

Effective Global Communication

Is it possible?

International Leadership and Professional
Development

7 ways to improve Global Communications

1. Don't Assume We Are All The Same

When you meet people from cultures other than your own, try to entertain the notion that they might be very different from you in how they perceive life, what they think is important, and how they relate to other people.

Americans spend an inordinate amount of energy, time, and resources on being personally successful

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2. What you think of as normal behavior may only be cultural.

A lot of behavior is universal and doesn't differ from country to country. But not all. Before you think you understand everything about other cultures, consider that you might be mistaken.

A Kiss is not just a Kiss.

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3. Familiar Behavior may have different meanings in different cultures.

Saying Yes.

If I ask an American, “You don’t want to go with me right now do you? You can get two responses - Yes or No

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4. Don't assume that what you meant is what was understood.

You can be sure of what you mean when you say something, but can't be sure how this is understood by someone else. Check for signs that the other person did or did not understand.

So are you down with that?" "Fair Dinkum?"

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5. Don't assume that what you understood is what was meant.

Your understanding is based on your experience of the world. If the other person has a very different set of life experiences, you may not share the same meaning.

“Whatever will be will be.” “I guess it was just not meant to be.”

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6. You don't have to like or approve of "Different" behaviors, but it helps to understand where it come from.

You may never get used to some of the things your guests do, but it can't hurt to try to figure out what they behave in the ways they do.

Texting while doing anything - are they paying attention?

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7. Most people do behave rationally; you just have to discover the rationale.

People of good will from other countries will do things that simply make no sense to us. The fun is in the translation of the intent.

President Obama bowing to King Abdullah. Fealty or Respect

7 Hidden Aspects of Mainstream U.S. Culture

1. American have an imaginary space bubble around them.

Arms length conversations

7 Hidden Aspects of Mainstream U.S. Culture

2. American culture is a “doing” culture.

How are you doing?

Never satisfied

Always tired

7 Hidden Aspects of Mainstream U.S. Culture

3. American culture is a “Low Context” culture.

Contrasting High and Low Context Cultures

▶ High Context

- ▶ Establish social trust first
- ▶ Value personal relations and goodwill
- ▶ Agreement by trust
- ▶ Negotiations slow and ritualistic

Chinese

Korean

Middle East

South East Asia

South and Central America

▶ Low Context

- ▶ Get down to business first
- ▶ Value expertise and performance
- ▶ Agreement by specific, legalistic contract
- ▶ Negotiate as efficiently as possible

United States

Germany

Scandinavia

North America

Great Britain

7 Hidden Aspects of Mainstream U.S. Culture

4. American culture is all about “Individualism”.

Self is most important

Self reliant

Independent

Self-centered

Inconsiderate

7 Hidden Aspects of Mainstream U.S. Culture

5. American culture reflects informality and equality.

Use of first name

Old people are just old people

Class status and privilege - who do they think they are?

7 Hidden Aspects of Mainstream U.S. Culture

6. U.S. culture is a “stair-step” culture vs. a “roller coaster” culture.

The master of your own destiny and the captain of our own fate. Start at bottom

versus

No matter what you do things will just happen the way they were supposed to happen.

المكتوب

7 Hidden Aspects of Mainstream U.S. Culture

7. U.S. culture is very time conscious.

Being punctual is extremely important

Clocks are everywhere

Future oriented

Linear thinking

Proverbs and Culture

- ▶ You can learn much about a culture from their proverbs
 - *“a short pithy saying in general use, stating a general truth or piece of advice.”*

American values through Proverbs

- ▶ God (Allah) helps those who help themselves *Initiative*
- ▶ Cleanliness is next to godliness *Hygiene/Health*
- ▶ A penny saved is a penny earned *Thriftiness*
- ▶ Don't cry over spilled milk *Practicality*
- ▶ Early to bed early to rise *Diligence*
- ▶ A man's home is his castle *Privacy*
- ▶ You've made you bed, now lie in it *Responsibility*
- ▶ Waste not want not *Frugality*
- ▶ Nice guys finish last *Competition*
- ▶ No rest for the wicked *Work Ethic*
- ▶ A stitch in time saves nine *Punctuality*
- ▶ If at first you don't succeed try, try again *Persistence*
- ▶ The squeaky wheel get the grease *Assertiveness*

Values through Proverbs in Different Cultures

- ▶ (Asian) One does not make the wind blow but is blown by it *Guided by fate*
- ▶ (Japan) The nail that stands out gets hit *Nonconformity not good*
- ▶ (Germany) Order is half of life *Organization/ Structure*
- ▶ (Irish) life is a dance not a race *Enjoying life*
- ▶ (Korean) Even if it is a stone bridge make sure it is safe *Cautiousness*
- ▶ (African) A zebra does not despise it's stripes *Acceptance*
- ▶ (Chinese) No need to know the person, only the family *Family*
- ▶ (Indonesia) Empty cans clatter the loudest *Respect*
- ▶ (Turkish) Beauty passes, Wisdom remains *Value of Age*
- ▶ (Asian) The first man to raise his voice loses the argument *Harmony*
- ▶ (Algerian) Women have 2 residences house and tomb *Role of women*
- ▶ (Jewish) Blessed is the one who finds wisdom *Education*
- ▶ (Belgian)The mouth is silent to hear the heart speak *Emotions*

Guide for Successful Communications

- ▶ Read, travel, know people as individuals
- ▶ Two ears one mouth
- ▶ Ask for feedback
- ▶ Learn the non-verbals
- ▶ Check out culture information online
- ▶ Suspend judgement
- ▶ Ask questions
- ▶ Be authentic

Discussion

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