

Communication across culture

Business



Culture is a key concept in communication and understanding of different cultures is important if communication is to be complete and effective. The concept of culture is very complicated but efforts should be made to understand those that apply to us and the people we communicate with. This is especially important in organizations and institutions that cross paths with people of different cultures. Culture affects how people perceive and interpret communication tools causing people to have difficult conversations.

It is important not to judge people and the information without first understanding their cultures. The results can be dire if the situation is critical. These difficult conversations are about what is of importance to people. Also, they are almost always about feelings that people have. In order for people to avoid or get out of difficult conversations, it is important to try to understand what has happened from the other individual's point of view (Stone et al 1999).

By doing so, there is bound to be improved understanding between different cultures while conversing. Another important concept to remember is that culture has an effect in knowledge and how it is interpreted. Assumptions should not be made that knowledge is interpreted in the same way by everyone. Differences in culture will definitely lead to differences in the reception and interpretation of knowledge. It is important to understand this because different cultures will give certain pieces of information more meaning and emphasis than others.

Therefore, not everyone will accept certain information as knowledge. In addition it is important, especially for organizations and institutions, to

understand the factors and criteria that can be used for culture definition. These criteria also show direct opposites in cultural perception. They include the following classifications. Individualistic - Holistic, short term - long term, high context - low context, public private, shame - guilt, direct - indirect, tangible - intangible, low trust - high trust, local - cosmopolitan and universalist - particularistic. Other than keeping these criteria in mind, in order to make sure that knowledge is effective in conversations one should also consider the areas of focus within management of knowledge which are knowledge development, knowledge retention and knowledge transfer.

Medical communication is an example of a situation where conversations have to be understood well to avoid dire consequences. Both the doctor and patient have to understand each other. If a doctor is working without knowledge on different cultures and how these cultures affect communication, the doctor may misdiagnose the patient. In addition, the doctor should not make assumptions about the gestures that the patient will make or how they may choose to communicate, every culture is unique in its conversations and patients should be treated this way too. For instance, he may get a patient who does not answer when asked questions, this may not necessarily mean that they are not unwell but maybe, their culture does not allow them to communicate medical issues without intermediaries. The patient may describe symptoms to the doctor using signs or they may answer the doctor's questions using gestures like shaking their heads from side to side.

This should not be taken to mean 'no' in the first instance, it may mean 'yes' in other cultures. The patient had a hard time communicating with the <https://assignbuster.com/communication-across-culture/>

doctor and the doctor had difficult time diagnosing and understanding the patient's symptoms. In order for the situation with communicating with the patient to yield better and accurate results without difficulty, effort should be made to learn the different cultures being dealt with and their impact on conversations. The most important thing to understand and do differently is to always keep in mind that culture counts. It affects our behavior subsequently, our method of communication from the language we use to our mannerisms and gestures.