

Impact of National Differences In Work Practices

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ABSTRACT

This paper will describe the results of interviews with individuals representing thirty different countries. The interviews were conducted during 2000 - 2005. Included in the paper are the interviewee's description of the culture of the country as well as work practices. Then, the conclusion of the paper contrasts a representative sample of the interviews with the work practices in the United States with those of the interviewee's country. Suggestions are given relating how expatriates could be successful when entering into a business relationship with individuals from their representative countries.

METHODOLOGY

Interviews

This information was collected from interviews with 100 students or managers residing in the U.S..

In the international world, people often make assumptions and decisions about each other based on things other than verbal communications. These assumptions are in response to the nonverbal communications that most people use within their own culture to communicate. These nonverbal responses can and often do affect the way an individual communicates with someone from another culture. They are crucial to the business world and must be identified by the perspective business person prior to the entry into the host culture before attempting to transact business.

Individuals representing the following countries were interviewed: Bosnia, Brazil, China, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Serbia and Montenegro, Scotland, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Venezuela, Vietnam.

Culture Descriptions (Mainly differences)

The cultural descriptions are written from the standpoint of interviewees from their native homeland. They describe what they see as differences and some similarities that exist between the two countries. Space and time concepts are two cultural differences between Bosnia and the U. S. According to Slobo, AIn Bosnia, we really have a laid back, less hectic, lifestyle than in the States. We don=t always have to rush every where to be on time. Another big difference is space. I think that Serbs like to get a lot closer to one another when we talk. A According to Samovar, Porter, and Stefani, the Bosnian culture can be described as close distance that is on a polychronic time system.

As with Bosnia, Brazil has a slower tempo than one found in many South American cultures. Americans are so used to a fast paced -- get-it-done-now -- mentality that they cannot operate effectively with people who do things more slowly.

Based on the interview, Croats are animated and hand movement during conversations is very commonplace. Time is really important. You do not want to be late at any time. Similar

to the U. S., eye contact is important, casual touching is acceptable in social situations, and men are more dominant in Croatia.

Cultural differences between Germany and the U. S. include the open-minded European dress trends, less concern over religious matters, and perhaps a stronger sense of regional pride.

Work Practices

One example of an interviewee's description of work practices in Greece include the following:

The people of Greece usually work from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. then they break for lunch. After lunch, they take a nap for a couple of hours. In Greece everyone must take a nap in the afternoon. During this part of the day everything closes down including the restaurants. After the nap, they are refreshed and are ready to go back to work until 8 or 9 p.m.

The Greek people feel the American people put too much importance on time and deadlines. In Greece it is important to enjoy life without all of the stress a job can bring. Hence, the Greek philosophy toward work is that nothing is so important that it has to be done right away. In Greece, there are no deadlines so what is not completed one day can be finished the next.

The dress code for business attire is somewhat more relaxed in Greece than in the United States. However, if conducting business in Greece it is appropriate for the United States to wear a business suit; however, be prepared for the Greek to have on a more casual attire such as a skirt for females and loose trousers for males. The women of Greece wear long silk dresses with a chemise or a velvet jacket over their dresses.

In the interview with a Chinese, she highlighted business negotiation skills. Because the Chinese closely research their business partners prior to a meeting, they have an advantage. Secondly, Chinese culture is a high-context one, in which communication takes place largely in nonverbal domains. Verbal messages occupy a small portion of the whole communication. Therefore, one of the reasons it is tough to negotiate in China is the result of ambiguous manners of negotiation, because he/she cannot completely rely on the verbally explicit messages. For instance, even when a Chinese negotiator implies there is no room for compromise, actually he/she is ready to reconcile. In terms of legal aspects of business, Chinese seldom use lawyers. They prefer to use intermediaries. Bribes, which help business run smoothly, are considered proper.

Management differences between Germany and the U. S. do exist. German managers are much more impersonal, they emphasize the need to be credible vs. the need to be liked, and doing

what it takes to win vs. fair play. (Friday). Similarities of course are the importance of punctuality, eye contact, and good posture.

In Guatemala, work hours are from 8 - 12 and 2 - 6. Workers take a longer lunch break than in the United States. People don't think of "Time as Money."

In Guyana, the business environment and work ethics are based on law and social mores. Business decisions are made collectively and rewards are group based. Accepting favors in the spirit of the law is acceptable, however, if one is doing it for illegal gains, it is not acceptable. Attitudes toward work are more relaxed than in the U. S. Guyana is low on power distance. People discourage using power and invoking feelings of inequity on employees.

Impact of Differences

Cultural diversity has become one of the "hot" management topics of the 21st Century. The changing nature of society is being mirrored in all areas of employment. The most dramatic change is seen by the emerging cultural pluralism found in the workplace. To manage effectively, one must communicate effectively, and to communicate effectively, one must understand the cultural underpinnings and biases of the individuals involved. This does not only include a manager's knowledge of the minority culture, but also the knowledge of the white male subculture and biases--and training and educating the individuals involved about the other cultures and their own biases, etc. Culture directly impacts communication, including nonverbal communication. Eye contact, facial expressions, smiles, and frowns are all elements in nonverbal communication. The national traits in relation to body language need to be understood, otherwise difficulties will inevitably arise. In order to effectively communicate with an individual from another culture, one must be aware of, and understand, the cultural differences and how they may impact nonverbal communications and how they may be interpreted.

The world has become small and global in the business community. The average business person no longer deals only with people from his own culture set, but now is conducting business with hundreds of other people from different cultures. In the attempt to assist the business person, there have been some correlations made between culture in an effort to identify the common nonverbal responses that occur within like cultures.

This paper will discuss nonverbal and paralingual communication in ten Hispanic countries, eleven Asian countries, and seven Arabic countries. The discussion will consider seven areas: facial/eye contact; kinesics; appearance; time; space; environment and language. Hopefully after reading this paper, one will have a better understanding how people interact; and, this understanding will help foster better intercultural relations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In today's global economy, businesses need cross-cultural training for expatriates [Shumsky, 1992].

An interview with Santiago Rodriguez, manager of multicultural programs at Apple Computer. Businesses need to define diversity and to develop an environment for people that allows them to express difference. Character of U.S. immigration has changed: Asian and Hispanic, not European. Diversity is also a function of globalization [Gordon, 1992].

It was projected that, by the year 2000, minority consumers would constitute a majority of population in 1/3 of the US' 50 largest

cities. The top 3 minority groups - African-Americans, Hispanics and Asians - represent a \$300 billion market now, according to Deloitte and Touche and Impact Resources. The size and power of the minority market is not reflected in strategic thinking and planning in most businesses. Efforts to provide products and services to minority segments will fail unless businesses know and understand, respect and correctly address minority needs and wants.

Eighty five percent of the new entrants into the U.S. workforce will be minorities, women and immigrants. Prior policies attempted to treat everyone the same--but everyone is not alike, and personnel policies and management techniques must change to deal with the diverse workforce [Allen, 1992].

In a interview with Jose S. Suquet, manager of the Equitable's South Florida Agency and District Manager Alfredo Cepero, he stated marketing and managing a salesforce in a multicultural and multiethnic environment often requires special insight and understanding and sensitivity to customs, jargon, and motivation [Lindenberg, 1991].

Ethnic and racial minority populations in the U.S. will grow at a rate seven times faster than the population as a whole. Communicators are being placed in the position of helping management convey its commitment to the new strategies where cultural diversity is valued and used as a competitive advantage [Williams, 1994].

There will be major shifts in the attitudinal, demographic, social and locational topography in the US of the 21st century. Businesses that understand important subcultures within America will be able to target their products to the cultures, lifestyles, age groups and value perspectives that exist.

Success in cross-cultural negotiations requires an understanding of others and using that understanding to realize what each party wants from the negotiations. Nonverbal communication is the key in all negotiations. One must understand each other's style and accept it and respect the cultural beliefs of others and avoid culturally biased personal mannerisms, etc. Factors to take into account: differences in decision-making; status; protocol; social aspects; perceptions of time; personal relationships [Herbig and Kramer, 1992].

A study examines the similarities and differences in work climate perceptions and level of job satisfaction among Anglo-American and Mexican-American employees [Rubaii-Barrett & Beck, 1993].

A survey of gender and race issues in a federal agency indicate no common culture of organizational life. Different groups have different experiences in the organization and are often unable to see or understand the experiences of others which can also be said of international differences [Fine, et al, 1990].

Asian represents 3% of the population in the U.S., totaling 7.3 million people. They have a purchasing power of more than \$225 billion and are the fastest growing, the most-affluent and the best-educated of all the groups in the U.S. according to the U.S. census.

Without having some knowledge of Asian beliefs and traditions, the likelihood for misunderstanding between people from an Asian culture and people born in the U.S. is immense. In an effort to avoid these culture clashes, businesses in a variety of fields are seeking training from intercultural specialists that can help employee interact better with the Asian population. [Forsberg, 1993].

As stated earlier, the three leading US minority segments - Hispanics, Asians, and African-Americans - make up a nearly \$300 billion market. Many banks are redefining financial marketing

tactics to better bridge the language and lifestyle barriers that often impede relationships with minority communities.

By the end of this decade, Hispanics are expected to be the largest minority in the U.S. A major training issue is communication. Success will depend largely upon credibility of the manager, how the material is presented, and the manager's understanding of the Hispanic culture. For example, Latinos tend to want paternalistic employers--Hispanics are raised in the tradition of authoritarianism, with its emphasis on knowing one's pace, hard work, and self-abnegation [de Forest, 1992].

By the year 2000, blacks and Hispanics will be the dominant populations in nearly 1/3 of the largest cities in the U.S. and will constitute the majority in at least 9 major cities. 20 million Hispanics spend \$367 million daily on goods and services. If current growth patterns continue, multi-ethnic consumer markets will comprise about 30% of the U.S. population in 11 years. Marketers, promoters, and advertisers can design effective ethnic campaigns. Firms can hire ethnic marketers to bridge cultural and communication gaps [Kern-Foxworth, 1991].

One of the cardinal rules in dealing with the Hispanic market is to provide customer service in Spanish. In offices in predominantly Hispanic areas, some 90% of Coral Gables Federal's customer service personnel are Spanish. Many of these offices are likely to have Spanish signs and some Spanish literature.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

For most Asians, it is critically important to develop a personal relationship with a business partner before making an agreement of any significance. Westerners, on the other hand, are compulsive about getting down to business right away, sealing a deal with a written contract, and rushing off to confront the next challenge. Understanding the differences between the individualist cultures of the Western countries and the collectivist cultures of Asia, Eastern Europe and many other parts of the world is one of the secrets to success in today's global economy.

Asian negotiators typically adopt firm bargaining positions and give ground reluctantly. Cultural etiquette can also cause misunderstandings. The following tips can help overcome cultural differences: 1. Start socially, 2. Begin negotiations with a well-prepared overview, 3. Be patient, 4. Maintain harmony, 5. Never underestimate the language barrier, 6. Keep the documentation simple but clear [James, 1992].

As a rule, Asians do not like confrontation. However, a face-off between two squabbling subordinates, supervised by a boss, can often help to achieve a reconciliation. There are six crucial points to bear in mind. First, an executive must be confident that distinctions can be made between substantive and emotional issues. Second, they key to successful intervention is to make subordinates aware of the negative, self-defeating aspects of their interpersonal styles. Third, the executive should try to help the opponents control their conflict, rather than seek to eliminate it. Fourth, two stages of negotiations should be arranged to establish what the differences are and then to reconcile them. Fifth, it is important to be sensitive to differences in rank. Finally, these reconciliation sessions should be held outside the office in a congenial environment [Bedi, 1993].

When East meets West, cultural differences often get in the way of smooth relations. Cross cultural training that teaches the Westerner to understand the Asian's background better can help prevent misunderstandings. What at first may seem strange and exotic becomes familiar-even comfortable-with education. For example, when we learn why certain people do particular things,

we tend to be less apprehensive and more at ease with these people. Learning their cultural languages-that is, their customs, traditions and beliefs-can improve our relationships with them. In today's ethnically diverse business world and global market, learning about individuals who come from different cultural backgrounds is fundamental.

ARABIC COUNTRIES

Decision-making Style, Individualism and Attitudes Toward Risk of Arabic Executives

An extensive review of the literature indicates that there has not been any attempt to empirically link decision-making style to individualism and attitude toward work. The present study focuses primarily on testing instruments that are culturally relevant to Arabic society. Questionnaires were distributed at the Arabic Gulf Management Development Conference. Three scales were used to measure work related attitudes: decision style, individualism and attitude toward risk.

Certain practical and theoretical implications stand out. In the context of decision style, the Arabic preference for consultative practice may indicate that the decision making process takes time and delays change. Western managers and consultants may get frustrated with the ritualistic and consultative practices in which top Arabian executives engage with immediate subordinates and influential members in the organization during the negotiation process. Likewise, traditional [consultative] Arabian executives show dismay when their Western counterparts are not able to make on-site decisions. Multinational firms eager to successfully conclude a business contract in Arabic are advised to send executives who have the power to make decisions. The preference for the pseudo-consultative may have a similar implication to that of the consultative style. It has, however, an important meaning for conducting business--that is, the apparent collision of ideal and practice. Probable consequences are hostility, friction and mistrust among superiors and their subordinates, in addition to disturbance of goal achievement.

In terms of participative preference, several implications can be identified. First, participative managers seem to be hopeful, optimistic and team oriented. This suggests that organizational change and development, utilizing job enrichment and modern design approaches, might appeal to them. Second, in negotiating with Arabic managers, their foreign counterparts should be sensitive to ritual aspects and the Arabics' high need for socialization, but also should show sympathy to Arabic culture and some understanding of the Arabic language. To communicate effectively in Arabic society, one has to fit the thought to the word, rather than the word to the thought. This is because Arabic individuals are infatuated with words. Familiarity with the language, thus, is important not because of its tendency to assertion and exaggeration but for its emotional impact upon users. Furthermore, Arabic negotiators are concession-seeking. Flexibility, therefore, is needed to reach a satisfactory compromise.

Third, in conflict resolution, Arabics tend to appeal to emotions and feelings, and to seek meditation. This point is crucial for understanding the difficulty that Western politicians and businessmen face in dealing with Arabics. Western negotiators pursue a win-lose solution. The Arabics, on the other hand, look for win-win situations where compromise and parity are enhanced. In addition, for Western negotiators, a solution comes only through a critical consideration of issues that are mediated and segmented.

Issues are to be taken up separately and mediated and segmented. For the Arabics, a solution comes through consideration of all issues taken together and integrated through mutual understanding. This often creates a stalemate or collapse of the negotiation. Another complication is related to the Arabic sensitivity to personal order or threat, in conducting business and political affairs. Arabics have a great sense of pride and self-esteem, and tend to resent orders.

Therefore, the basic assumptions and dispositions of Western and Arabic negotiators create formidable obstacles that inhibit the full exploration and development of meaningful and stable economic and political relations between the United States and Arabic countries.

The results of several exploratory studies identify the salient features of Arabic organizations and management, such as over centralization and emphasis on control. However, the results on the leadership style of Arabic managers are conflicting. The invocation of culture to explain both the authoritarian and consultative styles adopted by Arabic managers is unconvincing. This plurality style suggests that factors, other than culture, may be in operation here. Furthermore, these results can be interpreted to support the fact that management styles in these countries vary with situational factors. More in-depth research using larger samples is needed to verify these explanations.

Like other managers all over the world, Arabic managers perform the same functions, i.e., planning, organizing, commanding and controlling. In allocating their time, these managers, however, appear to favor some functions at the expense of others. They agree in general, that planning is one of their basic functions, but they are found to allocate only a minimum of their time and resources to performing this function. Arabic managers spend more time on controlling and commanding.

In spite of the emphasis laid on control and supervision, methods employed in performing these functions are largely traditional. Managers use personal rather than systematic methods of control. Effective supervision and control by Arabic Managers is impeded by cultural factors. The dilemma faced by Saudi public managers is in trying to enforce regulations concerning attendance which conflict with their subordinates' performance of their social obligations.

In decision making, Arabic managers use mainly traditional methods. Seventy three percent of a sample of Kuwaiti managers rely entirely on intuition and personal judgement in making their decisions. One of the major obstacles to effective decision making in Arabic organizations is the paucity of pertinent, reliable and timely information.

Interest in how Arabic managers actually perform their responsibilities was not shared by most researchers who published their findings in English. One exception, namely Badaway [1980], confirms that Arabic managers employees are still subjected to various forms of work-related discrimination and must work harder than their male counterparts to prove the worthiness of their labor. Furthermore, Saudi male supervisors generally prefer male subordinates and the idea of working under a female supervisor or manager is still unthinkable.

There are a number of findings that show a high degree of apathy, low concern for productivity and a strong emphasis on job security among the Arabic employees. Some other characteristics of Arabic employees are: aversion to risk-taking, strong loyalty to supervisors and strong friendship ties.

In terms of organizational structure and work methods and procedures in Arabic organizations, they are characterized by over centralization and the lack of job descriptions and work manuals.

Despite all of that, in some Arabic countries the researchers found the successful introduction of modern information technology.

In conclusion the researchers suggest that Arabic organizations, especially public agencies, exhibit many of these characteristics of modern bureaucracy in developing nations as well as its dysfunctional qualities. One of the undesired consequences of bureaucratic growth is the excessive emphasis laid on control and compliance with rules and regulations. These rigid bureaucratic systems have also shown strong resistance to the introduction of modern management and organization methods and techniques [Atiyyah, 1992].

Multicultural Business Meeting and Presentations: Tips and Taboos

When meeting with other cultures, the most important thing to remember is that each culture approaches things differently. Disagreements of the purpose of a business meeting are based on the cultural value systems of the different countries.

In an American meeting, the focus is on action, while the objective of Japanese business meetings is to gather information about a subject to analyze the data for further action. Arabic meetings are designed to build rapport and trust among the participants. Presentations in the US must be prepared. In Japan, information is presented for group discussion for feedback and additional information, but there is no call for action. In the Arabic countries, detailed background information is given, and a forum is provided for discussion. Arabic presenters use eloquent and elaborate speech to appeal to the audience's emotions [Elashmawin, 1991].

Effectiveness of Management Training in Arabic Countries

Beginning in the 1960s, a heightened interest in management training was observed in most Arabic countries. Unlike in Western industrial countries, private companies in Arabic countries have shown less interest in training than have public organizations.

Management training in Arabic institutes is based on models and practices found in similar institutes in Western industrial countries, in particular the US, the UK, and France. There is a consensus among management training specialists and managers in Arabic countries, that the effectiveness of training in general is low. External constraints as well as internal problems are the major reasons for this low effectiveness. These factors include: 1. lack of rigorous needs assessment,

2. deficiencies in program design and evaluation, 3. excessive reliance on conventional techniques, 4. inadequate training materials and 5. the shortage of qualified trainers. These problems cannot be solved unless the financial and manpower resources of the institutes are significantly increased and attitudes toward training become more appreciative and supportive [Atiyyah, 1991].

People, Proxemics, and Possibilities for Technical Writing

When anthropologist Edward Hall described and compared spatial perceptions of Americans with those of the Japanese, English and Arabics, he found significant differences among the four groups. Yet, a random survey of publications from foreign countries containing articles both in English and in the local languages indicates, at first glance, a strong conformity with the 50-

50 ration of white space to text. For Hall, territoriality is the source of proxemics, the social and personal uses of space. Perceptions of space arises from an individual's basic sense of territoriality. If this is the case, technical writers must review cultural perceptions about space as they work with documents intended for specific national audiences, because there is no single theory of proxemics that can apply to all cultures. Cross-cultural experiences must be, therefore, cultivated when they are exposed in technical writing classes or the workplace [Fisk, 1992].

RESULTS

Understanding "others" value is central to the understanding of nonverbal communication differences. Better understanding of these value differences is currently imperative.

Americans have been able to isolate themselves from other cultures in the past, but no longer do Americans want to nor can do without others. The past immigrant ideal of assimilation led Americans to become arrogant about their values and behavior at the expense of learning who and what they really are and how their culture relates to the other societies of the world. Americans tend to be ignorant of other languages and ways, and worse, too often do not want to learn about them. That ignorance is definitely not bliss.

The Arabic culture is no longer remote from many Americans. Images of Scherazade, Omar Sherif, oil wells, and long garb need to be replaced with the touch of reality. Additionally, the amount and type of contact between Americans and Arabics are growing continuously. Hopefully, better understanding of each other's motivation may help prevent the development of aggravation to the point of violence, or will help alleviate tension and allow Americans to deal with such problem to the satisfaction of all, should problems occur.

The largest distinct cultural group in the U.S. is Hispanic. By the end of this decade, Hispanics are expected to be the largest minority in U.S. industry and commerce. This group includes people from many countries and races, and are therefore not homogeneous. Also, diversity is a function of globalization. Before becoming a global entity, an organization has to confront different cultural issues. NAFTA will have a big impact on U.S. businesses and the expected growth of business with Mexico and South America, etc.

Nonverbal communication similarities and differences of the Hispanic culture group. There are six areas of nonverbal communication which will be considered: facial/eye contact; kinesics; appearance; time; space; environment.

Facial/Eye contact

There is no distinct facial or eye contact in these Hispanic countries: Spain, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, and Venezuela. While eye contact is very important in Chile, Puerto Rico and Suriname.

For example, to look directly at an older person is disrespectful in Spain, but in Suriname, you should bow and look intently more into one's eyes when speaking.

In almost all the Asian countries, there is no distinct facial or eye contact, except in some countries like Cambodia, good eye contact and smiles are considered friendly gestures.

Similar to Asians, there is no distinct facial or eye contact among Arabics. Men and women generally do not maintain eye contact.

Kinesics

In most Hispanic countries, men shake hands or embrace to greet their friends and women kiss each other on the cheek. In Suriname, bowing is part of greeting, too. Handshakes between males and females are acceptable in Spain. All fingers of the hand should wave with palm facing down to beckon. A half inch between thumb and index finger signals someone to wait a moment in Mexico.

It is important to avoid some improper gestures in a foreign country. For example, the American "OK" sign, is an offensive gesture in Brazil. It is not proper to wave to someone with the left hand or use hand gesture to beckon in Chile. Exaggerated hand gestures, pointing at people, and yawning in public are considered impolite in Ecuador. You should avoid indicating people's height with the palm down in Ecuador because it is only used for animals. Items should be passed but not tossed to another person in Mexico. Handshakes in Spain tend to be relaxed, not aggressive or outspoken. Also in Spain, you should not look at an older person directly, it is considered disrespectful. During a meal, hands, not elbows are kept above the table all the time and upon finishing, utensils are laid side by side on the plate.

Bowing is the traditional way to greet among Asians except in Malaysia and Philippines where handshake is used. In Malaysia, people shake hands with both hands, then touch the chests with fingertips. However, handshaking is accepted from foreigner in most of the Asian countries. Beckoning is done with the palm down with all fingers waving in Asian countries. You should take off your shoes when enter someone's house in Cambodia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore or Thailand. Items are offered and received with both hands to show respect. In formal situations, good posture should be maintained to show respect for the host or the speaker.

Do not touch a Cambodian's head, even a child, In Malaysia, objects are generally not passed with the left hand. While sitting, do not point feet toward a Buddha image or any person, it is an insult. Do not shake hands with women unless they extend their hands first. Hugging in public is improper.

People greet differently in Arabian countries. Egyptians shake hands every time they see each other. People bow their heads slightly to greet in Iran, handshakes are customary with men. Handshakes are common between for both men and women in Lebanon. Men kiss each other on the cheek when greeting in Palestine. In Saudi Arabia, there are several forms of greeting, usage depending on the relationship to each other and society. Generally, when a person is accompanied by a woman with a veil, she is not introduced nor is a handshake expected. Objects are passed and received with the right hand or both hands, but NEVER the left hand. Food is eaten with the fingers of the right hand. Bread may be torn with the left, but eaten with the right. It is impolite for the bottom of one's foot to point at another person. Holding hands between friends of the same sex is acceptable in public, however, public displays of affection, among opposite sex, even between married couples, are not acceptable.

Appearance

In Hispanic countries, appearance is important to individuals, people are fashion conscious. They dress nice. Western style

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clothing is acceptable. Proper clothing for each occasion is essential. These countries include Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Spain and Venezuela. There are some distinguished characters in each country though. In Brazil, women do not wear much make-up; people dress more conservatively in Cuba; darker colors are worn often in Ecuador; In Spain, men dress conservatively and women try to be stylish.

Both western style and traditional clothes are worn in Asian countries. Western suits and dresses are worn in the business world, they are the most common in Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan. Traditional clothings are worn in some rural areas or during special occasions and celebrations, such as Sampot and Sarong in Cambodia, Kimono or Wafuku in Japan, Hanbok in Korea, and Sarong or Baju Kurung in Malaysia.

In Egypt, Iran, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and other Muslim Arabic countries, women are covered from their hair to their feet, with only hands and face uncovered. Dresses are formal and conservative in public. Visitors are expected to dress conservatively and tight fit clothing is unacceptable. People dress in European style and dress up frequently in Lebanon. In large cities of Egypt, business representatives wear business suits and modest western style is acceptable for women. Men dress in traditional garb in Iran and long sleeves are required.

Time

Included in time consideration is work days and business hours.

For Hispanic countries, Monday-Friday is the working days for Chile, Colombia, and Suriname. In Brazil and Ecuador, people work five and half days a week, including half a day on Saturday. Business hours for Brazil are 7:30-12:00 & 2:00-6:00, for Chile are 8:00-12:00 & 2:00-6:00, for Colombia are 7:00-12:00 & 2:00-6:00, for Ecuador are 9:00-12:00 & 2:00-6:00, for Mexico are 10:00-2:00 & 4:00-8:00, all with a 2-hour lunch break during the day. While in Puerto Rico and Spain, business hours are 9 to 5.

For Asian countries, working days are seven days a week in Cambodia, six days in Malaysia, five and a half days in Hong Kong and Singapore, five days in China, Japan, Korea, Philippines and Taiwan. Business hours are 9:00-5:00 in Hong Kong, 9:00-1:00 & 3:00-6:00 in Cambodia, 8:00-5:00 or 9:00-6:00 in Japan, China, Korea, Malaysia, 8:30-4:30 in Singapore. However, individuals usually work longer than the normal hours in Japan, Korea and China.

In Arabic countries, one must know the work day and appreciate the differences. For example, in Egypt and Iran, work days are Saturday to Thursday, In Palestine and Saudi Arabia, work days are Saturday to Wednesday. While in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, Monday to Friday are the work days. Business hours also vary. It's 8:00-2:00 & 4:30-7:00pm for Egypt, 8:00-12:00 & 2:00-6:00 for Iran, 8:00-12:00 & 3:00-6:00 in Lebanon, 8:00 to 5:00 p.m. to 9:00p.m. with rest in between for Palestine and 9:00-12:00 & 4:00-8:30 for Saudi Arabia.

Another consideration of time may include promptness. There is less emphasis on promptness in Hispanic countries, people are considered more important. It is even fashionable to be late in Ecuador. However, in Asian countries, being late is generally considered to be rude. People are very aware of time, so they follow strict schedules. Similar to Hispanic countries, people are more relaxed about time in Arabic countries. Visiting is one of the most important pastimes, not visiting for a long period is a sign that the relationship is insignificant.

Space

People are polite in crowds and shoving is considered discourteous in Brazil. People in Chile, Mexico, Puerto Rico stand very close when talking, often touching their friends clothing and moving away is considered an insult. In Spain, there is more concern with resources and space. [Source: Brigham Young University, Dolphin, Jones, Nine-Curt, Rankins and Safadi and Valentine].

In Cambodia, do not touch another person's head, even a child. Shaking hands is not common and embarrass women if offered. In China and Korea, touching among strangers or casual acquaintances, especially between different sexes is considered inappropriate [N,S]. In general, people do not line up for things; crowds will push to enter, pushing and shoving is common and generally not considered impolite because personal space is limited [S]. Conformity, even appearance is particularly distinct in Japan. Characteristic of the rule is generally to act similar to, or in harmony with the crowd. In Malaysia, a person's ancestral background is often important to social status and future opportunities.

Of Arabic countries, distance between members of the same sex is closer than in the U.S. and farther apart for members of the opposite sex. Furthermore, out of respect, there should be proper distance between genders in Iran and women are separated from men when visiting and eating in Saudi Arabia. But in Lebanon and Palestine, personal space is more limited, so people may stand closer in conversation. Social classes play a key role in the society in Egypt.

Environment

For the social and business environment, when one looks at Hispanic countries one finds information about social customs such as gifts, conversation topics and dining habits. For example, in Brazil, you should give a gift to the host/hostess when invited to dinner and avoid personal questions, politics and religion in casual conversations. In Chile, flowers and chocolate are common gifts for host family, and it is important to show interest in someone's family. Light casual conversation precedes business discussions there. It is bad manners to eat food on the street except for ice cream. In Colombia, overeating is impolite, a host may offer helpings but this should be politely refused. In Cuba, when inviting a guest to a restaurant, the host is expected to pay for the meal and midday meal is considered the most important meal. In Mexico and Puerto Rico, both hands are kept above the table at all times and guests do not leave directly after the meal, but stay for conversation or business discussions. It is also inappropriate for adults to eat while walking on the street. In Puerto Rico, to be polite, one often declines a gift or invitation several times before accepting. But gifts are freely given and are unwrapped immediately. In Spain, when you are first invited to someone's home, decline at first as it might only be a polite courtesy, accept only if the host insists. It is polite to send or bring flowers and gifts when visiting.

There are a lot in common within Asian countries, such as, people tend to be formal in their introductions and will use full titles of their guests; Small inexpensive gifts are given to the host/hostess. And open criticism and public disagreement are considered very serious, because it is not considered proper to damage another's reputation; The host will try to refill a guest's bowl/plate with more food until politely refused; And they are very careful to allow others escape from potential embarrassment with dignity; Discussion about the government and politics are usually avoided. Yet there are some slight differences. For example, Japanese

people feel a deep obligation to return favors and gifts. In Korea, how one is greeted depends on one's age and environment standing relative to the greeter. Japanese, Korean and Chinese eat with chopsticks and spoons, and Malays and Indians eat with hands and spoons. In Philippines, a small portion is left on the plate to indicate the person has enough to eat.

It is very important to remember that alcohol is prohibited and should never be given as a gift in Arabic Muslim countries like Egypt, Iran, and Palestine. Muslim also do not eat pork. Gifts of flowers or candy are appropriate when visiting in Iran and Lebanon. In Lebanon, hospitality is a prized tradition and people feel honored to have guests in their homes. The host always prepares and serve guest something to drink and the guest is expected to accept. A word of polite explanation is in order if it is refused. It is also impolite not to try foods that are offered, but a guest can politely refuse more food when enough has been eaten. The meals can last several hours. However, it is not polite to discuss business during a meal. In Palestine, it is important to show respect to all elderly individuals, no matter what social or educational level. You are not expected to visit without invitation there. Saudi Arabians prefer to establish trust and confidence with an individual prior to proceeding with any business. Personal and family honor are important and can easily be offended by any perceived insult of that honor.

Language

Spanish is the official language in all Hispanic countries with the only exception of Brazil where Portuguese is the official language. Brazilians will be offended if deliberately spoken to in Spanish, therefore you should try to speak some Portuguese in Brazil and there. There are four official languages in Spain: Castilian Spanish, the main language, Catalan, Galician, and Basque. English is taught in school and is widely used in Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Spain, and large cities in Mexico. French is also known in Brazil and Spain. Some Indian languages are spoken, too. Such as Quecha in the inland rural areas of Ecuador. There are 100 Indian languages in Mexico. A common way to beckon is a "psst-psst" sound. Family names and titles are used to address older persons and professionals to show respect.

Compared to almost the same official language used in the Hispanic countries, there are large varieties in Asian countries. Khmer is the official language for Cambodia. Standard Chinese, based on Mandarin dialect, is the official language in China. Both Chinese and English are official languages in Hong Kong. Japanese is spoken by Japanese and Korean by Koreans. English and Filipino, which is called Tagalog, are the official languages in Philippines. Malay is the most spoken in Malaysia, but people also speak Chinese, Tamil and English. English, Cantonese, Malaysian, Mandarin are all official languages in Singapore. The official language is Mandarin Chinese for Taiwan, many people also speak Taiwanese. English is the most popular second language for Asian countries if it is not the official language.

A person is addressed by their full name or title of family name, but never just the name in Chinese spoken countries. Similarly, Japanese tend to be formal in their introductions and will use full titles of their guests. Politeness is extremely important in Japan, a direct "no" is seldom given. Japanese also place great worth on non-verbal language or communications. Frankness is considered uncultured in Philippines.

Arabic is the official language of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Palestine and Lebanon. French is another official language of Lebanon. Usual language used in Iran are Persian and Turkish. English and French are used in Business and Education in Egypt.

When greeting strangers, acquaintances, or friends in Arabic countries, it is important to exchange greetings, to inquire about the person's health and family, and in general to make polite small talk before getting down to business. First names are not used unless invited.

[Source: Brigham Young University, Dolphin, Jones, Nine-Curt, Rankins and Safadi and Valentine].

Suggestions for Adapting to Cultures

If the United States businesses want to be successful in negotiations, it is necessary that U. S. negotiators do their homework to have technical competence and non-condescending attitudes throughout the negotiation.

These tips are passed along by Glyn Dowden, who is a director of joint ventures and associated companies for ABB Combustion Engineering Systems. He stressed that first and foremost is the crucial need for training, and the emphasis is on-the-job training of a core of managers/supervisors to add to their existing skills and indoctrinate the Asian workers in quality control and productivity. There are nine tips:

1. Accept the fact that, in Asia, things are accomplished at a slower pace. It should take time to set up successful operations in a developing Asian land. ABB spent years positioning itself favorably in the Indonesian marketplace before opening its Surabaya plant. Dowden feels that it is imperative to initially develop personal relationships, especially to gain access to top government people who can clear away problems, red tape, etc. It is also wise to gain the experience of working with Indonesian at commercial and technical levels before embarking on specific ventures.
2. It is often a good policy to first initiate a smaller manufacturing presence in order to gain credibility for favorable consideration of larger bids. ABB/CE set up and ran the P.T. EST plant before it sought and won a contract, with other partners, to manufacture two 400-megawatt utility steam generating units.
3. Do not go it alone. In many instances, a joint venture with Indonesian and/or other foreign partners is the way to go, especially if the customer is a government agency. Developing nations are also interested in gaining technological competence and a project has a far better chance of approval if technology transfer-your commitment to help the nation develop-is a part of it. ABB/CE not only brought in machinery from its successful U.S. plants, but it trained Indonesians in using it. Its joint venture partners proved valuable in supplying personnel for the plant and in establishing supplier relationships for locally-purchased products.
4. In making an investment in a developing country, ideally pick a product or service that the country urgently needs. With electrification a top Indonesian goal, a plant manufacturing steam generation components for power stations encountered little opposition.

5. Industrial labor costs in Indonesia are substantially lower than in the U.S. Conversely however, an employer may get a lesser-skilled person or one who needs training to enhance skills. At first, doing the job properly may require a longer time or even employment of two people rather than one. ABB/CE solved this, to a larger extent, with its painstaking training programs, which also helped overcome a developing country's typical dearth of middle management.
6. Make a ceremony of a plant's opening. ABB/CE invited government and industrial leaders, the American ambassador, local dignitaries, the press and executives of the joint venture companies and had an impressive, official agenda. A local Muslim religious leader was present to bless the new facility, and the entire work force participated in the opening, its ceremonies and the accompanying feast.
7. Everyone knows that "face" is very important in Asia. Confrontation, especially publicly, is not in the culture. Indonesians, a warm and friendly people, can be offended without your realizing it, such as by openly-negative appraisal of performance. It is best to delicately and obliquely broach a problem issue and permit the Indonesians themselves to study and resolve it.
8. Often, employment of "go-betweens" or intermediaries can help provide solutions to problems. They can be useful in interpreting Indonesians' indirect language signals that may not be easily discerned by Western businessmen. For example, in a contract discussion, does "yes" simply mean they heard a question, or does it mean "we have a deal" or does it mean they are willing to talk further about it? Sometimes, it takes experienced people to interpret what is really meant.
9. U.S. companies that have overseas plants should be interested in new university programs that permit foreign students studying there to work at company facilities here and /or in their home area. The concept-particularly applicable to firms with business interest in Third World countries-entails alternating periods of academic and practical work related to the students' major field of study [Konopacki, 1992].

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