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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN THE GLOBAL WORK PLACE

Imagination of one earth with borderless countries remains a utopian dream. However globalization has left a huge impact across the globe with people crossing boundaries and working in totally unfamiliar cultural terrains. Organizations with their business spreading across the world have welcomed liberalization and globalization with open arms. Each employee walking into an organization brings a new culture creating a multicultural workforce that has to gel together in order to work in harmony. Few cultures due to their demographic closeness readily accept each other while few other under go frictions. Under this scenario business communication basically tends to be intercultural communication that must be effective in order for the business to flourish.

The book "Intercultural Communication in the Global work place" explains the need and methods of developing effective inter cultural communication business skills. It successfully connects business communication and understanding of business priorities with actual business practices. The book has been divided into three parts each containing 3 to 4 chapters. In a very logical flow the authors have started with the basic concept of understanding of culture and its impact on business, it then considers its application to a specific communication task and finally moves on to implications intercultural business communication for the firms operating locally or globally.

Chapter 1 is a glimpse of essential elements of business communication. Culture has been defined as a coherent, learned and shared using an agreed upon symbols to rank important and dictate behavior of the society. It captures the essence of the communication and relates culture with communication.

Major issues related to the use of language in intercultural business communication has been taken in chapter 2. The emphasis is on language barriers, the company's own language, role of

interpreter and communication with nonnative speakers. Business letters format from different cultures' are exhibited to emphasize how culture effect the communication.

Third chapter is an attempt to understand different cultures by means of asking questions many of which are spiritual. As spiritual beliefs of a community has definite role in shaping any culture the chapter deals with concepts of dominance of man over nature, life after death etc.

In order to understand others it is imperative that a man analyzes himself first. Chapter four deals with the way people view themselves and how it affect their business interactions. The difference of east and west lies in the basic foundation of understanding oneself as a unit of the group or individual respectively. Ample examples have been given on how businesses of west need to mould their individualistic nature into community form and vice versa. The differences of opinion of different culture on different issues like gender, age etc as the work force has been dealt in detail. The first part of the book offers a deep insight into understanding of culture based business priorities and their effect on business expansion beyond the boundaries.

Next the authors have focused on organization of business messages in different culture. Direct plan is favoured by result oriented cultures like U.S while indirect plan are preferred by relationship oriented cultures like Asian. Chapter 5 discusses the influence of cultural values and language pattern on the organization business messages.

Although nonverbal signals tend to enhance and support languages, they can minimize or even contradict a verbal communication depending upon the culture one is dealing with. Chapter 6 explains various aspects of nonverbal communication and how they can be misinterpreted in a culture different from our own. Difference of opinion on Issues like hospitality, recognition of performance,

assertiveness etc are elaborated in chapter 7 which shows how appropriate social and business behavior is dependent on cultural orientation of the employee. Business information is culturally defined and it is important that right information be gathered and used at right time in order to achieve business goals.

Chapter 8 examines the Impact of cultural priorities on information gathering, decision making and problem solving. This section is concluded by chapter 9 which explains how to apply the intercultural communication skill to business negotiations.

Third part of the book begins with chapter 10 which explores the legal environment and communication implications for international managers. International firms must consider specific legal system. Dispute settlements, legal issues in labor etc need careful consideration of the cultural diversity of the workforce of the organization.

An International firm must deal with a variety of business structures around the world. As companies expand

internationally their communication need also expands and becomes much complex than domestic firm's requirement. In international firms intercultural communication experts are required at all the levels of hierarchy of the organization. Chapter 11 covers intercultural business communication practices across the organization and the structure of the international firm.

The book is written with an easy logical flow that has taken into consideration the psychology of the communities too while explaining communication. Authors have made the book all the more interesting by following a story telling narration style with each chapter starting with a real world example of cross cultural business and interesting incidences being sprinkled all across the book under the heading of "In Focus".

Excellent case studies given at the end are useful for applying all the analysis studied in earlier chapters.

The book offers an insight to researchers working in the field of intercultural communication and give important tips to people working on a global platform.