Intercultural Communication for Global Business

How leaders communicate for success

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Contents

Foreword xiv
Preface xvii

PART 1
Foundations of Intercultural Communication **1**

1 Culture in Business Contexts 3

Chapter Overview 3
Learning Objective 4
Key Takeaways 4
Leadership Applications 4
Introduction 4
A Cultural Faux Pas 4
Whose Rules? 5
Our Changing World 6
Why is Culture Important in Business? 7
Globalization and Business 7
Globalization and Society 7
Globalization and Language 8
A Rationale for Culture Learning 12
What is Culture? 12
Cultural Metaphors 15
Significance 16
What We Can Learn 17
Historical Foundations of Intercultural Communication 18
Understanding the Field of Management's "Four Legs" 18
Edward T. Hall 19
Defining "Intercultural," "Cross-Cultural," and "International" 19
Summary 21
Putting Things Into Perspective 21
References 22

Case 1
Wal-Mart in Germany: Corporate Formula Does Not Fit the German Culture 25

PART 2
Self-Awareness in Intercultural Communication 33

2 Cultural Competence for Leaders 35

Chapter Overview 35
Learning Objective 36
Key Takeaways 36
Leadership Applications 36
Introduction 36
What's in a Name? 36
Concerns For More Than Functional Skills 37
Emotional Intelligence and Cultural Intelligence 37
Emotional Intelligence 39
Cultural Intelligence 41
Components of Cultural Intelligence 43
The Cultural Intelligence Model 44
Example of the Model of Cultural Intelligence 47
Ethnocentrism and Enculturation 49
Social Psychology Foundation 49
The "I, We, They" of Ethnocentrism 50
Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity 51
Stages of Intercultural Sensitivity 52
Awareness is Key 53
Unconscious Bias 54
Cultural Sense-Making 54
Framing 56
Making Attributions 56
Selecting a Script 56
Example 56
Critical Incidents 57
Summary 59
References 59

Case 2
Appropriating the Samoan Culture: Another Nike Cultural Faux Pas 61

3 Culture and Identity 71

Chapter Overview 71
Learning Objective 72

Key Takeaways 72
Leadership Applications 72
Introduction 72
Cheerios and Coca-Cola Commercials 72
Individual Identity 73
Who Am I? 73
Social and Cultural Identities 74
Enculturation and Acculturation 74
Salience in Cultural Identity 75
Salience in Social Identities 77
Identity Negotiation 80
Uncertainty-Anxiety Management 82
Group Membership 83
Ethnicity 83
Race 83
The U.S. Census on Race and Ethnicity 86
Latino/a and Hispanic Cultures 87
National Differences in Identity 89
Individual Cultural Identity 92
Summary 93
References 94

Case 3
Cheerios Commercial: Thirty Seconds that Caused 30 Days of Controversy 97

PART 3
Concepts of Intercultural Communication 107

4 Cultural Frameworks and Foundations 109

Chapter Overview 109
Learning Objective 110
Key Takeaways 110
Leadership Applications 110
Introduction 110
Why We Need Cultural Dimensions 111
Understanding Human Values 112
Cultural Dimensions 101 112
Mental Models 113
Hofstede's Six Culture Dimensions 115
Power Distance 115
Individualism and Collectivism 118
Uncertainty Avoidance 123
Masculinity and Femininity 126

Japanese Valentines—a Cross-Cultural Comparison 129
Long-Term/Short-Term Orientation 131
Indulgence and Restraint 133
Challenges to Cultural Dimension Theory 135
Debating Theories 135
Cultural Generalizations 136
Paradoxes of Culture 136
Nomunication 138
Value Trumping 138
Summary 141
References 141

Case 4
Best Buy: Is China Ready for the Big Box? 145

5 Culture and Context in Communication 156

Chapter Overview 156
Learning Objective 157
Key Takeaways 157
Leadership Applications 157
Introduction 157
It is All About Frame of Reference 157
Frame of Reference 158
Miscommunication in International Business Blunders 158
Triangle of Meaning 159
Lost in Translation 161
McDonald's Comeback 163
Context and Communication 165
Edward T. Hall 165
Low-Context Communication 166
High-Context Communication 166
Direct and Indirect Communication 168
Monochronic and Polychronic Time 171
Monochronic 171
Polychronic 173
Space 176
The Cultural Anthropology of Traffic Patterns 177
Summary 178
References 179

Case 5
Target Corporation: The "Urine Sandal" 181

6 Culture and World View 188

Chapter Overview 188
Learning Objective 189
Key Takeaways 189
Leadership Applications 189
Introduction 190
Nike Air Bakin' Goes Up in Flames 190
World View 191
Definition 191
Value Orientations 192
Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck Orientations 192
Examples of Value Orientations 192
Overview of World Religions and Belief Systems 194
Hinduism 195
Buddhism 197
Judaism 197
Christianity 198
Islam 198
Other Religions and Belief Systems 199
Perception and Culture 201
The Science of Perception 201
Culture's Influence on Perception 201
Games of Perception 202
Food and Perception 204
Stereotypes and Mental Representations 205
Definition of Stereotype 205
Prototypes 206
Stereotypes and Generalizations 206
Sophisticated Stereotypes 208
Universalism and Particularism 211
Definitions 211
Example 212
Summary 213
Answers from Beginning of Chapter 214
World Religion Symbols 214
References 214

Case 6
Nike, Inc.: Air Bakin' Blunder and the Council on American-Islamic Relations 216

7 Culture, Cognition, and Reasoning 225

Chapter Overview 225
Learning Objective 226

Key Takeaways 226
Leadership Applications 226
Introduction 226
Neuroscience and Culture 226
Cognition 227
Deductive and Inductive Reasoning 228
Systemic and Linear Perceiving 229
A Case of Linear Versus Systemic Thinking 230
Historical and Philosophical Backgrounds of the East and West 232
Eastern Orientation 234
Western Orientation 241
World View Revisited as Cognitive Themes 244
The Ethno-Semantic Test 244
Examples of Cognition and Reasoning Across Cultures 247
An Indian Perspective 247
Summary 248
References 249

Case 7
Groupon: Advertising at Super Bowl XLV 252

8 Culture and Leadership 263

Chapter Overview 263
Learning Objective 264
Key Takeaways 264
Leadership Applications 264
Introduction 264
Case: What Would You Do? 265
Culture Myth #1 265
Culture Myth #2 266
Culture Myth #3 267
Culture Myth #4 269
The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies 270
GLOBE Study Leadership Styles 271
GLOBE Study Cultural Dimensions 272
GLOBE Study Society Clusters 272
Overcoming the Four Cultural Myths as a Global Leader 280
Using the GLOBE Study 282
Step One Analysis 283
Step Two Analysis 283
Step Three Analysis 284
Step Four Analysis 285
Step Five Analysis 288

Conclusion 289
Model of Cultural Competence Revisited 289
References 295

Case 8
Brew Time: Starbucks in the Indian Market 297

Index 312

Foreword

The field of intercultural communication (IC) has advanced significantly over the past 75 years. In the 1940s through the 1950s, cultural anthropologists Clyde and Florence Kluckhohn and Fred Strodtbeck established criteria which explained societal values that illuminated social interaction styles between people of different cultures, which was useful to IC later on. In the 1950s through the 1970s, Edward T. Hall, another anthropologist, laid the groundwork for the study of IC through his work for the American Foreign Service, producing influential constructs such as high- and low-context cultures and their relative effects on communication, and space and time perceptions in cultures. For the next four decades, scholars from various fields of study such as psychology, linguistics, and training contributed to the developing discipline of IC. A few key figures are: William B. Gudykunst (theorizing about IC), Edward C. Stewart (contrast culture method, American cultural patterns), John C. (Jack) Condon (semantics, communication), Milton Bennett (linguistics, intercultural training), Young-Yun Kim (international negotiation), Stella Ting-Toomey (identity negotiation), Judith. N. Martin (communication), and of course, psychologist Geert Hofstede (cultural dimensions). Cross-cultural psychologists such as Harry Triandis, Hazel Markus, Shinobu Kitayama, and Michael Bond brought additional insights. The study of communication expanded to include scholars who researched the effect of culture on *business* communication.

In the 2000s two influential areas of study contributed to IC and business leadership: cultural intelligence (CQ), first presented by Christopher Earley, Soon Ang, and Linn Van Dyne; and the GLOBE (Global Leadership Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) ten-year study *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations,* by Robert House and others, which brought the importance of IC competence front and center in global business. The GLOBE research project was the first study of its kind, mobilizing nearly 200 social scientists from 62 countries around the world for interviews with over 17,000 employees from almost 1,000 organizations worldwide. The study sought to determine the characteristics of a global leader. As Robert House and his colleagues stated, an outstanding leader is a person in an organization or industry who is

"exceptionally skilled at motivating, influencing, or enabling others or groups to contribute to the success of the organization or task" (House et al., 2004, p. 15). His colleague, Mansour Javidan, extended this definition to: "someone who is able to handle complexity, risk, and ambiguity in a fast-paced and multicultural environment successfully, because he[/she] possesses knowledge about cultural differences and mindfully reflects on behaviors, attitudes, values, and beliefs while interacting with others" (Javidan et al., 2016).

Despite the large body of research in IC and the GLOBE study in leadership, some still ignore the need for cultural knowledge and communication competence in leading global organizations. Because nation states, societies, and individuals are able to interact more easily and rapidly today than ever before, it does *not* mean that people are able to do so more effectively. Communicating successfully with people who are like you is often tricky; however, communicating successfully with people who are different from you is much harder.

Some business people assume knowledge of another culture and competence in IC are becoming irrelevant because we are moving toward a global culture. Evidence suggests that this is quite untrue. In the 21st century alone, at least half a dozen new nations have appeared, after separating from other countries, because their citizens want to retain and nurture their own cultures. Furthermore, populations who have been driven from their own land by war, climate change, and economic pressures and have migrated to new countries, bringing their own cultures with them, need IC skills, as do those who receive them. More than ever, we need to communicate with each other, seek to understand each other, and develop an unprecedented level of competence in recognizing how culture affects everything we think and do, including global leadership. That goes not only for business, but for day-to-day contacts in our lives. To connect successfully, we need knowledge, understanding, and skills.

Intercultural Communication for Global Business challenges both the business student and the business professional to become more culturally competent, what the business community now defines as *culturally intelligent*. This book is both accessible and practical, bringing together theories and concepts in applications of IC. It enables readers to put into practice—immediately—what they read. The reader finds tools to address the inner work that is required of today's global leader, which includes first developing greater awareness of the role of cultures of people who are different, then engaging in reflection about success or failure in interactions, and finally developing skills for interacting successfully and employing them in successful communication behaviors.

This book is about how *you* can develop your own cultural competence both personally and professionally, for successful IC in global leadership.

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