

INTRODUCTION

Conducting business internationally is a key topic addressed by IOR's intercultural orientation program. Business discussions are not intended to give prescriptive advice on particular issues, but rather to acquaint participants with viewpoints on the challenges of working in a specific international environment, and to highlight some effective strategies for adapting to the differences.

Your challenge in this session, one of several in this program, is to portray your own understanding of the business culture using ideas and examples from your own experiences. This will help participants interpret the culture as they encounter it and help them become more comfortable in both personal and professional interactions in the host country.

Many participants look for the reassurance of similarities between cultures. They want to believe that modern technology and global business have standardized the world and minimized differences. While we recognize that participants need to know that many things will be comfortable and familiar, it is the differences that will pose the greater challenges.

It is more beneficial for participants to gain a sense of differences in behavior and attitude from someone who can share direct experiences. In hearing alternate interpretations of life, they begin to understand that differences are not necessarily right or wrong, but that they can be meaningful.

An honest interchange of personal ideas and experiences regarding the destination culture is a significant opportunity for learning about the international environment.

SESSION PURPOSE

This session should help participants:

1. Increase understanding of how the destination culture's value system impacts business functions and relationships.
2. Identify strategies for adapting business performance to the destination culture.

SESSION STYLE

IOR programs focus on the delivery of information and how the information can be used, providing opportunities during training programs for participants to apply information and synthesize concepts. This is accomplished through interactive learning activities that are facilitated by the IOR trainer. When designing the activities, the trainer will build in ways for you to provide information to the participants. While a presentation format may be required for some topics, whenever possible IOR uses alternatives to presentations.

As a cultural consultant, you are an integral part of this comprehensive training process. You provide much of the information that participants use to prepare for their intercultural interactions. More importantly, they synthesize their own experiences and understanding with your insights to facilitate their personal and professional lives in the new culture.

The IOR trainer will work closely with you. In order to maximize the transfer of your knowledge and experience to the participants, we would like you to focus on providing the content of the session as prompted by the IOR trainer.

IOR Trainer Role:

The IOR Trainer is the overall facilitator of the session. In this capacity, he/she has the following responsibilities:

- Formulate session objectives.
- Brief the consultant before the program by telephone and/or email. The trainer briefs the consultant regarding the session objectives, needs of the participants, consultant role, and necessary preparation.
- Design and facilitate the session activities.
- Evaluate the consultant's work.

Cultural Consultant's Role:

You are primarily an intercultural informant and content expert rather than a "presenter." This includes the following responsibilities:

- Provide information, concepts, ideas, strategies, perspectives, and stories from personal experience.
- Participate in the session activities according to the trainer's design and guidelines.
- Accomplish any necessary pre-program preparation.

Before every program, the responsible IOR trainer will contact you for a program briefing. We look forward to your continued contributions and cooperation.

CULTURALLY INFLUENCED BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

IOR's training programs focus on the core business functions most commonly affected by cultural variants.

NOTE: This is the section of the Training Manual that the trainer will use during the business session. Please consider the differences between origin and destination business cultures with respect to these functions. **The participant will be instructed to choose between 5 to 7 business functions to initiate the discussion.**

CORE BUSINESS FUNCTION	<i>NOTES</i>
<p>Problem Solving Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What problems can be discussed? • How are problems introduced? • What are the procedures for handling problems? • Is the problem the individual's or the team's responsibility? 	
<p>Decision-Making Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the procedures? • Who is involved? • Authoritarian or consensus style? • Is risk a factor? • Direct or indirect? 	
<p>Meeting Style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the format? • What is the purpose: discussion, brainstorm, or approval of prior decision? • How organized? • Formal or informal? • Fixed or adjustable agenda? • Duration: fixed or flexible? • Who participates, and under what rules? 	

CORE BUSINESS FUNCTION	NOTES
<p>Customer Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the dynamics and protocol? • What motivates or influences the relationship? • How is the relationship initiated, established and maintained? • Which is of primary importance, the relationship or business needs? • What is the role of age, status, and reciprocity? 	
<p>Negotiating/Persuading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the procedures? • What are the bargaining/compromise strategies? • Is the philosophy competitive or collaborative? 	
<p>Motivating People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What promotes and reinforces good performance: pay, promotion, power and/or status? • Team or individual? • Independent or interdependent goals? 	
<p>Leadership Style</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the responsibilities as a leader? • Selected or earned status? • Authoritarian or egalitarian/consensus style? • Formal or informal? • Accessible or distant? 	
<p>Performance Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is performance measured and communicated? • How is feedback obtained? • What is the motivation for change? • How is better performance coached? 	

CORE BUSINESS FUNCTION	NOTES
<p>Teamwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the power structure and protocol for interaction among team members, between members and the team leader? • Egalitarian or hierarchical? • Formal or informal? • Explicit or implicit rules? 	
<p>Contracts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are contracts always written? • Intermediate statement of intention or end-point of a process? • Is renegotiation an acceptable practice? • Is it a guide for action or to be fulfilled exactly as written? 	
<p>Conflict Resolution/Disagreement Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is conflict viewed? • What does successful conflict resolution look like? • Is conflict necessary? • Is conflict dealt with directly or through intermediaries? • Who are the winners and losers after a conflict is resolved? • How is bad news communicated? 	
<p>Staff Training/Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are employees expected to be qualified when hired? • Who is responsible for staff development in the organization? • Is on-going staff development a norm? • What kinds of training approaches are used? 	

CORE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS	NOTES
<p>Staff Recruitment and Selection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is initial contact made with the company – via agencies or directly with the company? • What is the recruitment procedure? • What does an effective interview look like? • Are personality testing tools used? • When can a candidate discuss salary and benefits? 	
<p>Superior/Subordinate Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the delegation of tasks viewed? • How closely are subordinates monitored? • What role do supervisor and subordinate play in decision-making? • What does an effective supervisor look like? 	
<p>Presentation Styles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the primary purpose – to inform, persuade or create a relationship? • What is the level of formality? • Content and form: • What is the length? • How much data – graphs, charts, etc.? • What does the overall flow look like? • How is humor used? • What are the key points in a sales presentation? 	