Communicating Across Cultures

Linda Heindl, Regent University
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Culture can be a challenging issue that many business leaders encounter. A business leader does experience the difficulty of understanding and communication of another culture and may easily breach the cultural customs of a foreign country without being educated of this particular culture.

First important cultural issue is stereotyping. When scrutinizing a culture, a business leader must be extremely careful not to stereotype about personality traits once he/she sees. All cultures do have significant personality differences.

Second important cultural issue is that business leaders need to take cultural lessons about that particular foreign country that they wish to do business with. Many cultures have the utmost respect for higher levels of ritual. For example, a Japanese business negotiator may observe long silent pauses (silent communication) when a business leader’s convincing point is being considered.

Third important cultural issue is language issue. Business leaders need to understand the foreign country’s language as well as regional differences that may be too subtle to notice. For example, in some cultures, business transactions can be carried out in non-verbal communication such as nodding to indicate “yes” and shaking heads to indicate “no.” Other problems for language also include slang, idioms, and writing patterns. It can unfortunately produce a cultural shock for business leaders.

Fourth important cultural issue is the foreign country’s local customs and geography that complicate business leaders when interviewing prospective consumers and/or foreign business leaders. For example, in foreign countries, women and children are not allowed to communicate with foreigners.

Many global leaders attempt to bring coaching, mentoring or discipleship models to foreign countries which can be fantastic opportunities once they are readily accessible on all cultural
issues, knowing when and where to get help, becoming increasingly transnational, competent in high technology and be willing to pay the exorbitant cost of education to learn about other foreign countries’ cultures and communication. Tracy says in her book, leaders should “make their conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.”

Leaders need to learn more and more, but have less time to learn it (Goldsmith, et al 2006)! I totally concur with this statement. It is of utmost importance that leaders learn to understand other cultures’ communication to prevent humiliation before making a business transaction whether it is locally, nationally or globally. Once a leader has a universal heart of caring for the people across the globe, it means his/her organization is growing phenomenally because he/she is selling products and services with the customer’s needs in mind.

Thank you,

Linda Heindl
Regent University

References:
A. Books


B. Website

http://princesslah.blogspot.com/