

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

Every intensively developing company eventually makes the first appearance in international arena. This can be connected with foreign employees' involvement or products output in the world market, but anyway, it requires the establishment of contacts with foreign colleagues. This work is devoted to some basic principles of efficient cross-cultural interaction.

Keywords: *TPU, culture, cross-cultural coaching, business communication.*

Nowadays we live in a multicultural world and each of us face the need to communicate with people from different regions and countries, especially in huge corporations or universities which are centers of cultural crossing. Cultural factors have long been known to influence the communication and potential success of competition. Cultural awareness shapes how business firms behave in the multicultural international market. It is broadly recognized that cultural factors act as invisible barriers in international business communications. Understanding cultural differences is one of the most significant skills for firms to develop in order to have a competitive advantage in international business.

To answer the question what is so special about cultural differences, we are to understand what the culture is.

Culture is, in the words of E. B. Tylor, «that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society».

In other words culture is a set of basics principles of world perception which are formed almost in the childhood and depends on what traditions and features surround person during his upbringing.

With the culture is more or less clear, next key word is Communication.

Really, communication is the way, how we transmit information to our interlocutor. But the problem is that communication is based on the culture as far as the languages that we use to communicate reflects the world in a certain cultural perspective and ideas we are trying to share have occurred in the result of processing the information received. Culture has a major impact on the way how we think. So, each idea bears the imprint of culture. Therefore, in the process of communication we share not only messages but also particles of culture.

Why is it important to communicate with people? A significant reason is we live in society and in everyday live we need to deal with other people. It's for normal live but for the inner life of the company it's far more important. You just have no way to do your work by yourself. You should work in a team this implies communication. Now we understood the importance let's continue description of communication.

There are two basic ways how people talk to each other: verbal and non-verbal. Verbal way uses language itself: words, sentences, speaking, listening and so on. Non-verbal way is all about using «body language»: gestures, movements, poses and all that stuff. And both of these methods of communication affects culture. As example, such a simple gesture as a nod may be interpret in two opposite ways! At most countries a nod indicates agreement, but not in Bulgaria, where nod means «No». Another strange situation with Okay sign. In English-speaking countries OK means «All correct» and treated as an expression of consent. On the other hand using this gesture in Brazil can have serious consequences because it is interpreted as an insult.

Second way is the verbal one. It deals with written and spoken language. It's very habitual to communicate using words and intonation, and international languages play a significant role in this process. However, there are some challenges in understanding since the language being used passes through the prism of world perception.

The first challenge is the way of thinking. As we found out, the structure of thinking firstly depends on culture, different cultures imply different styles of thinking. Internationals languages don't change the structure of our mind (until they are accustomed). In this case international language acts as an adapter between cultures and there are a lot of problems with adapters. Some discrepancies can't be avoided and it is necessary to sacrifice the subtleties of language in favor of accessibility of information.

Another difficulty is the language itself. The interaction of the plan of content and the plan of expression, which is characteristic for any semiotic system, causes complex phenomena. One of them is homonymy, which particular difficulties of understanding. Homonym is one of two or more words spelled and pronounced alike but different in meaning (as cleave meaning «to cut» and cleave meaning «to adhere» (coincidentally, also antonyms. All this adds much difficulty, especially if the person's level of language is not very high.

An inevitable consequence is culture shock. Culture shock is disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country, a move between social environments, or simply travel to another type of life. One of the most common causes of culture shock involves individuals in a foreign environment. And there is no true way to entirely prevent culture shock, as individuals in any society are personally affected by cultural contrasts differently. If the person has not yet settled into a new environment your task is to help him with it because it is in your interest! Psychologically approved when person feeling good and comfortable it's better for work results. In this case most companies really care about their employees. And comfort means not only pictures and armchairs around but emotional comfort too. Moreover even if a person doesn't surround with convenience stuff but clearly understands the idea of his work and feels like a part of the general deal, like a part of the team, he will work more efficiently!

In addition, culture influences communication as well as communications influences culture. Our life style and thinking patterns changes in process called integration. What can the person do to integrate in a new life faster?

Key of integration is insight of culture. TV shows and newspapers can help you both to understand language better and to know some cultural aspects deeper.

However, it is important to remember that there are two different sides of communication: from your side you do your best, trying to find a common language and integrate in the culture of interlocutor, but from the other, person should make a step towards you. Anyway, communication is the work where everyone has to make efforts to achieve a common goal.

So if you're want to create strong international team you will face this questions: how to make an efficient team out of international merger? How to help teams spanning countries and continents better collaborate? To deal with these issues, many companies are turning to coaches who specialize in helping diverse teams deal with cultural tripwires. Seems like a smart solution, right?

Cross-cultural coaches can help (assuming you've picked a capable one). But one need to keep in mind that the coaching relationship is not culturally neutral and it's prone to the same cultural issues that you're trying to address in the business. In fact, the coaching-client relationship can be equally wrought with cultural tripwires.

First, consider the coach-client dynamics. You might assume that the coach is a knowledgeable and approachable mentor who offers tidbits of wisdom as he or she guides you. That may be the case in the U.S., and perhaps in other Western cultures, but in East Asian cultures, the relationship is often far more hierarchical and less interactive. Coaches distribute knowledge. They don't necessarily engage in a «dialogue» or a «partnership» as is common in the U.S. In fact, if an American coach told an Asian client that she really wants to «learn» from the client, the client might doubt her experience rather than interpret the gesture as an invitation to share perspectives and engage in mutual learning. Second, take a look at how feedback is given in a coaching context. In some cultures – like the U.S. – it's perfectly acceptable to provide critical or challenging feedback to a coach. But in Korea, or China, or Japan or other East Asian cultures, that would be considered highly inappropriate. The same goes with coaches providing critical or corrective feedback to their clients. In the U.S., it's quite typical and, in fact, it's often a critical part of the process, as long as it's provided in constructive manner. In cultures like Germany, the critical feedback is even more direct and doesn't need to be «softened» at all. In contrast, if you're coaching a client from Korea or another culture where direct feedback can cause a loss of face, it can be much trickier to get the message across without inadvertently – and potentially irreparably – damaging the relationship. First, the coaches themselves need to attuned to the fact that the very cultural differences they're helping their clients with can also interfere with the coaching process. Too often coaches are so focused on the «external» – on what the client might be struggling with in his or her work environment – that the dynamics within the coaching relationship gets overlooked.

Second, use the coaching process as an arena for noticing and working with cultural differences. If a client struggles with authority, see how that plays out in the relationship. If the problem is making small talk, use the session as an opportunity to do that as well. The point is that the coaching session itself can and should be an opportunity to both point out cultural differences and to practice developing global dexterity.

Third, make sure that the coaching process itself is understood as valid and legitimate. For some, especially those from Western cultures, there are obvious benefits to the idea of personal skill building. But that's not necessarily the case for others who may feel that it's inappropriate or self-indulgent to focus so directly on enhancing one's own personal welfare. One tactic a colleague of ours who Coaches Koreans uses is to reinterpret the coaching goal through a more collectivistic lens. Instead of framing coaching as an individualistic process of self-improvement, it can be seen as a tool for building relationships and community, which, for some, is a far more palatable goal. Cross-cultural coaching can bring great benefits to your organization but you need to select the right person for the job – an expert who can help clients with their challenges on the job, and also leverage key opportunities within the coaching relationship itself to achieve this objective.

To sum up, we live in such a communicational world. Day after day, we exchange ideas with people. This is particularly important in the company because all of coworkers should join forces to bring their company to success. There are no problems when all raised in one culture and understand each other perfectly. But if they are face to face with different culture and want to communicate effectively, help comes from cross-cultural coacher. Fortunately it's not necessary to know another culture by heart because there are some basic aspects of any cultures. In order to successfully cooperate with people no matter where from they are, better to follow some general principles like politeness and tact. The first thing is to be nice to the person. It will smooth out all the rough edges. Do not take other cultures as something hostile, be friendly and remember both you and your interlocutor are interested in mutually beneficial cooperation!

Thus, even though we live in a multicultural world, we always can find a common language. As the saying goes: if there is a will, there is a way!

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ОСНОВЫ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ КРОСС-КУЛЬТУРНОГО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЯ В ДЕЛОВОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ

Перед каждой активно развивающейся компанией рано или поздно встает вопрос о выходе на международный уровень. Это может быть связано с привлечением иностранных сотрудников или выводом продукции на мировой рынок и требует установления контактов с зарубежными коллегами. Данная работа посвящена изучению основ такого кросс-культурного сотрудничества.

Ключевые слова: ТПУ, культура, кросс-культурный менеджмент, деловая коммуникация.

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TOLERANCE IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

The article is devoted to tolerance in a modern society, which is an essential part of society and plays an important role in the dialogue of cultures and their communication. This issue is highly relevant at the moment, when various extremist, nationalist and fascist views are becoming popular among young people that can lead in the future to terrible consequences, especially in the country like Russia. The objective of this research was to study the term «tolerance», its forms and its role in intercultural communication.

Keywords: tolerance, society, intercultural communication, intolerance, religion, culture.

Introduction

The process of globalization, which takes place in a modern society, implies a transition from a system of relations, which is based on domination and subordination to the system of relations, built on democracy and tolerance. However, as a result of globalization, there is a difficulty in the dialogue of cultures, which is associated with a variety of the world, strengthening of religious beliefs and nationalism. So there is a need for consensus, which involves understanding that the satisfaction of their own interests is possible only under consideration of the interests of others.

Currently, the vast majority of ethnic groups defend their local interests, which are recognized the priority ones over all others. In this situation, extreme tolerance towards members of the group is intolerance to all the others, while the necessary conditions for the survival of the peoples in the modern world is the recognition of the independence and values of each nation and its culture. All this means that the interaction between peoples and cultures can develop when people seek to achieve mutual understanding and conformity, without resorting to violence, suppression of human dignity, and by a dialogue and cooperation.

1. Tolerance and its types

Each of us has ever encountered such a situation, when the behavior of a person of a different nationality, religion or belief seemed to us strange and unacceptable. But do not rush into any inferences about it, you must try to understand and accept a man with his differences. Such people's ability to positively relate to the «otherness» of another is called tolerance.

Tolerance – a sociological term for tolerance to a different worldview, lifestyle, behavior and traditions. Tolerance is not an equivalent to indifference. It also does not mean adopting a philosophy or a way of life, it is to provide others with the right to live according to their own worldview.

In 1995, the UNESCO was announced and approved the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance. According to it, the definition of tolerance is the ability to have patience without aggression, philosophically accepting behavior, thoughts, ways of expression and other people's ways of life.

The main arguments in favor of tolerance and the need to actively combat intolerance has become a frightening increase in xenophobia, Nazism, extremism and other perturbing phenomena of civilized society.

In 1997 the UN General Assembly proposed to conduct an international day of tolerance, as a reminder of the possible threat to the humanity in the case of non-tolerant relations. The World Day of Tolerance is celebrated on the November of 16th.

Based on the active moral position of psychological readiness to interact with people of different cultural environment, it is possible to distinguish the following types:

1. Interpersonal;
2. Intersocial;
3. Inter-ethnic;
4. Interfaith;
5. Intercultural.
- 1.1 Interpersonal tolerance