

# Example of essay on culture

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



Any person, who relocates to a place where the language, behavior, attitudes, and ways of thinking are different from one's own native ethnicity, is bound to have some degree of " culture shock." Culture shock is a set of feelings a person would experience when moved to a new living condition. The feelings may include: confusions, nostalgia, lack of motivation, frustration due to local people's attitudes, paranoiac interpretations about people's behavior, diminished self esteem etc. This concept has much relevance in International Human Resource Management.

Martin Nicole is a practicing architect working in Daffodil Engineering Projects Inc ( DEP), a Chicago based infrastructure design and implementation company. The company recently bagged a couple of multi-million dollar worth projects in China for high rise green buildings, which would house offices and apartments for the high income groups. The mandate from the Chinese counterpart is that the sky scrapers should be sturdy, durable, environment friendly and must have aesthetic value not only in the interiors but also should decorate the skyline of the city (the building must reflect Chinese heritage) from the ground view and from a flight too. The estimated completion of projects is about 28 months and might extend if the company gets other projects. The head Architect is expected to lead the team (mostly consisting of employees from the host country) and complete the project before the stipulated time. The chief technical manager and the HR manager of DEP recommended Nicole's name for heading the design and implementation of the project.

Nicole has successfully designed new generation buildings in North America, especially in the cities of Chicago and Toronto. He also has handled projects

in Portugal and in Spain. But China is presenting a huge challenge because for the company as well as to Martin Nicole, this country is unfamiliar. The HR manager is asked to motivate Nicole, as he is the star performer in the design, to move to China and to help Nicole adjust with the Chinese work culture.

People say and do based on assumptions and values that are invisible and underlying in their psyche. Similarly, people interpret other's behavior based on the meaning they attach to what is observed as non-verbal communication and contextual information. Way back in the year 1965, the then Personnel Manager at IBM, Geert Hofstede, studied cultural differences among nations and proposed cultural dimensions theory. His theory presented four dimensions through which the national cultures can be analyzed: individualism versus collectivism; uncertainty avoidance; power distance (strength of social hierarchy) and masculinity versus femininity (task orientation versus person-orientation). Conduct with people of a nation in their home country need care and preparation, because the semantics, beliefs and values are expressed in symbols, gesture, postures and other non verbal ways and are intangible in nature. A faux pas on symbols, gestures, postures, etc. can spoil the relations and the business as well. There is an opportunity for the HR manager of DEP to apply the theories of intercultural communications in the case of Martin Nicole.

The relocating Architect leader has to be aware of the cultural differences between the US and china. An awareness and a conscious effort will take a long way the adjustment with the Chinese culture. The HR manager does research and provides an awareness session to make Martin Nicole prepared

to take up the assignment in China. Nicole is a normal individual with American values and life style but there are a number of probable professional obstacles and opportunities that Nicole might face while working in China. One is that Nicole prefers to be individualistic; he places higher value on self reliance, and becomes uncomfortable when responsibilities are externally imposed. These characteristics of Nicole are quite normal in the US. The Chinese on the other hand value individual modesty (they disapprove self promotion). For working with host country's people, the architect need to give priority to group goals and must speak in terms of 'we' than 'I'.

Second likely conflict Nicole need to resolve would be his meticulousness in following the agreed rules, norms etc. The Chinese value personal relationships over the rules and regulations. Nicole has to ignore the violations of rules and commitments for the sake of relationships. Keeping harmonious relationships is very important in China. People do not criticize openly or express their concerns to others even if they have to undergo difficulties.

One of the reasons for selecting Nicole for this project is his characteristic of managing time productively. He is reliable and gets his things done on time. Though this is a very positive quality in the US, it can be a source of conflict or be considered as impudent in China. Chinese people attach importance to the past experiences and focus on long term future, while DEP's culture is to think 'what next?' in the near future.

The workplace culture at DEP is almost matching to the typical American culture. All employees interact informally, and treat each others as equals,

not attaching any status to the level of job (example top management, middle management etc). In China, hierarchies, particularly positional and job role related, play an important role in decision making and in determining what jobs one should do and one should not do, irrespective of the capabilities.

There may be countless situations to quote, but if the expatriate understands the gist of the host country's culture and behaves accordingly, the business can flourish. It is very important for the DEP business owners to orient their employees for a global business. Learning about another culture and conforming to other culture does not require the expatriates to abandon their own culture. It merely adds to the competency of the organization or the employee. A multi cultural sensitivity and adjustment is the requirement to be successful in the globalised economy.

## **REFERENCE**

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