

# Avoiding cross cultural miscommunication



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Subject: Avoiding Cross-cultural Miscommunication It has been brought to our attention in Human Resources that our organization will begin international business at the beginning of the new year, which is just less than five months away. There are several negative situations that can occur within our organization due to cross-cultural miscommunication. When cross-cultural communications do not translate as intended, people can take with them a complete different message which can cause costly mistakes.

Sometimes the wrong choice of words will be used and can cause severe embarrassment. If our organization uses poor translators, we could experience some tragic consequences in our business (Daniels, Radebaugh, & Sullivan, 2007). I would like to be proactive in avoiding cross-cultural miscommunication by making some recommendations in cross-cultural communication. However, before I make some recommendations, I would like to discuss cultural awareness. It is important to understand that the key elements that define culture are the learned norms based on attitudes, values, and beliefs of a group of people (Daniels, Radebaugh, & Sullivan, 2007). Ultimately, an organization that does not try to understand these elements will surely fail if they become an international company. Another area a company must avoid or overcome is ethnocentricity. According to The Columbia Encyclopedia (2000), ethnocentrism is the feeling a specific group has about their values and feels that they are superior to those of other groups.

It is quite possible that it can cause an attitude of superiority. If this organization chooses to ignore important factors, thinks that their home-country objectives should be the only objectives that should count, and

thinks that change is easy, we might possibly find ourselves missing out on greater opportunities. Our attitudes, values, customs, and beliefs shape the culture of our organization. At this point, I recommend that we have a third party come into our organization and evaluate our organizational culture and see if it is in alignment with our company goals.

If the study reveals we are not in alignment with our goals, I highly recommend that a new culture be developed and all management and employees be trained in the new adopted culture. There are effective strategies in which our organization can adapt to the culture in our organization. According to an article on alignment and how it works and why it matters in Training Magazine, organizational alignment can only be achieved when our strategic goals and cultural values are consistent with each other. So, if we follow my recommendation and have a study of our organizational culture and if it reveals a need for change, we can hopefully get our organization headed in the same direction. This will allow our organization to increase our profits, our employees' job satisfaction, increase our quality of service, and our long-term success (Tosti, 2010). values in order to operate profitably and successfully. If we try to operate our organization with different norms and values than our employees can adapt to, we will soon find ourselves with a possible high turnover.

For example, our organization should develop a reward program for providing excellent customer service instead of the current nobody cares culture. We need to develop leaders that will shape this culture. We need to make a priority of understanding the norms and values of a desirable and successful organizational culture. When we make this possible, the work attitudes

within our organization will be a respectful one. The other attitudes toward leisure, time, change, family, social mobility and religion will be important to shape our culture, also.

For example, we can form a recreation committee to start planning activities and outings for our employees on a quarterly basis. This could help increase attitudes toward leisure, family, and social mobility. At the same time, we should think about developing a flex time schedule for all employees allowing a flexible start and end work time. Corporate/personal verbal and non-verbal communication has an influence on cultural understanding. If our organization continues to promote that we are an

English only speaking organization, we must strive to walk the talk and speak and write in English only. At the same time, I recommend our training and development department to conduct training classes in verbal and non-verbal communication. We need to ensure that employees understand the different meanings of the words used from each country. This will help with any embarrassments that might be caused by using the wrong words during conversations and presentations. At the same time, training can be provided in the styles of communication we want our organization to practice.

If our organization continues the culture of a closed communication style, I believe that senior leadership will lose out on what employees are accomplishing and feeling. How else will they hear the voices of their most valuable assets? (Whiley ; sons, 2007) Education and technology are both linked to culture in a way that provides intrinsic needs for employees. Our organization can offer work-life programs such as tuition reimbursement

and/or a career development program. This would allow employees to further their education, which will help them in advancement opportunities within our company.

This would help create a culture of career development. The mass media shapes culture, public opinion, marketing and advertising by having a persuasive power over us. The reason they have persuasive power over us is because it is a one-way conversation. This leaves a huge gap between the sender and the receiver. However, the internet has affected one-way communication to some extent by decreasing the control on citizens to communicate to the outside. There are both positive and negative political impacts that can affect our company.