the fourth stage in the process of negotiation. This stage involves the actual bargaining on what each side wants. Metcalf et al (2007), explain that at this point, both parties make proposals of what they want and a tradeoff is done. This is therefore meant to bring about a mutual agreement on what will be of benefit to both sides. In that case, an analysis is done on what each side wants and both sides try to bargain on what they think would be better for all of them. It is then common for cultural differences to affect the process of bargaining at this stage. For example if one of the sides belongs to a low-context culture the other side should consider using threats to bring

them to agreement instead of just remaining flexible.

e) Concessions and Agreement

This is the final stage of the negotiation process where both sides come to an agreement after hard bargaining and decide what is best for both sides (Wall and Blum, 1991). Therefore, each side gives what they have and take what the other side has to offer. In that case, cultural aspects will shape the agreement on which side makes the final offer. For example one side may have a stereotype that the other side is profit oriented and self absorbed. This will then affect the decision on making the final agreement.

References list

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