

Nigerian and british negotiating styles



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It can be argued that cases of successful negotiators in businesses have always kept their vision of success straight. These people are advocated to full understand what they want along with a complete understanding of the negotiation process. The successful people do not only have an understanding of their preferred negotiating style but also fully understand the preferred negotiating style of their counterpart. Hence, this allows the manager to excel in achieving their goals. Recently, few of the academics have undervalued the stance of adopting appropriate negotiation styles. However, on the other hand it can be argued that an approach that works superb for the counterpart's style of negotiation has the capability of creating deadlock having a different negotiation style. Prudent people have been advocated the ones who carefully distinguishes and understands these differences and adopt a negotiating style that is best suited according the situation.

This briefing paper has highlighted the challenges in terms of varying negotiating styles that can be faced by The Body Shop. These include cultural barriers, communication barriers from the perspective of Hofstede model or time orientation, space orientation, nonverbal communication, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. The next section has briefed about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that the company can face by setting their operations in Nigeria. Finally, the conclusions have focused on the precautionary measures that need to be taken by the manager of The Body Shop Company while carrying successful operations in Nigeria.

2 Terms of Reference

This report is written as a part of management consultancy report for The Body Shop company. This report is a short briefing paper that will inform The Body Shop with the ways that can be adopted by the company to set up business operations in Nigeria. This report will provide a brief on the ways and styles of negotiation that can be adopted by The Body Shop. The Body Shop is the world's second largest cosmetic franchise in the world. The company runs about 2400 shops in a total of 61 countries. The headquarters of The Body Shop is based in West Sussex England. The company has now decided to open their operations in Nigeria.

This report is being compiled by ABC consultants, who specialize in providing cultural specific information to help their clients set up their businesses in new environment. The company excels in providing high quality service in facilitating the client help combating their cultural related issues. This particular report is a brief for The Body Shop Company on the ways company should solve their upcoming cultural related problems in opening their business in Nigeria. The Body Shop has asked for the tips and information from the ABC consultants, on the differences in negotiating styles that prevail both in England and Nigeria. This will provide The Body Shop with some idea on what to expect from the business environment when executing operations in Nigeria.

3 Overview of the Situation

In considering the cultural differences in both the Nigeria and Europe, it is important to expand on the cultural dimensions presented by Hofstede, Hall, Kluckhohn, Strodbeck and Carbaugh (Orientation, 2008). It is worth

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mentioning that there exist no right approach to negotiation but rather there are good and bad approaches (LeBaron, 2008). For The Body Shop, to expand their business in a developing country such as Nigeria, will be expected to be exposed to a number of challenges. The challenges that the company can encounter includes:

3. 1 Negotiation

The literature suggests that managers and officials in Nigeria have very limited exposure to other cultures and hence like to perform their activities the way they want to perform (Katz, 2008). Specifically in Nigeria the culture is such that there exist contingency bargaining (Katz, 2008). The people of Nigeria adopt the cooperative style of negotiation but generally people may avoid compromises unless it is important (Katz, 2008). The preferred approach generally adopted by people is not win /win (Adair, 2001) The habit of Nigerians is that they will try to draw more outcomes out of the entire deal, without having regards for being fair to the other party (Adair, 2001) The Body Shop has to keep in mind that Nigerians have the capability to trick other party into inferior terms and conditions (Katz, 2008). Most importantly, in any situation of conflict the Nigerians are not very prone to compromise situation (Masayuki and M., 1993).

Nigerians normally believe in sharing information as a means to develop trust but on the other hand side the other party must beware of the frauds that are a common practice (Graham et al., 1994). Normally the pact with which these negotiations take place is quite slow (Katz, 2008). The act of building relationships with Nigerians, bargaining and decision making takes much longer than expected (Katz, 2008). It is advisable for The Body Shop to <https://assignbuster.com/nigerian-and-british-negotiating-styles/>

be patient and control emotions about this delay because it is a part of their culture (Katz, 2008). It is worthwhile for the Body shop to keep in mind that the Nigerians prefer a polychromic work style (LeBaron, 2008). They normally take up on a number of things at the same time (LeBaron, 2008). At the time of negotiation, the Nigerians keep jumping back and forth on different topics rather than addressing one at a time (LeBaron, 2008). Whereas, the Europeans follow a monochromic style and consider one thing at a time (LeBaron, 2008). This may confuse the personnel of Body Shop. When it comes to bargaining, the Nigerians love haggling and feel offended if not welcomed (LeBaron, 2008). The Body Shop have to keep in mind that they facts can be revisited to their advantage, provided if Nigerians reciprocate on agreed areas (LeBaron, 2008).

3. 2 Time Orientations

There are two different orientations to time that exist in the world. These are the monochromic and polychromic cultures (Kirkman et al., 2006)

3. 2. 1 Negotiators from Polychronic culture

It should be kept in mind that Nigerians have no fixed timings for meetings (Reisinger and Crofts, 2010)

They take more breaks in work (Soares et al., 2007)

Are normally comfortable with high level of information

Normally overlap talks

Consider the start time of anything as flexible and not take lateness

3. 2. 2 Negotiators from Monochronic cultures

The culture in Europe follow specific timings for beginning and ending the task (Taras et al., 2010a)

They prefer scheduled breaks (Taras et al., 2010b)

Consider one thing at a time (Williams and Zinkin, 2008)

They rely on specific and detailed authentic communication

Like talking in sequence

Consider lateness as devaluing

3. 3 Space Orientations

These space orientations also vary across different cultures (LeBaron, 2008).

This refers to the physical distance that is considered comfortable according to a specific culture (Arrindell, 2003, Baskerville, 2003). The personal space that is preferred in Europe is much more than that in developing countries like Nigeria. This space will also consider the aspect of eye contact. In Europe the eye contact is taken for its reliability whereas in Nigeria it may be seen considered as disrespectful (Eckhardt, 2003, Ford et al., 2003, Peterson, 2003). There are many differences in spatial preferences based on age, gender, generation and class which needs to be taken into account (Lederach, 1995). Therefore, space needs to be considered as a variable in negotiation (Lederach, 1995).

3. 4 Nonverbal Communication

It can be one of the problems that The Body Shop needs to take into consideration. It can be argued that in intercultural studies, some cultures uses silence as one of the ways to negotiate, whereas some use none at all (Nancy, 1997). Nigerians may consider hugging as a trusting relationship whereas Europeans find it too intimate (Sharma, 2003).

3. 5 Power distance

Hofstede uses power distance to explain the degree of acceptance of unequal power among people (Tavakoli et al., 2003) Generally, in Nigeria the power distance among people is quite much, where some are considered superior to others due to factors such as social status, age, race, gender and education. Whereas, in Europe the power distance is less and advocates equality among individuals (Williamson, 2002). Generally, Nigerians have hierarchical structures, clear authority figures and consider their right to use their power (Yoo and Donthu, 2002) Whereas, in Europe there are flat organizational structures, shared authority and consider their right to use power only in some circumstances (Yoo and Donthu, 2002)

3. 6 Uncertainty Avoidance

It related to the national culture that relates to uncertainty and the degree of adapting to change (Ford et al., 2003) It can be argued that Nigeria does not welcome uncertainty and ambiguity. Nigerians normally place high value to risk avoidance and depend on following formal rules and procedures (Ford et al., 2003) It is normally not a common thing to trust a non family member in Nigerian culture (Ford et al., 2003) On the other hand side, the Europeans

have high tolerance for risk. They value risk taking, solving problems and have flat organizational structures (Ford et al., 2003)

3. 7 Masculinity-Femininity

It refers to the extent to which a culture values boldness (Cronje, 2011) It also refers to the role of men and women in organizations (Cronje, 2011) The Europeans are more assertive and task-oriented as opposed to Nigerians. There are rigid gender roles in Nigerian culture as opposed to that in Europe (Cronje, 2011)

3. 8 Communication

Nigerian follows direct and straight forward communication when it comes to friends and business (Migliore, 2011). They can easily say “ no” in case they do not like something in particular. In early stages of business they may seem non-committed and communicate indirectly. In situations of silence shows anger or displeasure. Nigerians also value eye contact (Migliore, 2011).

4 Analysis of Situation

4. 1SWOTof Body Shop

The Body Shop has a team of management that has specific expertise on areas such as negotiations. They need to keep in mind the negotiation styles and techniques that are followed by the Nigerian businessmen. The company has the capability to attract the customers due to their high quality body care products. It has an edge over its rivals based on its uniqueness that can be depicted from making products from natural content of the environment (Huang and Xu, 2009).

One of its weaknesses is that the image it tries to portray does not parallel reality. The company claims for having natural products but they are seldom fresh. Other negative for them is that there will be hostility by the locals because the people generally don't want outsiders to operate in their country. The company will have to bear the cultural barriers; including language and gestures etc. the Nigerians welcome bribes in many cases, hence making it confusing and difficult for The Body shop to understand what is required by the other party (Hartman and Beck-Dudley, 1999).

Greatest opportunity for The Body Shop will be to enter new market and attract new customers. That will allow the company to increase their customer base. The business will also make new contacts and understand the culture properly, making it easy for Body Shop to enter into any other new market having the same culture (Awe, 2000, Kintish, 2002).

The major threats that will be posed to The Body Shop will be the local cosmetic providers that already have been serving in the market for decades. The local people living in Nigeria will find it confusing and difficult to make the initial switch due their lack of knowledge on how it is different from any local cosmetic provider.

5 PESTEL Analysis of Body Shop in Both Countries

A PESTEL analysis of Body shop in both countries has also been conducted. Body Shop has a number of political issues which would be important for the company (Awe, 2000). In Nigeria, the company would have to deal to deal with uncertainty and political turmoil, as the government is not stable. In UK , the negotiators would be faced with different issues, such as the

spending cuts and government bureaucracy. The economic factors which would be considered by the negotiators in Nigeria would involve the aspects of changing currency markets and economic hardship due to the global economic crisis. Similar factors would also be visible in UK . The social factors influencing negotiators in Nigeria would be related to the working conditions of the human force. They would have to ensure that the local culture of male dominance does not come into play, as Body Shop would want to portray a positive international image from the operation. A number of technological factors would also influence the Body Shop operations (Li et al., 2010, Huang and Xu, 2009), which would include online shopping and the availability of a online managed supply chain in Nigeria. The technological factors would also influence the working conditions of the workforce, which would be a key negotiating tactic. Environmental issues such as the making sure of good environmental policy for any future operation, and government regulations governing these must also be taken into consideration. Finally, legal issues are also important for the negotiating for Body Shop (Awe, 2000, Kintish, 2002). All new operations must fulfill international and local legal requirements, and this is carefully considered when starting a new operation and negotiating working conditions with local representatives.

6 Solutions and Recommendations

It has been concluded that it is completely difficult to track the starting points that are used by the negotiators belonging from different national settings. The reason for this is that cultures are constantly changing with changing times. From another perspective, it can be argued that cross-cultural negotiation literature is based on the organizational areas and hence

it cannot be applied to the area of intractable conflicts. It can also be concluded that The Body Shop will have acquire the know how about the way things are done in different situations in Nigeria. It should be kept in mind by the company that setting operations in Nigeria would mean changing their ways of dealing with businesses. The managers of The Body Shop need to be more vigilant on communication as a means of bridging the cultural gap. It is recommended that Body Shop must study the Nigerian culture carefully so that they can make business deal successful. It is also recommended that before entering in Nigerian market, some research must be carried out to measure the worth of the target market that the company intends to cater to. The space orientation, time orientation must be taken into account while conducting the business dealings with the locals. Since, The Body Shop is a multinational, in order for it to keep up with its reputation, the manager responsible for its operations in Nigeria needs to set the timescales and deadlines well in advance, keeping in mind the laidback attitude of Nigeria. The people of Nigeria are usually use to be being pushed for work, therefore it needs to be kept in mind by the expatriate of Body Shop to keep motivating their workforce every now and then to make their business successful in Nigeria. Moreover, the manager for Body Shop needs to keep motivating team work because it is the most common way of achieving task in Nigeria.