

Intercultural communication in the workplace assignment

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The growth of interdependence of people and nations in the global society of the 21st century has forced us to pay even more attention to intercultural issues. In order to live and function in this multicultural environment as effectively and meaningfully as possible, people must be competent in intercultural communication, which includes verbal and nonverbal communication. Communicating with people from other cultures can be challenging regardless of where one works. At the same time, one's ability to foster successful communication between people of differing cultures will bolster one's success in business and career.

In order to overcome the cultural barriers to effective communication, one must first learn what culture means. Culture is a shared system of symbols, beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations, and norms for behavior. I do have a couple of specific examples to discuss but working in human resources. I have to be sensitive to many different cultures and will focus on the different situations I have encountered. The first instance of intercultural communication that comes to mind is a situation where I was trying to explain a policy to an employee.

The particular employee who is from India originally but has been in the United States for some time yet is difficult to understand with her strong accent. The employee sent me an e-mail with a question regarding the use of annual and sick leave time and the length she would be allowed to be on vacation and sick leave combined. The second part of the question involved the insurance coverage of a treatment she wanted to receive while visiting India called Ayurveda (Ayurveda is a system of medicine that originated in India several thousand years ago).

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The term Arrived combines two Sanskrit words- your, which means life, and Veda, which means science or knowledge. Arrived means “ the science of life). Although this might seem like a simple answer It was not and Involved discussion with her manager and some research to understand what this treatment was all about and if it would be covered. Situations such as this one make it difficult to decide if the best approach is to communicate via e-mail or to attempt to communicate face to face to make sure one understands.

The second situation involves a Package employee who works in our building and is from the Somalia. This person came here as a refugee and speaks very little English yet is always friendly and has a smile on his face. At Characteristic, It was suggested to adopt a Tamely Ana someone suggested patting NV Ana Nils Tamely. I tongue It was a wonderful idea yet the group had individuals who objected and said what about one of our employees! I thought that was very selfish and it should not matter whether it was a Court employee or a Package employee.

However, the decision was made we would not adopt this family through the Court but a group of us decided it as the right thing to do and worked with Catholic Social Services to make it a special Christmas for him and his family after all but did so anonymously. In the first situation I had to do some research to understand what exactly this treatment was for and why she was not receiving the treatment here in the United States. What I learned is the treatment mainly comprises of powders, tablets, and detections, and medicated oils prepared from natural herbs, plants and minerals.

The medicines are from natural sources and not synthetic, they are accepted and assimilated in the body without creating any side effects. Because she was going to be in India visiting family she wanted to take the opportunity to get this treatment from someone she trusted in her own country. I have also learned about the certain comfort zone in this culture as well as weddings can go on for three to four days, which is what she was going there for, and the culture is not good with paperwork.

Had I taken the time to explore her culture or even ask her about it I could have learned this and been able to understand where she was coming from instead of making assumptions and judgments. The result was she was allowed to take her 6 ekes of annual leave but was not able to use sick leave because having the treatment there was a personal choice and the medical insurance would not cover it. Although I thought I was being open to the cultures of others I now recognize that one can take it a step further and take the initiative to learn on my own and ask questions to become educated on the cultures of others.

The second situation which involved adopting the family was also very important and was happy that we went to Catholic Social Services for assistance. The biggest factor in this situation was the employees who wanted to participate in this particular nation could but it would have to be anonymous as opposed to the employees presenting the gifts. I was fine with this approach but we again had others who wanted to be recognized for their contribution and choose not to participate.

Well, what I learned is the reason it had to be done anonymously is because it might cause humiliation and embarrassment to this Package employee if the group presented the gifts for him and his family. The other reason is the Package employee would have felt like he owed those who donated items something and would have created a rudeness for him. All these factors are part of his culture and who he is and I think it would be wrong for anyone to invade those characteristics.

Cultures can differ in several ways that affect communication such as; stability: conditions which may be stable or may be changing either slowly or rapidly; cultures vary in the accessibility of information which can make things more complex; composition: because some cultures are made up of many diverse subcultures and generally the fewer subcultures in ones background, the easier communication is because of the fewer attention differences to consider; Acceptance: cultures carry in his or her attitudes toward outsiders, some can be openly hostile, some have a detached aloofness, and others are very friendly and cooperative with strangers.

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It might be easier said than done but I found the following 10

Commandments to follow when trying to bridge intercultural communication:

- 1) Be aware of differing social values;
- 2) Be aware of differing status humbly and how to demonstrate them;
- 3) Be aware of decision making customs: not all people like to make decisions quickly and efficiently;
- 4) Be aware of concepts of time: not all people like to see time as money;
- 5) Be aware of

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personal space: people from different cultures have different 'comfort zones'; 6) Be aware of cultural context: people from certain cultures (called 'high-context cultures') rely less on verbal communication and more on the context of nonverbal actions and environmental settings to convey meaning.

People from low-context cultures like the USA rely more on verbal communication and less on circumstances and implied meaning to convey meaning; 7) Be aware of body language: learn the basic differences in the way people supplement their words with body movement; 8) Be aware of different etiquette rules or manners: what is polite in one culture may be considered rude in another; 9) Be aware of legal and ethical behavior; 10) Be aware of language barriers: English is the most prevalent language in international business, but a easy mistake to assume that everyone understands it. If one is willing to learn as much as possible about another culture it will enhance ones ability to communicate more effectively with many individuals. I know it can be easy to disregard the cultures of others and think because we are in the United States each person should become accustomed to the way things work here. However, I have to say that approach would be selfish and the reality is we can learn so much from other cultures that might do one some good!