Intercultural Skills for Global Success

IOR *global services*

ADVANCING GLOBAL TALENT

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The ability to navigate successfully across cultures is not a luxury. It is a necessity.

Welcome

Congratulations on your assignment! Whether this is your first time relocating to another country or you are a seasoned expatriate, you are about to embark on an adventure that will change your life and the way you look at the world. Our goal is to provide you with the knowledge, skills, insights and confidence you need to adapt to your new host culture, and to build the personal and professional relationships that will contribute to a successful and rewarding assignment.

Charisse Kosova, Director of Intercultural Training and Development

About IOR

IOR Global Services is a leading provider of global mobility and talent management solutions designed to **advance employee effectiveness across cultures**. Our personal attention to details and problem-solving capabilities provide peace of mind during exciting and uncertain times.

Originally known as International Orientation Resources, the company was founded by Noel Kreicker in 1979 after a "failed" expatriate experience in Bogotá, Colombia. Noel returned from Bogotá determined to make it easier for future international assignees to succeed. IOR began by offering **Destination Services** and **Intercultural Training** programs to expatriates, and soon thereafter added complementary **Language Solutions** services.

As companies of all sizes have become increasingly global in scope, today's business leaders need both international experience and intercultural competence to be successful. Companies are no longer focusing only on avoiding failed assignments, but instead are taking a more forward-looking approach at developing global talent. IOR led the industry by offering a full spectrum of **Global Talent Management** solutions for our clients**.**

Why IOR?

| **35**		**70+**
Years of Industry Leadership		**Countries**
3,200		**99.3%**
Global Consultants		**Recommendation Rate**

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Destination Services

We ease the transition and reduce the challenges and complexity of international relocation through:

- Area Tour/Orientation
- Home Finding
- School Search
- Settling In
- Departure Services

"I got superior support and a very warm and helpful welcome – it was a great experience. I have had other foreign assignments without IOR's service. IOR made it so much quicker and easier!"

Assignee, Global Automotive Manufacturer

Language Solutions
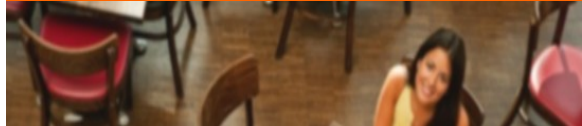
Global business demands that we communicate effectively across languages and cultures. IOR provides:

- Language Training
- Language Training for Groups & Individuals
- Advanced Business Language Coaching
- eLearning

"The smartest thing I did was to learn the language while on assignment. I got access to people I never would have and got a lot done by being able to build strong relationships."

Assignee, Global Industrial Company

Intercultural Training

Employees who have the skills to maneuver fluidly across cultures are more successful in global business. We provide:

- Intercultural Training for Expatriates
- Global Management Training
    - Working Globally
    - Regional Business Briefings
    - Building Intercultural Competence
- Assessment Tools
    - Employee Development & Selection

"It was the most rewarding, enlightening and confidence building two days I have had in a while."

Assignee, Oil and Gas Producer

Global Talent Management
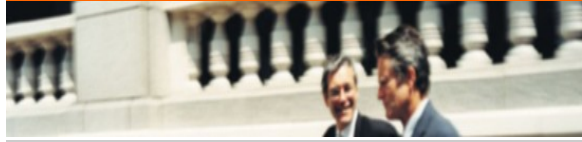
Developing your company's talent is more crucial than ever in today's dynamic innovation economy. IOR supports your investment through:

- Global Leadership Development
- Global Team Building
- M&A Cultural Integration
- Assessment Tools
    - Employee Development & Selection
    - Coaching/Group Learning/Consulting

"It should be a mandatory training for any global manager. We now understand the differences of culture and have adjusted our behaviors and approaches in order to reach high performance."

Director, Medical Component Manufacturer

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CHAPTER 6

IN SUMMARY

APPENDIX

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Chapter 1
Crossing Cultures

Discussion: Where are you now? Where are you going from here?

WHAT ARE YOUR PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES OF CROSSING CULTURES?

What are your immediate concerns?

What are your feelings and mood about this move?

What are your commitments?

What are your personal and professional goals/objectives during the assignment?

What is your attitude toward the assignment?

How motivated are you?

Role Changes?

During an international assignment, each family member will undergo some role changes. The more prepared you are for these changes, the easier the transition will be.

What role changes will you and your family make?

Y o u ?

S p o u s e ?

F a m i l y ?

Role Changes in the Family

Often there are more role changes for the accompanying spouse because, unlike the employee, the spouse will not be entering a structured work environment. Some typical changes are listed below, but this list is by no means complete.

Employee
- Greater travel responsibilities/ less available to the family
- Need to be more supportive and sensitive towards spouse
- Family more dependent on each other, therefore more involved as a unit
- Need for new parenting strategies
- Responsible for staying connected to home office
- Sole breadwinner (if spouse has been working)
- Others?

Spouse
- New responsibilities, often alone in decision-making, food, schools, transportation
- Status differences
- More independence needed; spouse travels more
- Difference in pace, interaction and overall life style
- Isolation, loneliness
- Need for new parenting strategies
- Mute – difficulty speaking the language
- More travel opportunities
- No immediate support group
- No concept of neighborhood
- More entertainment responsibilities
- Develop international circle of friends
- No work visas/loss of career
- Feeling loss as financial contributor/power shift in family
- Opportunities to network with corporate executives, ambassadors, etc.
- Others?

How will these changes affect you personally?

How will they affect your responsibilities?

Have you thought about how you will manage these changes?

W ill the focus of your job be the same in your destination country?

Are you expected to be a cultural change agent?

In what ways might members of the host culture perceive you as a cultural change agent?

WHAT OTHER NEW ROLES WILL YOU BE ASSUMING?

- Intercultural manager

- Teacher of corporate culture and values

- Cultural bridge with home office

- Intercultural parent

- Knowledge transfer

- Facilitator for transfer of technology

- Cultural mediator

- Information gatherer

- Intercultural teacher

- Cultural learner

Adaptation: Who Should Adapt to Whom?

Do as the Romans do?...

Or just be yourself?

Living in a new environment causes people to change. Many times, the change is unconscious. When you begin to encounter situations in which you are feeling pressure to adapt and raise your awareness of the changes that you are making, then you are more consciously able to make decisions about your own adaptation. Being conscious of your feeling of discomfort helps you to manage your responses and choose to react in ways that helps ease your adaptation process.

Try to identify an experience you have had socially or at work that made you feel uncomfortable.

Did you adjust your behavior?

Different perceptions of the same behaviors are caused by cultural value differences...

Cultural value differences can create different perceptions of familiar situations as in these examples:

- **In India,** close monitoring by a supervisor may demonstrate trust and respect because of the value placed on hierarchical relationships between subordinates and supervisors.

- **North Americans** tend to place a higher value on equality in relationships and so interpret close monitoring as distrust.

- **Japanese** tend to perceive the direct expression of opinions as disrespectful because of a high value placed upon indirect communication and face saving.

- The **Dutch** perceive the expression of opinions as respectful because they value direct communication.

How might you manage these differences?

Key Considerations for Adapting Behavior

As we move from one environment to another, we find a strong need to adapt our behavior in order to meet both basic and more complex needs. The range of behaviors varies from minor habits, such as how one eats, to the complexity of building relationships. **Over the course of an extended experience in a new environment, we all change to some degree** and may even bring some changes home.

It is useful to contrast **ADAPTING** with **ADOPTING**, as not all adaptation — behavior change — is a full adoption of local practices. According to the situation, we may **choose** to:

- Modify first-culture behaviors strongly in the direction of the destination culture
- Find an "in-between" way to do something
- Retain our first-culture behaviors and manage or even ignore differences

In every culture, the most important skills we acquire growing up — our acculturation — are those that help us create successful relationships with others. Such relationships are based on mutual trust, comfort and respect. **Perhaps the most difficult part of the adaptation process is recognizing and accepting that different cultures have different ways of building these.**

Under what circumstances might you choose to adopt local behaviors?

Imagine you are moving to a culture where table etiquette is different from your own (for example: eating with your hands or using chopsticks or cutlery in a new way). Would you be able to adopt the new behavior? If you couldn't, how else might you choose to adapt?

Adaptation Restrictions

T here are often circumstances that restrict our ability to adapt and make the process even more challenging. These may include:

1. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Each organization has its own philosophy and value system. In some cultures teamwork means the whole team is equal in status; in other cultures, teams have a hierarchical structure with a clear leader. In order to accomplish work objectives and yield high performance among their employees, multicultural organizations need to be culturally sensitive in recognizing that their value systems and behaviors may be unfamiliar to new employees and, therefore, expectations must be explicitly communicated and changes may need to be negotiated.

2. WORK OBJECTIVES

When people from different cultures meet to conduct business and/or work together, one or both parties will need to adapt their behavior. In some cultures if one wants to make a sale, taking the time to establish a personal relationship is necessary. In other cultures, the focus is on the task and the quick sale. By understanding the culture and differences in motivations, your decision about how to interact will be informed, even if you choose to go against the cultural norm.

3. ESTABLISHMENT OF TRUST

Trust is often communicated quite differently between cultures. In some cultures, the direct expression of a contrary opinion to a supervisor is perceived as positive – it demonstrates trust and respect between supervisor and subordinate. In other cultures, this kind of direct communication would instead be perceived as disrespectful and rude. In order to establish trust, comfort and respect with colleagues from different cultures, sufficient cultural information and understanding are necessary in order to begin the process of forming credible working relationships.

4. PERSONAL/ PROFESSIONAL LIMITATIONS AND BOUNDARIES

Additional factors include one's limits to cultural adaptation. In some cultures, people avoid getting into a personal discussion with someone when entering into business negotiations. It may seem too personal or a waste of time, or "not how we do business at our company!" In other cultures, people may not feel comfortable doing business unless they have exchanged personal information and shared a meal. We quickly become aware of our personal and professional limitations as we encounter uncomfortable situations and have to decide how to adapt.

Deciding Who Should Adapt to Whom and When

During initial cross-cultural interactions, it is almost always the case that someone will be uncomfortable during communication due to differences in expected ways of establishing trust, comfort and respect. **CHOOSING** whether to stay in your own "comfort zone" or allow others to keep theirs depends on:

- Your **GOAL** or desired outcome of the interaction (and whether it is immediate or long-term)

- Your **LIMITATIONS** and **BOUNDARIES** as described above

E X A M P L E   1 :   An expatriate from a culture that places a high value on completing tasks enters a culture that places a greater value on first building relationships. The expatriate determines that it is important to take the time to build relationships even though it feels uncomfortable to be spending time "chatting" or going to lunch or asking about family matters when there is so much work to do. However, the expat knows that moving quickly toward the task will not be the most effective way to earn credibility (establish trust/comfort/respect) with colleagues.

   GOAL: To establish long-term working relationships

Goal

**Considerations
for Adaptation**

Limitations / Boundaries   **Comfort**
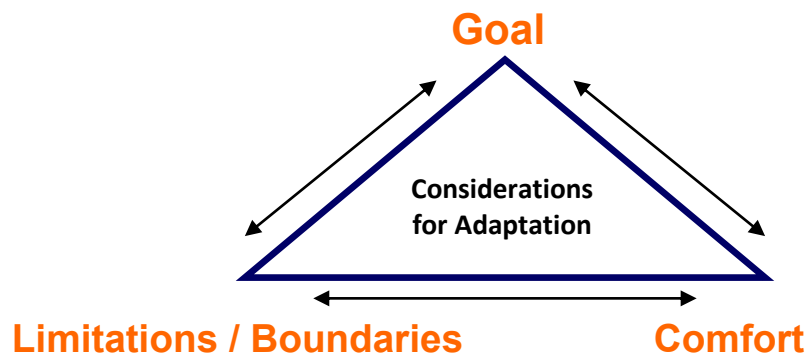
   COMFORT: Given to "other" to meet that goal

   LIMITATION: Feels a strong need to accomplish a task **now**, but suspends that limitation temporarily.

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E X A M P L E   2 :   The same expatriate comes to work a few days into the assignment and receives an email from corporate headquarters demanding that a report be completed that afternoon. In order to complete the report it will be necessary to take employees off other projects and make demands of people he still has not had an opportunity to meet. Here, our expat's desire to give others their comfort is limited by the situation. His goal is now to quickly complete a task, even before building relationships. His limitation is the time demands of headquarters. So he keeps his comfort and pushes ahead. However, if he is aware of the dynamic that this decision creates, he will be better able to manage the responses and pushback he may get from colleagues and subordinates.

> **GOAL:** To complete a report quickly for headquarters

> **COMFORT**: Must keep his task focus and do it "his" way because there's no time for employing another way in this circumstance.

> **LIMITATION:** Need to put headquarters' demands above all else at the moment.

Each situation presents its own unique set of circumstance*s:*

Describe a situation in which you kept your own comfort (or familiar way of approaching a situation) in order to meet a personal or professional goal.

Describe a situation in which you allowed another to keep his/her comfort in order to meet a different or longer-term goal.

Can you identify why you made this decision? Was it a conscious decision? What was the outcome? Would you do it the in the same way next time, or approach it differently?

BECOMING AWARE OF THIS DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IS THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL INTERCULUTRAL ADAPTATION.

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Context Matters

A

daptation: **A Considered Response**

In intercultural adaptation **C O N T E X T   M A T T E R S**

You may not be able to fully consider this now, but by the end of the program you will have the tools to Consider your work objectives/strategy, your flexibility and individual limits in specific situations...

- Learn how trust, respect, and comfort are best established in your destination culture.

- Understand the key value differences between your destination culture and your culture of origin. This will help you better comprehend the meaning of behavioral differences with respect to common situations.

- Evaluate the range of adaptive choices: Adapting closely to local behaviors, continuing with more familiar patterns, or employing another strategy (such as discussing the differences) in order to meet the requirements of the situation.

- Consider the circumstances before making a decision on how to respond, always with the intention of fostering trust, respect, and comfort for all involved, including yourself.

- Later, reflect on your interaction and outcome to learn and quickly improve **intercultural** effectiveness in common situations.

Concepts of Culture

I
t is helpful to envision culture as an iceberg. There is much more mass underneath the surface than is outwardly visible. If you imagine two cultures – each a different iceberg – coming together, you can see that they will inevitably clash invisibly under the surface.

Visible Part of Culture:
The ways people are socialized to behave: what you can see, hear, touch, taste and smell

Clash!

Larger, Less Visible Part of Culture:
Motivational factors for human behavior: what you think, feel and believe
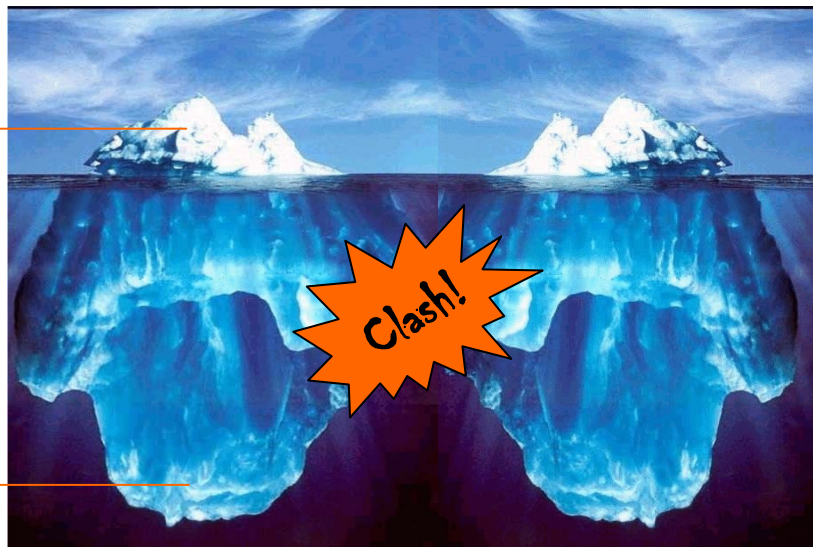
Some working definitions of culture are:

"Culture is the collective software of the mind."   *Geert Hofstede*

"Culture is the learned and shared patterns of beliefs, behaviors, and values of groups of interacting people."   *Milton Bennett*

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To understand where behavior comes from—to understand *why* people behave the way they do—means learning about values and beliefs. The behavior of people from another culture may seem strange to you, but it probably makes sense to them, and vice versa.

The reason any behavior makes sense is simply because it is consistent with what a given person believes in or considers important. Conversely, when we say someone "makes no sense," what we mean is that <u>the action contradicts what we would expect in that situation.</u>

C ulture **shapes and develops us...**

1. Culture gives us the—mostly unwritten—rules for life.
2. Everything we think, feel and do is shaped by culture.
3. Culture tells us how to behave in ways that are acceptable to our group.

Give some examples of the "rules" of your culture.

Give some examples of the "rules" of your corporate culture.

One culture's common sense may not be so "common" in another.

Cultural Perceptions

Meaning formation and the perception of reality are socially constructed.

Perception = Reality

USA = Pest

China = Pet

Thailand = Appetizer

.

"We don't see things the way they are –

We see things the way we are."

Anaïs Nin

Perception is culturally relative: **certain symbols, behaviors, or objects may be quite meaningfully visible to members of culture A, but quite "invisible" to the members of culture B.**

- To eat in Germany using a fork only, or in the Middle East with the left hand, may be viewed as "uncivilized."

- The tendency to launch quickly into business before spending time building a personal relationship may be viewed as considerate and efficient in the U.S., but self-centered, insensitive and impersonal in Latin cultures.

Give an example of a time when your behavior was perceived differently than you had intended. Were you surprised that your actions or communication were misunderstood?

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Cultural Generalizations

Common beliefs and values of two cultures, shown as bell curves

Central Values

Culture A

Culture B

Overlapping Values of Culture A & B

Marginal Values

Marginal Values

Norms and Values
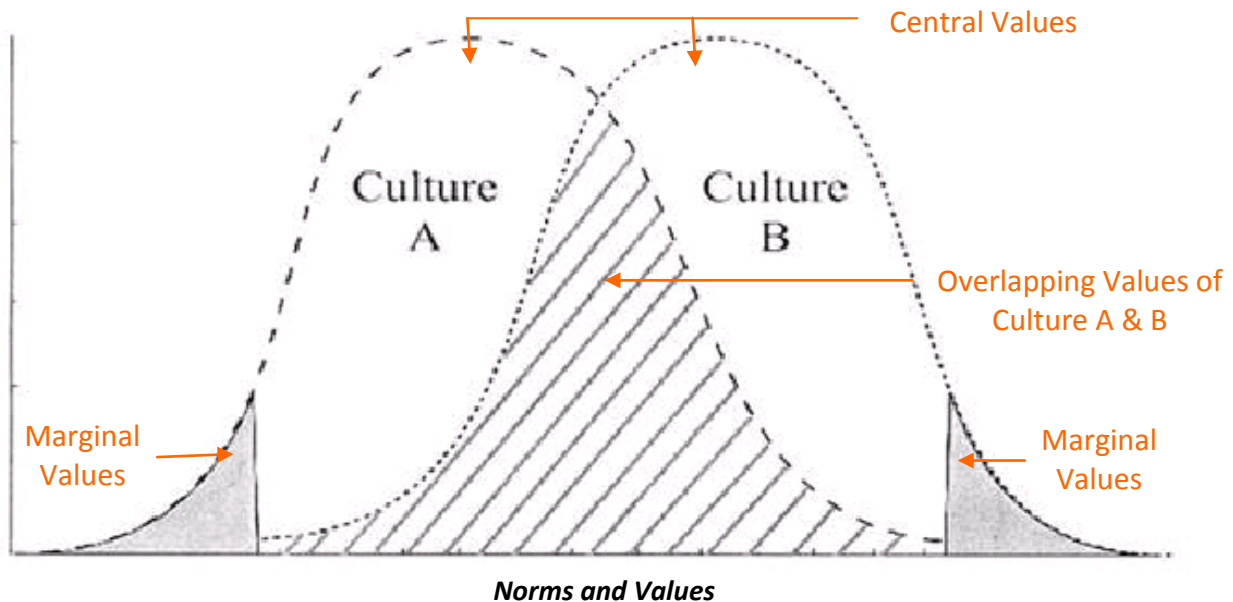
Adapted from: Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner: *Riding the Waves of Culture* (2nd edition)

Point to consider: Values that are marginal in one culture may be more central in another culture.

Cultures can be distinguished on various levels of analysis such as: national, regional, ethnic, generational, social, and organizational.. Each of these has its own value preferences. People may be members of more than one of these groups and influenced in different situations by different value sets.

Where do you find yourself on this curve?

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Stereotypes vs. Generalizations

S tereotypes...

- Rigid, fixed
- Oversimplified
- Put people in a box
- Negative

Example: "All Americans are self-centered and don't care about others."

Stereotyping is thinking and acting as if all members of a particular group are the same. Stereotypes are broad judgments based on culturally-influenced perceptions.

Stereotyping occurs when one expresses unexamined, pre-existing – often negative – notions of a particular group: What other people do is perceived as "impolite," "strange," "crazy," or "inferior."

G eneralizations...

- Fluid, flexible
- Tentative language
- Allow for individual differences
- Backed by research

Example: "Americans tend to be individualistic and task-oriented."

Generalizing about common cultural characteristics is necessary in order to make useful observations and comparisons about culture.

While there are "norms" which describe *generally* how members of a given group or culture think, communicate, or act, there is also considerable *variation* in these norms among individuals that can change over time.

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We See the World Through the Lens of Our Culture

Humans are social animals...

Question: **To what extent do you conform to the social values of your culture?**

- We tend to adopt the values, beliefs, prejudices, and attitudes of our group.
- We exist within the group and conform to its rules.
- The "rules" evolve as people interact with their environment.

yet we are each unique.

Cultural background...

shapes our experiences
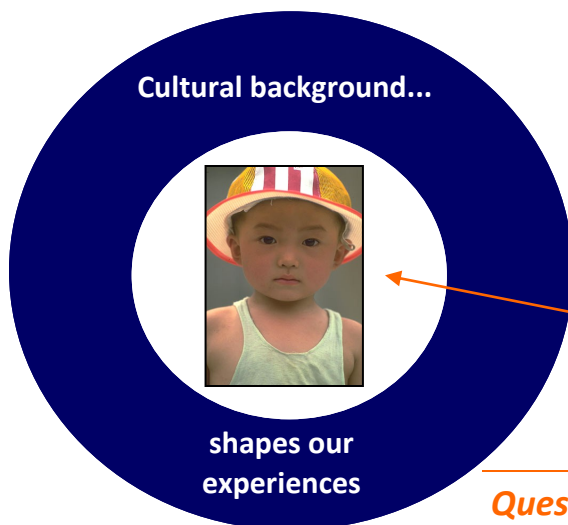
- We each develop our unique personality through our personal processing of our life experience.
- However, we also exist within a group and are molded by the group.

Personality: this is unique and individual

Question: **How do we become aware of the "rules" of our culture?**

T

he influences of **birth culture...**

The culture we are born into shapes and develops the viewpoint that we have of our world. Culture is also the filter through which we see the world.

Question: *How does language filter experiences? Can you give some examples?*

C

ulture **shapes and develops** us...

Culture gives us the rules of the game of life. Everything we do is shaped by our culture. For example, culture tells us

- What to eat
- What not to eat
- When to eat
- How to eat
- How not to eat

Question: *How might your eating habits change in your host culture?*

Worksheet: Priorities of Cultural Values

Working from the list, try to rank the values in terms of what you consider the most important and the least important values to you.

Cultural Values List

Self Reliance

Obligation/Duty

Work

Happiness

Relationships

Group Consensus

Politeness

Freedom

Saving Face

Assertiveness

Family

Equality

Risk Taking

Time

Group Harmony

Acceptance/Humility

Privacy

Seniority/Formality

Material Success

Spirituality

Most Important Values
(Ranked 1—5)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Least Important Values
(Ranked 1—5)

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Questions:

To what extent do your MOST IMPORTANT VALUES reflect the culture and behavior of the people of your home country?

To what extent do your LEAST IMPORTANT VALUES reflect the culture and behavior of the people of your home country?

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Critical Incidents

Critical incidents are short encounters in which individuals from different cultures interact. They provide an opportunity for learning and analysis. Although apparently pursuing a common goal, the interacting parties become uncomfortable and fail to accomplish their purpose. This is due to mutual misinterpretations as well as different understandings of roles and relationships. They often highlight specific values differences. In this situation, different assumptions about hierarchy, individualism, taking initiative, and assumptions about the role of a supervisor become evident.

Sample: A Supervisor and a subordinate

Mr. M is on an international assignment. His subordinate Mr. Z, who is from the host culture, has just walked into M's office. They have not spent much time together, and this is one of their first interactions.

Z: Did you want to see me Mr. M?

M: Yes Z, come in. It's about that report we discussed. How long will it take you to finish?

Z: (surprised) I don't know Mr. M...mmm... Do you think...uh...?

M: (exasperated) No Z. You are really in the best position to analyze the time requirements.

Z: (tentatively) Well, let's say ten days...

M: Ten days... OK... let's say 15, alright? Then it's agreed. Let me know if you need anything.

Z: Yes, Mr. M.

15 days later - M has not seen much of Z.

M: Well Z, where is that report?

Z: It will be ready tomorrow.

M: (frustrated) Tomorrow?! But we agreed it would be ready today.

Your trainer will introduce a critical incident that illustrates values specific to your host country culture.

Some useful questions about the scenario:

What happened?

What did the characters say or do?

What contradictory assumptions are being made?

What is happening?	Why is it happening?		What could have been done differently?
What are the various behaviors that are occurring?	Values of Culture 1?	Values of Culture 2?	Strategies?

As we continue to look at specific cultural beliefs and values, you will gain a deeper understanding of how to analyze such situations.

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Continua of Cultural Values and Characteristics

People throughout the world have different sets of values, attitudes and assumptions about life. Social scientists use polar dimensions to help us understand the differences. Values are neither good nor bad, but there is always tension between the two poles. Another's behavior can feel "wrong" when that person's value differs from your own along any given dimension. Below is a partial list of dimensions that help explain cultural difference. Your trainer may choose to introduce additional dimensions that highlight differences between your home and host culture.

Can you identify any tensions between your home and host cultures?

Left Pole		Right Pole	Category
Task Getting things done can be achieved before establishing relationships		**Relationship** Things get done when the right relationships are in place	**Relating**
Explicit Meaning is stated directly. Say what you mean, and mean what you say		**Implicit** Meaning often must be inferred from both what is said and what is not said	
Individual Me before we		**Group** We before me	
Risk Taking Make change happen; act decisively. New is good.		**Risk Avoiding** Avoid change. Steady, but sure. Stress continuity.	**Regulating**
Tight Be punctual; control time; time is money		**Loose** Be Flexible, go with the flow. Things will happen in their own time.	
Shared Power and authority is distributed within the group		**Concentrated** Power and authority is focused on specific people within the group	
Linear Analytical, step-by-step process toward solutions		**Circular** Focus on exploring & integrating perspectives in a less unstructured way	**Reasoning**
Facts Emphasis on data and concrete experiences		**Thinking** Emphasis on reasoning, concepts and data	
Simple Reduce to basics. Focus on essentials with little context.		**Complex** Focus on developing a detailed, contextual understanding	

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The TMA World Prism
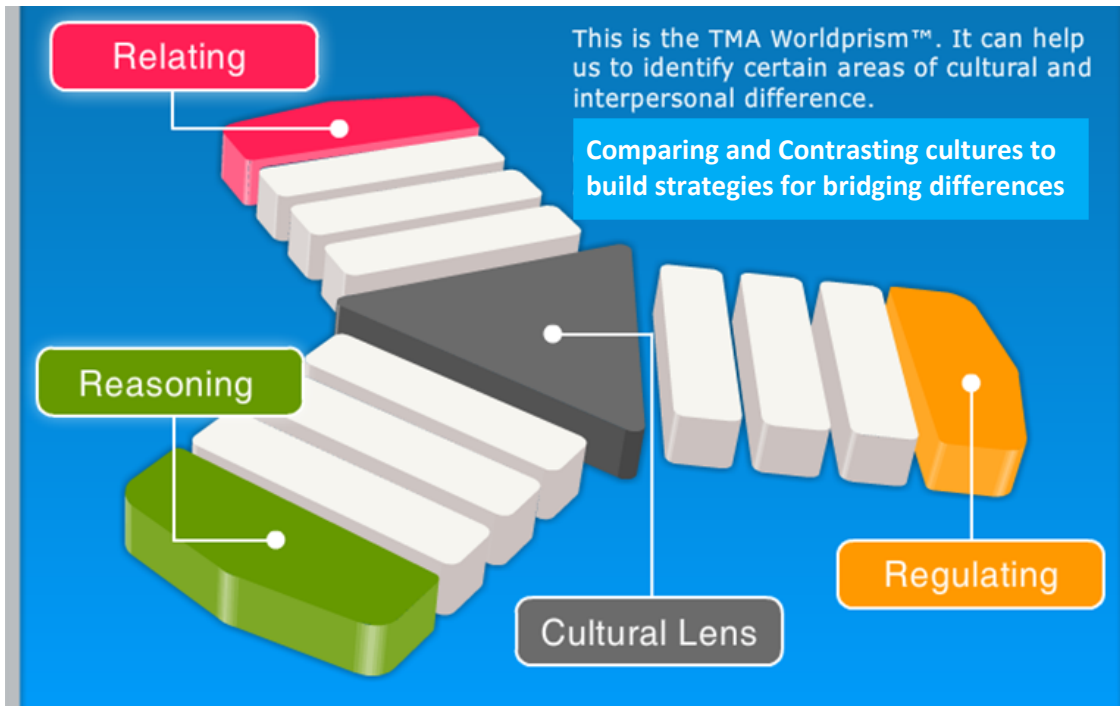
Cultural Lens: *History, geography, religion, language*

Relating:
The way we communicate with others
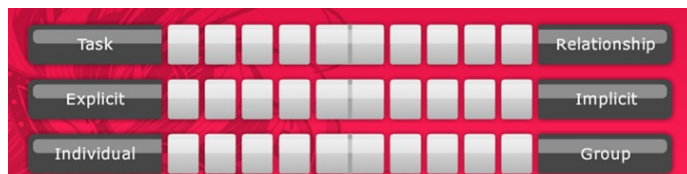
Regulating:
The way individuals approach processes and tasks

Reasoning:
Culturally developed ways of approaching decisions

Are You More Motivated by Task or Relationship?

G etting the job done: **Task Oriented**

Tasks and data drive the business; goals are achieved; timelines are valued.

What you know gets the job done. Focus on task supports a positive working relationship.

- Do you put work first?
- Do you live to work?

How does the host culture function?

Will this present challenges?

If so, what will you do to overcome them?

G etting the job done: **Relationship Focused**

Tasks are accomplished through relationships.

Who you know gets the job done. Establishing a relationship first is necessary to get the job done.

- How important are relationships and people in your life?
- Do you work to live?

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How do you communicate?

C ommunication style: **Explicit**

Meaning is stated directly. "Say what you mean and mean what you say."

Does honesty mean simply stating the facts?

Do you believe that communication is based on what is said rather than on *how* it is said?

Where does the host country fit?

Will this present challenges?

How will you be challenged?

C ommunication style: **Implicit**

Meaning is both in the verbal and non-verbal messages. Consideration given to both what is said and what is *not* said.

Does honesty mean delivering the facts in a way that maintains harmony in the relationship?

Do you look for meaning in body language, tone, silence and other non-verbal messages in addition to what is said?

How Do You See Yourself?

P
erception of self: **Individual**

Self perceived as an individual with limited responsibility to the group.

Do you value self-reliance and independence?

Do you stand "on your own feet"?

Are you responsible for your own actions?

Where does the host country fit?

Will this present challenges?

How will you be challenged?

P
erception of self: **Group Member**

Self identity based on the membership of a cultural group, family or work group.

Do you feel a strong tie to your group or family?

Do you prefer to work with others rather than working alone?

Do you have a large extended family and close family ties?

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Risk-taking or Risk-avoiding?

Accept change: Risk-taking

In cultures that tolerate more ambiguity, freedom to address or make change is encouraged.

- Tendency to try out new things and to embrace change
- Brainstorming is common
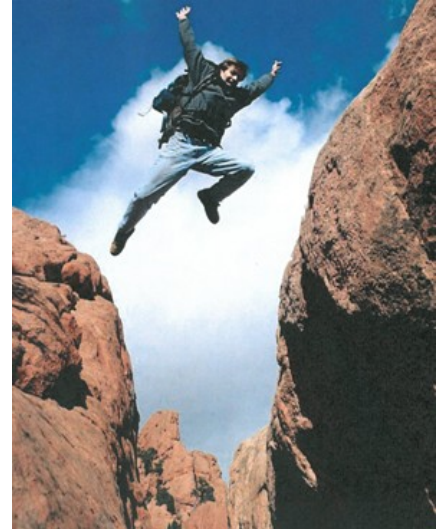
How is ambiguity and change viewed in the host culture?

How is it different from your culture?

Resist change: Risk-avoiding

In cultures that have a preference for certainty, attempting to make life predictable is important.

- Only familiar risks are taken
- Tendency towards perfectionism (experts are valued)

What Does Time Mean to You?

Our perception and management of time affects how we interact with others, how we plan, coordinate and execute activities.

Regulating Time: Tight

In some cultures, time is treated as a commodity that is not to be wasted. It is conceptualized as a straight line starting in the past and running into the future. People view time in a sequential manner and tend to do "one thing at a time." They are mostly short-term oriented.

How do you view and manage time?

How is it viewed and managed in your host culture?

- **Quick results are expected**
- **"Time is money"**
- **Desire for immediate gratification**
- **Live by the clock**
- **Considers precedence**
- **Analytic thinking**
- **Single focus**

Regulating Time: Loose

In some cultures, **time is perceived to be plentiful and has little structure.** It is intangible and only exists in relation to events. You may perceive time as rhythmic cycles. Cultures that view time in a cyclical manner tend to do several things synchronously. Priorities are seen in context and can be re-ordered as needed. These cultures can be either short-term or long-term oriented.

"Time is not passing; it is waiting for you."

O.B. Jenkins

- **Lower sense of urgency**
- **Time is plentiful**
- **Relationship oriented**
- **Perseverance**
- **Considers current context**
- **Synthetic thinking**
- **Multi-focus**

Sources: Hofstede, Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, Hall

A Survey of Time Orientation

Culture	Time Orientation	Questions to Ask
TIGHT • Nordic and German European • North America • Japan **MODERATELY TIGHT** • Australia / New Zealand • Eastern Europe • Southern Europe • Singapore • Hong Kong / Taiwan, China / South Korea **LOOSE** • The Arab World • Africa • Latin America • South and Southeast Asia	**TIGHT** Focus on one goal or activity at a time; precise scheduling ↑ ↓ **LOOSE** Focus on more than one goal or activity at a time; flexible scheduling	How do you operate? What is the time orientation most generally found in the destination country? Will you need to adapt? What new strategies could you develop? Examples?

Something to keep in mind…

Cultures change, slowly, but sometimes perceptibly, and particularly from the influence of modernization and participation in global business. Some examples:

- In Edward T. Hall's original work on **Japan** in the 1960's he described it as polychronic (loose), whereas today the urban Japanese are nearly as monochronic (tight) as the Swiss or Germans.

- **Singapore**, was also loose in those days, but now has a moderately exact business culture.

National cultures are not uniform; urban culture can differ from rural, north from south, costal from inland, etc.:

- In **Brazil**, Rio de Janeiro has a very loose sense of time, whereas São Paulo, the hub of Brazilian business, favors tighter time.

- The megacities of coastal **China**, such as Shanghai, have tighter time than the large inland cities.

- Northern **Italy** is tight while southern Italy is looser.

Adapted from *Cross-Cultural Business Behavior*, Richard R. Gesteland

IOR

How Much Hierarchy do you prefer?

F
ocused power: **Concentrated**

In hierarchical societies, status is well defined and clearly indicated by formal behavioral rules. There is acceptance of the necessity of layers of authority that are concentrated with specific individuals.

- Group, family, privilege, and order are determinants of rank and are "fixed".
- Certain protocols are required for interactions with those above and below.

How does the host culture view status and societal structure?

D
istributed authority: **Shared**

In egalitarian societies, status difference is less visible and interaction across levels is less formal.

- Initiative is valued and rewarded.
- Authority is shared and distributed
- Interactions above and below one's status level are generally acceptable.

How do you find solutions?

A
nalytical approach: **Linear**

Cultures that prefer a linear approach to finding solutions and to decision-making are action-oriented, base decisions on facts and take a step-by-step approach as they move forward. There is not lengthy discussion or introduction of tangential ideas and other considerations.

Do you prefer a step-by-step approach to finding solutions?

Or do you prefer to consider ideas in a relatively unstructured manner until solutions arise?

What challenges might individuals from cultures that differ on this dimensions encounter when working together?

U
nstructured approach: **Circular**

The circular approach focuses on exploring and integrating perspectives from many different angles in a relatively unstructured way. Intellectual discussion and debate is encouraged and tangential thoughts and insights are considered critical to the process.

What guides your actions?

E mphasis on data: **Facts**

In cultures that emphasize reasoning through facts, the focus is on data collection, facts, and concrete experiences. Documented past experiences are more important than general principles.

Do you have a preference for collecting data and facts or on reasoning and conceptual understanding?

E mphasis on reasoning: **Thinking**

Cultures that are guided by a thinking approach do not focus as heavily on empirical evidence. More emphasis is put on developing a logical, coherent framework for guiding action.

How much context is needed for decision-making?

S
tick to the basics: **Simple**

Issues are reduced to manageable proportions in order to save time and promote action.

- Are results more important than the process?
- Can one process for decision-making fit most contexts?
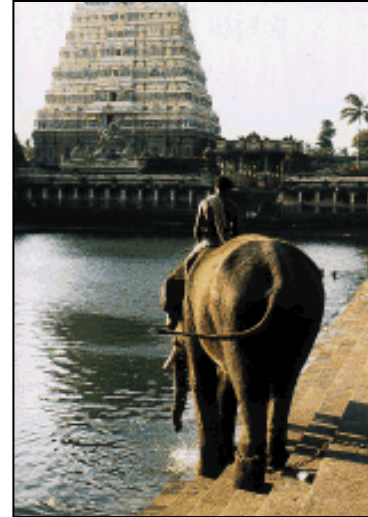
What is the situation in the host culture?

Is this different from how one views rules and regulations in your culture?

C
onsider context: **Complex**

Problems are explored in detail and ideas are in a way that takes multiple angles into consideration.

- To what extent does context and relationship influence decision-making?
- Do you think the decision-making process influences the outcome?

IOR

Chapter 3
Communication Across Cultures

An introduction to Intercultural Communication

"The essence of effective cross-cultural communication has more to do with releasing the right responses than with sending the 'right message'."

Cultural anthropologist and former advisor to the U.S. State Department,
Edward T. Hall

Most messages that people send have cultural content. Intercultural communication happens when our cultural group membership affects our communication. Different meaning attribution of the same message causes misunderstanding and often conflict. Understanding the other culture's perception of what was said is important to intercultural competence.

"I know that you believe you understand what it is you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."

How Do You Communicate?

There are several dimensions of communication that, when added up, result in a cultural communication style. Upon first glance, it appears that behavior within these dimensions depends upon individual preference. While there are always individual variations, these dimensions are strongly influenced by cultural background and there are definite cultural patterns.

TOPICS OF CONVERSATION

- What topics do people discuss?
- Do people like in-depth discussions or not?
- What do people talk about upon first meeting?

SELF-DISCLOSURE

- How much personal information and how soon in a relationship do people disclose personal information?
- To what extent do you share personal information in the workplace?

COMMUNICATING DISAGREEMENT AND AGREEMENT

- Direct or indirect, and in which situations?
- How do people show disagreement?
- How do people say "no"?

EXPRESSIONS OF EMOTIONS

- To what extent and how soon in a relationship do people openly express emotions?

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

- What kind of significant gesturing goes on?
- How is space handled?
- What is the nature of eye contact?
- How is silence used or not?
- What are conversational patterns? (overlapping, length of pause between speakers etc.)

Direct or Indirect?

I

ndirect Communication

Communication is **INDIRECT** with many non-verbal cues.

The **CONTEXT** in which the message is conveyed contains a large part of the meaning.

Indirect communicators pay attention to the concept of face and to maintaining harmony.

"Tatemae/Honne"*
Japanese non-verbal concept of honesty

*Tatemae = surface conversation
Honne = how someone really feels

What is your preferred style?

How does it change with context?

How might this change in the destination culture?

How will you manage the differences?

How will communication style impact remote communication?

D

irect Communication

Communication is **DIRECT** and to the point.

Little attention is given to non-verbal cues, face and harmony.

"Can I be honest with you?"
U.S. concept of "straight talk"

IOR

Emotionally Expressive or Restrained?

E motionally Expressive

Emotions are an indicator of the importance of the matter.

Trust and emotional commitment are developed and credibility established through emotions.

What is your preferred style?
How does it change with context?
How might this change in the destination culture?
Will you need to adapt? If so, how?
How will the degree of emotional expressiveness impact remote communication?

E motionally Restrained

Emotions are discredited as unprofessional.

Trust and credibility are developed through emotional suppression.

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Communication Styles in Conflict

Communication style is learned during socialization in a cultural community. Communication style is adaptable to the environment. We do not always communicate disagreement in our preferred style. The more a disagreement touches on deep-seated values, the more we retreat to our preferred communication style.

DIRECT

Discussion Style
Direct and emotionally restrained

- Verbally direct approach

- "Say what you mean: mean what you say"

- Perception that emotion gets in the way of communication

- Direct disagreement is comfortable and personal feelings are set aside

Engagement
Direct and emotionally expressive

- Emotionally expressive "confrontational" approach

- Expression of emotion shows sincerity

- Lack of emotion seen as disinterest

- Disagreement directly addressed with emotion

INDIRECT

Accommodation
Indirect and emotionally restrained

- Ambiguity in language to avoid conflict

- Emotional calm and reserve used to maintain interpersonal harmony

- Belief that emotions get in the way of conflict resolution

- Use of stories, metaphors, third-party mediators

Dynamic
Indirect and emotionally expressive

- Use of expressive hyperbole, repetition, stories, metaphors and humor with intense emotion

- Use of third party intermediaries

- Credibility established by degree of emotional expressiveness

EMOTIONAL RESTRAINT   **EMOTIONAL EXPRESSIVENESS**

How might individuals with one communication style perceive individuals from another?

Compare and contrast perceptions of each style from the perspective of another style.

Adapted from Mitchell Hammer's *Intercultural Conflict Style Inventory*

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Which communication styles do these proverbs reflect?

"The squeaky wheel gets the grease."
U.S American

"What is nearest to the heart is nearest to the mouth."
Irish

"The first to raise their voice loses the argument."
Chinese

"It is good to know the truth, but it is better to speak of palm trees."

Arab

Key Skills in Managing Conflict Across Cultural Borders

In a direct style:
- Informing through facts / arguments
- "I" statements
- Advice = solution to problem
- Statements that suggest that the other revise his / her viewpoint

In an indirect style:
- Explanation through story telling / "We" statements
- Advice offered through past example
- Statements that suggest that one revise one's own viewpoint

In an emotionally expressive style:
- Display feelings in non-verbal behavior (touching, facial expressions)
- Loud voice

In an emotionally restrained style:
- Hide feelings in non-verbal behavior ("poker face", give interpersonal space)
- Soft voice

Non-Verbal Aspects of Communication

- Eye contact

- Gestures

- Facial expressions

- Posture

- Conversational distance

- Touching (how, when, for how long)

- Uses of silence

- Rules of turn-taking during conversation:

A _____B _____	**B waits for A to finish before speaking.**
A _____ B_____	**B leaves silence before speaking: the length of silence can vary greatly by culture.**
A _____ ** B_____**	**B starts speaking before A finishes; the degree of overlap varies by culture.**

Unconscious signals influence our interpretation of verbal messages.

Exercise: Translating Directness

This is an exercise that helps you to **translate direct (confrontational) to indirect (non-confrontational) styles of communication.**

Review these statements and below each one, write a statement that is less direct.

I don't think that is a good idea.

That is not the point.

I think we should…

What do you think, Mr. _____?
(Calling on people, especially in a group, sometimes embarrasses them. How can you find out what someone thinks without directly asking?)

Those figures are not accurate.

You are doing that wrong.

I don't agree.

Exercise: Translating Indirectness

Thisis an exercise that helps you to **translate indirect (non-confrontational) to direct (confrontational) styles of communication.**

Review these statements and below each one, write a statement that is more direct.

This is a very interesting viewpoint.
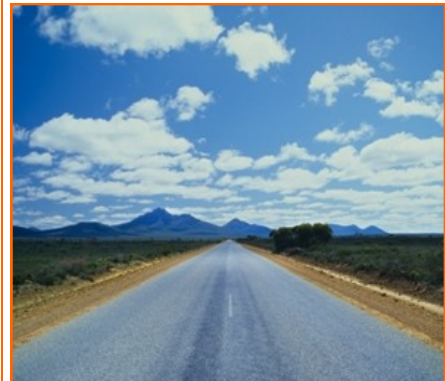
This proposal deserves further consideration.

I know very little about this…

We will try our best.

We understand your proposal very well.

I heard another story about the project.

Can we move on to the next topic?

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Further Communication Insights

Variances in human communication styles are complex and often difficult to define. Below are some distinctions that may overlap but allow us to illustrate differences in communication styles and help de-mystify the challenges that we face when we encounter styles that differ from our own.

The terms **DIRECT** and **INDIRECT** refer to verbal communication and are mostly about the way in which sensitive information is delivered and how much face must be preserved in order to establish or maintain credibility in a relationship (as discussed in the previous pages). There are two other interrelated concepts of communication to consider.

EXPLICIT and **IMPLICIT** communication refers to how much of the message is put into words versus how much lies in non-verbal or contextual cues. The degree to which people use explicit or implicit communication depends a great deal on how much shared information can be assumed between those who are communicating and the degree to which people are comfortable relying on that contextual information for the message. All cultures value both types of communication in particular situations. But one quality defining a culture's communication style is the degree to which people are more comfortable with explicit or implicit communication.

EXAMPLE: A supervisor asks his employee, "Can you get me that report by Monday?" But the employee cannot supply the report on Monday.

POSSIBLE RESPONSE IN U.S: "I can't because I'll be in training that day, but I can get it to you by Tuesday."

POSSIBLE RESPONSE IN JAPAN: "Yes. It will be difficult."
(This communication will only convey the intended message if both people share the understanding that "difficult" may mean "impossible.")

Edward T. Hall discussed communication differences in terms of **HIGH CONTEXT** and **LOW CONTEXT** interactions.

In **HIGH CONTEXT** cultures, the context of a situation is in the foreground and forms an important part of the message, or may even preclude the need for a verbal message. The way a message is conveyed, by whom, and in what setting helps form the message itself. Generally, the more homogenous a culture is, the greater the degree of high context communication. We can also say that hierarchical, group-oriented cultures tend to put more emphasis on context.

In the example above, the Japanese employee was required to say "yes" by the hierarchical nature of the relationship, and adds a second phrase that preserves face but conveys the message implicitly. The situation determined the communication style.

In **LOW CONTEXT** cultures the spoken message is in the foreground and context falls to the background. The message is delivered with less concern for the context of situation. The verbal message is the main event, with much less emphasis on how it is delivered. More individualistic cultures tend to put less emphasis on context.

In the example on the previous page, the Japanese employee was required to say "yes" by the hierarchical nature of the relationship, and adds a second phrase that preserves face but conveys the message implicitly. The U.S. American employee used more direct, explicit communication style.

Characteristics of **HIGH CONTEXT** communication:

- Value is placed on a person's ability to observe unspoken rules of communication and one's ability to "read between the lines" by observing non-verbal and contextual messages. Building trust is based on maintaining face. **For example**: Feedback may be given as suggestions with concern for saving face. .
- Dress, manners, and respecting one's place in a given group all contribute to the implicit messages one is sending. (Dressing informally at a meeting may send message that one does not respect himself enough to dress well).
- The type of communication is highly dependent on the situation and is often determined by implicit rules of hierarchy within the culture.
- Assumptions are made about one another based on characteristics such as: family name; region of origin; style of dress; relationship to others in the community; quality of possessions.
- It may take more time to deliver and receive information.

Characteristics of **LOW CONTEXT** communication:

- Value is placed on an individual's ability to speak articulately and communicate precisely with words. Trust is based on direct communication rather than face. **For example**: Feedback is given directly and may be critical.
- Less emphasis on dress often leads to more casual workplaces and very casual dress in public

- Communication is as an equalizer. We can all communicate with one another.

- Attention is focused on personal accomplishment. Less focus on family background or community relationships. Individuals act and speak for themselves.

- Messages may be delivered more quickly.

Questions:

What are some of the challenges that may arise when someone more accustomed to low context behavior enters a high context situation in a new culture?

What are some of the challenges that may arise when someone more accustomed to high context behavior enters a low context situation in a new culture?

Which style do you feel more comfortable with?

What might challenge you when adapting to a new style?

What adjustments would you have to make?

Guidelines for Virtual Communication

A big challenge to remote communication is to personalize the interaction in order to engage the recipient's attention, motivate a response, and develop a mutually satisfying relationship over time and distance. Take a look at the chart below and discuss the impact that lack of context has

Context Loss During Remote Communication
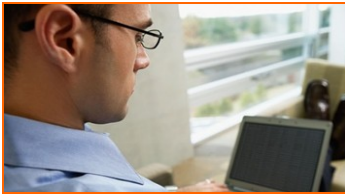
	Words	Control Over Format	Voice Tone	Immediate Feedback	Nonverbal Cues	Environmental Cues	Direct Physical Exchange	Informal Context
Person to Person	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨
Videoconferencing	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨	▨		
Phone	▨	▨	▨	▨				
Voice Mail	▨	▨	▨					
IM / Chat	▨	▨						
Email	▨							

Reduced "Bandwidth" = Lost Information
(emails have lost more than 80% of their context)

Adapted from the work of Ernest Gundling

IOR

Virtual Communication in English: Telephone Tactics

10 Tips for effective telephone communication with non-native speakers of English

In today's world of global business, native speakers of English are privileged and have the advantage of fluency in the language that is most frequently used in international business. With this in mind, native English speakers may consider beginning a conversation by apologizing for the fact that the conversation will have to take place in English, perhaps exchanging basic greetings in the host culture's language, when possible. It is also important to encourage non-native speakers to ask native speakers to speak more slowly, offer further explanation or repeat key points as needed . A little humility goes a long way in establishing effective cross-cultural relationships.

Many international meetings are composed of speakers of a variety of languages all speaking English. Native speakers can best lead such a group by understanding that the non-native speakers have varied proficiency in English, may understand far less than 100% of what is said, and may tire quickly from the concentration required to listen and attempt to speak in a second language where the only channel of communication is voice (see chart on page 43). Here are 10 tested tips for producing more effective virtual meetings.

1. If you are a native speaker of English, take personal responsibility for the success of the communication. Realize that a "yes" answer to the questions "do you speak English" does not tell you the level of proficiency that a person has.

2. Send an agenda in advance; appoint a recorder to summarize and distribute the minutes of the meeting, listing decisions, tasks, and timelines.

3. Speak carefully and slowly and avoid colloquial language (idioms, slang, jargon).

4. Listen actively for meaning not explicit in the words; silence may have a variety of interpretations.

5. Try to sense the comfort of your correspondents; adjust your speech - formality and level of emotional expression - to that of the group.

6. Ask informational (rather than yes/no) questions. Yes / no questions may often result in a "yes" answer that is difficult to interpret.

7. Avoid humor, which generally doesn't translate well across cultures; listen for laughter, which may indicate nervous disagreement, confusion, or embarrassment.

8. If speaking to a group sharing another language, allow opportunities for the group to discuss the topic in their first language and select a member to reply for the group, especially if you require an opinion or decision.

9. Repeat & restate frequently; check understanding by requesting summaries of key points.

10. Keep the meeting as short as possible (break longer agendas in half and hold two meetings).

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Virtual Communication: Virtual Meetings

7 additional tips for better virtual meetings.

(Assembled from the LinkedIn Discussion Group: Competence in Intercultural Professions)

1. For scheduling, use www.timeanddate.com/worldclock, where you can enter locations and look for best time solutions for a globally distributed team.

2. Announce meeting times in UTC (GMT/Zulu); everyone can work out their local time from that.

3. Spread the pain of inconvenient scheduling across the group by rotating times from meeting to meeting.

4. Likewise, for standing teams, change the lead from meeting to meeting to keep up interest.

5. Use multiple technologies to avoid dependence solely on spoken word. This diminishes many problems caused by language and cultural difference.

6. Adding Group Chat allows the minutes to be typed up while the call is in progress.

7. Consider reviewing minutes and taking questions at the end of the meeting so that the minutes are finalized before distribution.

Virtual Communication: Email Strategies

Ten Tips for Effective MultiCultural Email Communication

1. Establish a relationship with the person you are writing to. Always include a brief greeting.

2. State your purpose.

3. Make sure that you copy the appropriate people according to the hierarchical and organizational rules of the specific culture with which you are communicating. (Ask for an organizational chart whenever you start a new project.)

4. Ask informational (rather than yes/no) questions.

5. If you don't get what you want, you might need to get your superior to work with their superior.

6. Use numbered points to itemize what you are writing about.

7. Add your replies in colored font immediately below the questions you have been asked.

8. Follow up regularly. Frequent follow-ups show that you are on top of things and that you care. For important matters, follow up with a phone call. State deadlines for follow-up.

9. Keep track of replies and make sure you have been understood. Request a reply if it is required.

10. Take personal responsibility for successful communication.

Chapter 4
Doing Business in the Host Country

E very aspect of daily business life is affected by the cultural decisions we have to make as we enter a different cultural environment. One important key to effective intercultural communication, is understanding and comparing the cultural values, attitudes and behaviors of the destination culture to your own— **MAPPING.** This means that we have to take culture into account when we work in a multi-cultural environment.

INTEGRATING
Manage the differences

BRIDGING
Communicate across the differences
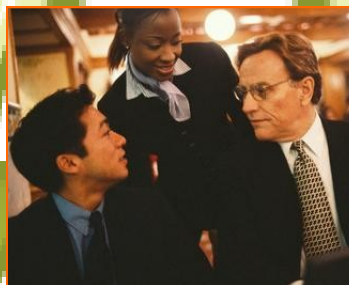
MAPPING
Understand the differences

Value the differences and the differences create value.

Understanding the other culture's perspective allows expatriates to interpret and send context-appropriate messages — **BRIDGING**, which in turn begins to reconcile cultural differences and foster mutual understanding in an effort to manage those differences — **INTEGRATING**.

Adapted from *International Management Behavior*, Henry W. Lane, Joseph J. Distefano, and Martha L. Maznevski

Onion Model of Corporate Culture

Sometimes we use the iceberg model of culture, as seen earlier in the program, to understand that our beliefs and values are found well "below the surface." Another way to view this is by looking at layers of culture using the onion model. According to Geert Hofstede, a leading researcher in the intercultural field, primary beliefs and values are already formed by the time we are between 8 and 10 years old. We learn them from our parents and our society through the messages they send about how we **should** and **should not** behave in various situations in our lives.

Our primary values change little over time. Values determine our concepts of such basic principles as: good and evil; ugly and beautiful; immoral and moral. **Even what we see as logical or rational is determined by cultural values.** Situations in which we encounter values contrary to our own can elicit strong — often negative — emotional response. Although we are unlikely to change our own or others' cultural beliefs and values, Hofstede argues that **we can change our behavior** to reflect that of a corporate culture as long as the **symbols**, **heroes** and **rituals** of that corporate culture are clearly articulated to all employees.

The values of the workplace culture as reflected in the symbols, heroes and rituals shape workplace practices — the way we work and perform our business functions. In order to better understand the ways in which your corporate culture may differ from the one you will be entering, on the next few pages we ask that you begin to think about and define the ways in which you and your corporation perform some fundamental business functions.

People, both real and imaginary, who serve as models for behavior. Difficult for an outsider to recognize initially.	Includes words, gestures, jargon, acronyms, dress, logos and other visible signs that are easily observed and taught.

Symbols

Heroes

Rituals

Primary values by 8-10 years old

Corporate Culture & Practices

Shared activities that are socially essential such as greetings, new employee initiation, birthday celebrations, business entertaining. Can be learned or changed if articulated.

What are some of the symbols that define your corporate culture?

Who are the heroes of your corporate culture?

What are some of the rituals that are practiced at your workplace?

Adapted from: Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind by Geert and Jan Hofstede (3rd edition)

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Culturally Influenced Business Functions

During the business portion of IOR's cultural training programs, we focus the conversation on your goals, your perceived challenges, and on core business functions commonly affected by cultural variants.

In order to maximize the effectiveness of your session with the business consultant, please **identify and briefly describe your goals and perceived challenges** for this assignment. If you have already done this as pre-work, please share your answers with your trainer to prepare for the business session.

On the next page, we will ask you to note your organizational or personal preference for the performance of several key business functions so we can compare and contrast them with those of the destination culture.

<table>
<tr><td>

My professional goal(s) for this assignment:

</td></tr>
<tr><td>

Perceived challenges going into the assignment:

</td></tr>
<tr><td>

Your cultural role at work: change agent, adapter, cultural mediator, etc. (see p. 4)?

</td></tr>
</table>

How would you describe your company culture?

What behaviors are rewarded / discouraged?

Did you have to adapt your behavior to become effective in your company? If so, how?

How well is your company culture understood in the host location? Do they follow similar business practices?

Culturally Influenced Business Functions

To focus specifically on your business role, read through the list below, and **select five to seven functions crucial to your business effectiveness**. In the right column, note your organizational or personal preferred style for the performance of these functions so we can compare and contrast them with those of the destination culture. Use the questions on the left to prompt your thoughts.

CORE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS	PREFERRED STYLE

Problem Solving Process

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?

Decision-Making Process

What are the procedures?

Who is involved?

Authoritarian or consensus style?

Is risk a factor?

Direct or indirect?

Meeting Style

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

PREFERRED STYLE

Customer Relations
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?

Negotiating/Persuading
What are the procedures?

How much information is shared up front?

What are the bargaining/compromise strategies?

Is the philosophy competitive or collaborative?

Motivating People
What promotes and reinforces good performance: pay, promotion, power and/or status, time off, other perquisites?

Team or individual rewards?

Independent or interdependent goals?

Leadership Style
What are the responsibilities of a leader?

Responsible to employees, stockholders or stakeholders?

Status assigned (ascribed) or earned?

Authoritarian or egalitarian/consensus style?

Formal or informal?

Accessible or distant?

Performance Expectations
How is performance measured and communicated?

How is feedback obtained?

What is the motivation for change?

How is better performance coached?

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CORE BUSINESS FUNCTION   PREFERRED STYLE

Teamwork
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?

Contracts
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?

Conflict Resolution/Disagreement Management
How is conflict viewed?

What does successful conflict resolution look like?

Is conflict necessary?

Is conflict dealt with directly or through intermediaries?

Are there winners and losers after a conflict is resolved?

How is bad news communicated?

Staff Training/Development
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?

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CORE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

PREFERRED STYLE

Staff Recruitment and Selection

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 assessment tools part of the process?

When can a candidate discuss salary and benefits?

Superior/Subordinate Relationships

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?

Presentation Styles

What is the primary purpose – to inform, persuade or build relationship?

What is the level of formality?

Are conclusions given at the beginning or the end?

What is the ratio of word to image?

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?

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Worksheet: Survival Skills for International Living

Using the experience you have gained in your international life and work, rate yourself, on a scale of one (low) to five (high) on each of these characteristics.

Write the number beside each one and total them.

_____ Tolerance for ambiguity		_____ Sense of humor
_____ Low goal/task orientation		_____ Warmth in human relationships
_____ Open-mindedness		_____ Motivation
_____ Non-judgmental mind-set		_____ Self-reliance
_____ Empathy		_____ Strong sense of self
_____ Communicativeness		_____ Tolerance for differences
_____ Flexibility; adaptability		_____ Perceptiveness
_____ Curiosity		_____ Ability to fail

_____ **Total (Interpret score on the following page)**

Then circle the three traits you think are most important for success on an international assignment.

Why?

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Survival Skills Worksheet Interpretation

According to Kohls, if you scored less than 55, you need to consider areas in which you rated yourself lower, and consider strategies for building skills in those areas.

Many people think that these are the three most important traits for successful international living.

Sense of Humor

Ability to fail

Low goal/task orientation

Why do you think these traits are important?

How did you score on the scale of 1 to 5 on these three traits?

What insights do your scores give you concerning your cultural adaptability?

Adapted from *Survival Kit for Overseas Living* by L. Robert Kohls, Intercultural Press, Yarmouth Maine, 2001

IOR

Cultural Adjustment: Opportunity for Personal Growth

Culture Shock as "Learning Shock"

Of course, adapting to a new environment is enormously stressful. The continuous forced learning and the need to constantly and consciously process new information and make first-time decisions is exhausting, both emotionally and physically.

As a competent adult it is irritating and frustrating to be reduced to a childlike helplessness in an unfamiliar environment without, perhaps, even the ability to communicate with host nationals. All of this is both the source and the condition of "culture shock." Once the "survival level" of new learning is accomplished, the symptoms of adaptation stress subside, but new learning continues, though at a more manageable pace.

The new environment continues to provide ongoing stimulus, with an emotional response of excitement and enthusiasm that may persist throughout the international assignment. To many, this is reminiscent of being a child, with the anticipation that every day will be a new adventure, an opportunity to explore new territory, make new acquaintances, and learn new things. Nevertheless, it can continue to be stressful and tiring.

Culture Shock "W" Curve

HOME

NEW COUNTRY

THE NEWS

THE DOWN TURN

IT'S A NEW LIFE

surprises   differences are amplified

curiosity   disappointment

lots to do   excitement   irritation   participation

excitement   try new things   why am I here?   pride

adventure   explore   fatigue   security

good-bye   see new places   homesickness   contentment

settle-in   guilt   strength

fatigue   self-doubt   understanding

discover   stress   it's not that bad

fear   anger   more positive

sadness   keep learning

pause, rest

DEPARTURE

GIVING UP

Life's normal "ups and downs" can become greatly exaggerated during the first year of an international assignment.

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Culture Shock Symptoms

Excessive sleeping

Chronic fatigue

Headaches

Weight gain

Skin rashes

Physical

Heavy drinking

Frequent illness

Substance abuse

Exaggerated cleanliness

Backaches

Excessive exercise

Homesickness

Low self-esteem

Boredom

Irritability

Anger

Depression

Emotional

Feel like crying

Arrogance, feeling superior

Feeling like an outcast

Loss of sense of humor

Culture Shock Symptoms

Stereotyping others

Ineffective work patterns

Behavioral

Act aggressively

Inability to make decisions

Tension & conflict with children & family

Relational

Marital stress

Impatience with nationals

In the past have you or your family members ever experienced Culture Shock?

What were your symptoms?

What did you do about it?

In hindsight, what measures could you have taken to reduce adjustment stress?

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Strategies for Managing Culture Stress and the Adaptation Process

How have you coped in the past with the stress of difficult events or transition?

What are some strategies you typically use? Which of those can you put into place now, and continue during the process of expatriating?

Everyone has different ways of managing the ups and downs of cultural adaptation and culture stress. Being aware that this is a normal process and that thinking ahead of ways to manage it can help prepare you. Many expatriates find that building strategies in four key areas can help ease the transition.

1. Immersion

What interests you about your destination culture? What aspect about that culture could you immerse yourself in and become an "expert" by the time you leave (language, art, architecture, food, sports, geography, etc.)? Immersion can help you develop a deeper appreciation for the host culture.

1.   3.

2.   4.

2. Escape!

When you have absolutely had enough of the host culture and can't stand it another minute, what are some ways that you can pull out — literally or "virtually?" (Here you can list places that you plan to travel, day trips, expatriate organizations that make you feel "away" from the host culture, ways to be in touch with friends or activities from your home culture, etc.)

1.   3.

2.   4.

3. Maintaining Status Quo

When everything else around you seems new and different, what aspects of your life can remain the same? Will you have favorite furniture, dishes, videos? Are there family rituals that you can continue in the host culture? Is there a hobby or do you play an instrument that you can continue?

1.   3.

2.   4.

4. Stress Management

Stress is likely not new to your life. How do you manage stress now (exercise, talk to friends, movies, journal or blog, read, yoga, etc.)? And, will you be able to use those techniques on your assignment?

1.   3.

2.   4.

Cultural Adjustment is a Natural Process

Everybody experiences cultural adjustment to some extent. It is a process with a beginning and an end. By being aware that you will undergo some adjustment stress, you will be able to manage it to some extent, diminishing both the amplitude and duration of the emotional wave depicted by the "W" Curve.

- Consider culture shock as a natural process, not as a sign of weakness.

- Learn more about aspects of the culture that personally interest you.

- Make a continual effort to learn and use the language.

- Look for the differences in cultural ways of thinking that underlie the host culture and your own culture in order to understand the differences in cultural behaviors.

- Avoid criticizing behavior and indulging in discussions in which others are doing so. (Is this possible?)

- Find one or more host country associates and experienced fellow expatriates who will:

  > - Listen to feelings and problems
  > - Help you locate information and learning resources
  > - Help to explain the other cultural point of view
  > - Suggest more effective behaviors

- Participate in social networks that can provide you with orientation, social support and enjoyment, and help others with the process of cross-cultural adjustment once you become experienced.

- Expect a period of adjustment stress and discomfort; it is a natural process of adaptation to another environment.

- Recognize and acknowledge the symptoms when they appear.

- Discuss your feelings and attitudes within your family and circle of friends and colleagues.

- Establish links to your home culture and maintain contact. Find broadcasts in which your first language is spoken, restaurants serving your culture's cuisine, cultural institutions, music, films, etc.

- Seek out and participate in social networks that can provide you with social support and enjoyment, including expatriates more experienced than yourself, and, as your comfort increases, seek out other new expatriates and help them with the process of cultural adjustment.

International Compound Living

When you choose your living arrangements for the new country you will be working in, you will likely be faced with the choice of living in a managed compound community populated by other expatriates and shorter term business travelers. Such compounds can often be the only choice you might have for housing. They are especially common if your assignment is in one of the Gulf Arab States, India, China or Africa.

Even if you do not choose to live in these compounds, you will likely meet many other expatriates who do live there. In any case, living in an international compound has its pros and cons to weigh:
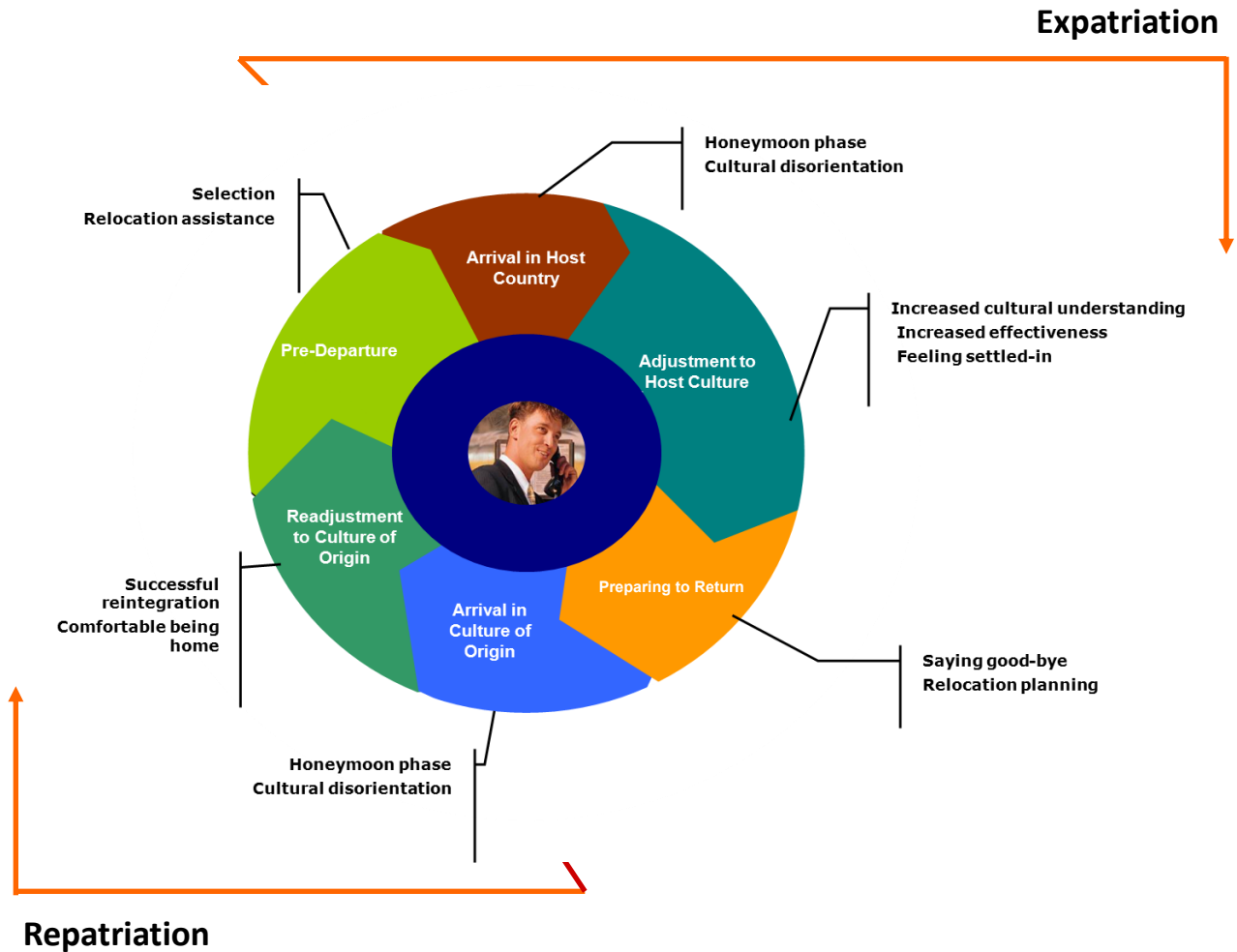
Significant Features: Positive and Negative Aspects of Compound Living

- Security - particularly if your assignment is in an unstable region

- Familiarity - as you will be surrounded most likely by other expatriates from your own culture

- Social interaction - a ready community with other families to network with that are in a similar situation

- Little to no interaction with the host culture – as Craig Storti notes in his research, living in compounds earns "the dubious distinction of living abroad without ever leaving home"

- Potentially negative environment – many expatriates actually withdraw into their compounds and bitterly complain about their assignments and the host culture

- Playing with the same people you work with – intense involvement of a small group of people in a closed environment can lead to stressful interpersonal relationships

- Lack of intercultural skill development – few opportunities for significant cultural adaptation and development as a global professional either as employee or spouse

- Common language will be English in most cases

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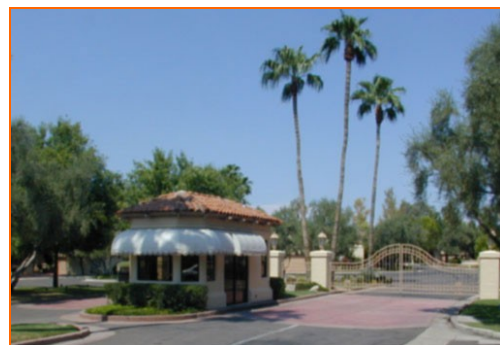
Stages in the Expatriation/Repatriation Cycle

It is important to view an international relocation as an entire process beginning with pre-departure procedures and concluding with reintegration into the culture of origin.

Expatriation

Selection
Relocation assistance

Honeymoon phase
Cultural disorientation

Arrival in Host Country

Pre-Departure

Adjustment to Host Culture

Increased cultural understanding
Increased effectiveness
Feeling settled-in

Readjustment to Culture of Origin

Arrival in Culture of Origin

Preparing to Return

Successful reintegration
Comfortable being home

Saying good-bye
Relocation planning

Honeymoon phase
Cultural disorientation

Repatriation

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About Repatriation

Fast forward a few years and imagine the following: You are returning to your home country. You have changed as a result of successful cultural adaptation to another culture. Things have changed at home as well, and you might need assistance, similar to the time when you expatriated to your host culture.

The following facts and suggestions are based on research, studies and interviews with returning expatriates. Consider each point; might this apply to you?   What will you encounter upon your return?   Understanding the emotions involved with repatriating may help you adjust.

- No two people experience repatriation in the same way.

- It is common to experience feelings of loss.

- It is also common to experience mood swings.

- Not everyone will want to hear about your international experiences.

- You may feel very "out of date" or "out of step" with professional information, corporate policies, and procedures.

- You may experience feelings of insecurity and uncertainty during your transition.

- Upon repatriation some people may feel critical toward their home culture.

- Your "new" ideas may not be enthusiastically received, if received at all.

- Upon your return you may find your organization more goal/task oriented, though you have become more relationship/ people oriented.

- You may feel out of touch with the organization you work for.

- You may feel like your personal and professional needs are not being met.

- Your personal and professional life may seem out of balance, with one or the other becoming too demanding.

- Expect to be asked many "silly" questions about your past experience.

- Expect changes at home; big shifts and subtle differences.

- You may experience apathy and a lack of concern for current global situations.

- Many returning expatriates are surprised/ shocked to discover the financial costs of repatriation.

- The pace of life may be different (too fast, too slow).

Because of the level of stress and disorientation often experienced during the reintegration process, we suggest that you:

◊ Allow a short break between your departure and reentry.

◊ Do not over schedule yourself.

◊ Set realistic daily goals upon reentry.

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Goal Setting

SMART Goals

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time Based

Sample Goals:

Example (1): Before I arrive in my new destination, I will learn how to:

- greet people in the host country language
- address them using names and titles correctly
- use the polite formal greeting style

Example (2): Within one week of arriving in my new destination I will learn how to:

- use the public transportation system

Make three short-term goals for yourself:

1.

2.

3.

Identify at least one long-term goal that you wish to achieve by the end of your assignment. *(If nothing immediately comes to mind, imagine that you are writing a letter or email to family or friends at the end of your assignment and complete this sentence: "I know that my time here has been successful because…")*

Long term goal:

Adaptation: A Considered Response

In intercultural adaptation CONTEXT MATTERS

Consider your work objectives/strategy and your flexibility and individual limits…

- Learn how trust, respect, and comfort are best established in your destination culture.
- Understand the key value differences between your destination culture and your culture of origin. This will help you better comprehend the meaning of behavioral differences in common situations.
- Evaluate the range of adaptive choices: Adapting closely to local behaviors, continuing with more familiar patterns, or employing another strategy (such as discussing the differences) in order to meet the requirements of the situation.
- Consider the circumstances before making a decision on how to respond, always with the intention of fostering trust, respect, and comfort for all involved, including yourself.
- Later, reflect on your interaction and outcome in order to improve intercultural effectiveness in future situations.

Adaptation Strategies of Successful Expatriates *Revisited*

- They determined their role in a particular situation and assessed whether it was appropriate to influence or change the situation.
- They weighed the contingencies of the situation – what were the consequences of either adapting to the host culture or sticking to their familiar patterns?
- They "picked their battles" in conflicts between headquarters and the local company and tried to avoid those conflicts they could not win.
- They accepted what they could not change.
- They learned from the experience and applied it to future situations.

Can you now identify a situation in which you have made adaptation choices or a situation in which you know you will soon have to do so?

Adapted from: *The Adventure of Working Abroad,* Joyce S. Osland

Appendix

Possible Topics for Discussion with Cultural Consultants

The following questions may be discussed with the Cultural Consultant. The topics below focus on the deep-seated cultural values (below the waterline of the iceberg) that will affect your living and working in the destination country.

Social Organization: What is the power structure and protocol for interaction among host country nationals?

- Egalitarian or hierarchical?
- Formal or informal?
- Explicit or implicit rules?

Significant Aspects of History, Politics

- Are there any important formative historical or political aspects that I should be aware of?

Family Life of Host Country Nationals

- How important is the family?
- What are the roles of the father and mother?
- What expectations are there of how children should obey / behave?

Establishing Relationships with Host Country Nationals

- How is the relationship initiated, established and maintained?
- What protocols and etiquette do I need to know when introducing myself?
- What are the dynamics and protocol of establishing relationships?
- What motivates or influences the relationship?
- Which is of primary importance, the relationship or business needs?
- What is the role of age, status, and reciprocity?
- What do I need to avoid doing or saying when communicating with host country nationals?

Education

- How does the school system work for local children?
- What is the literacy level in the country?
- Are there expatriate schools and day care facilities?

Conversing with Host Country Nationals

- What topics can be discussed?
- How are problems introduced?
- What are the procedures for handling problems?
- Who participates, and under what rules?

Approach to Challenges and Problems

- Are risks and face factors?
- Are they direct or indirect?
- How implicit or explicit are they?
- What are the procedures of dealing with this communication style?

Conflict Resolution/Disagreement Management

- 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?

Daily Living Checklist

The following questions may be discussed with the Daily Living Resource. The topics below focus on the visible culture (above the waterline of the iceberg) that will affect your living and working in the destination country.

Clothing and household articles to take with you (pre-departure only)
- ☐ Clothing
- ☐ Appliances
- ☐ Household goods
- ☐ Linen, china and crystal
- ☐ Furniture
- ☐ Toolbox
- ☐ Religious festival items and decorations
- ☐ Photos and mementos
- ☐ Other

What might be unavailable in the host country and should be taken? (pre-departure only)
- ☐ Foods and spices
- ☐ Medicines
- ☐ Books and toys
- ☐ Medical records and x-rays
- ☐ Medical prescriptions
- ☐ Children's play and sports equipment
- ☐ Other

Medical Issues and Medical Care
- ☐ Quality of care
- ☐ Availability of medications and personal care products
- ☐ Immunizations
- ☐ Area-related problems (e.g. diseases and carriers, insects)
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Emergency numbers

- ☐ Hygiene precautions with food and water

- ☐ Medical evacuation

- ☐ Other

Shopping
- ☐ How to bargain

- ☐ Store and market hours and holidays

- ☐ What might you need to take with you? (shopping bags, coins for shopping carts etc.)

- ☐ Shopping in open-air markets as opposed to supermarkets

- ☐ Other

Household Help
- ☐ How to find and interview, check references and health screening

- ☐ What are the responsibilities of a household helper?

- ☐ How should you interact with them? (formal vs. informal)

- ☐ What are your obligations and duties towards the household helper?

- ☐ What promotes and reinforces good performance and trust? (delegation of tasks; monitoring)

- ☐ Advantages and disadvantages of live-in vs. outside help

- ☐ Other

Socialization
- ☐ Expatriate organizations and what they provide

- ☐ Organizations that support involvement of expatriate women

- ☐ Language study programs

- ☐ Religious organizations (are services conducted in a familiar language?)

- ☐ Business groups, associations or networks

- ☐ Business and social entertaining

- ☐ Other

Personal and Family Safety and Security
- ☐ General safety at home and in public (men, women, children)

- ☐ How and where to play -- children alone in the streets, freedom, mobility, maids accompanying children

- ☐ Less safe areas or activities; times of day; special precautions

- ☐ 911 equivalents

- ☐ Terrorism

- ☐ Extra locks / window bars

- ☐ Night watchmen

- ☐ Other

Banking and Mail

- ☐ Banks and how to open accounts for local and home country currency

- ☐ Can the non-working spouse have his or her own bank account? If not, how will the family arrange an independent money source for her/him?

- ☐ How to conduct various banking functions in host country — check cashing, credit and atm

- ☐ Procedures and how to receive mail — office, P.O. box, or at home

- ☐ Other

Transportation

- ☐ Reliability and safety of public transportation methods

- ☐ Renting cars

- ☐ Driving with unfamiliar roads, signs, and rules

- ☐ Cycling, mopeds and other forms of transportation

Recommended Resources

Books

- *A Broad Abroad*, **by Robin Pascoe Expatriate Press Limited 2009**
  (Humorous, encouraging and practical guide to relocating abroad as an expatriate spouse)

- *A Career in Your Suitcase*, **by Jo Parfitt, www.bookshaker.com 2008**
  (A guide with advice on how to re-define a career for the accompanying spouse who wants to continue working)

- *A Portable Identity: A Women's Guide to Maintaining a Sense of Self While Moving Overseas* **by Debra R.Bryson and Charise M. Hoge Transition Press International 2005**
  (A workbook designed to help women adapt to the role of accompanying spouse by better understanding their own identify)

- *Cultural Intelligence: Living and Working Globally,* **by David C. Thomas and Kerr Inkson, Berrett-Koehler Publishers 2009**
  (Outlines and applies the concept of Cultural Intelligence to interactions in organizations and people's daily lives and provides examples from a variety of cultures)

- *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind 3rd edition*, **by Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede, McGraw Hill Books 2010**
  (In-depth look at cultural difference based on cross-cultural research conducted in more than 70 countries for more than 30 years)

- *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands*, **by Terri Morrison and Wayne A. Conaway, Adams Media 2006**
  (How to guide with brief background information and business dos and don'ts for 62 countries)

- *Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Diversity in Global Business*, **by Fons Trompenaars, Irwin Professional Publishing 1994**
  (A classic text on doing business across cultures that forms the foundation of many of the discussions of global business today)

- *Survival Kit for Overseas Living: For Americans planning to live and work abroad 3rd edition*, **by L. Robert Kohls, Intercultural Press, Inc. 1996**
  (A practical guide on cultural adjustment for Americans living abroad that has become one of the most widely read books on the topic)
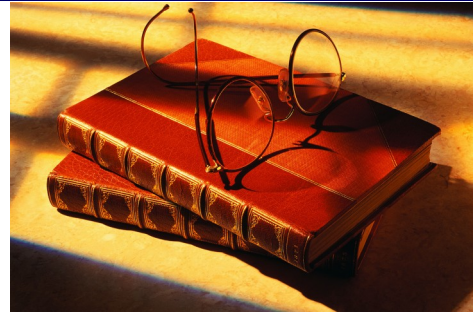
- ***The Dance of Life and Other Dimensions of Time***, **by Edward T. Hall, Doubleday 1983**

  (A classic book about the impact of the concept of time on cultural difference, based on research by a cultural anthropologist considered one of the founders of the field. Other influential books include: *The Silent Language* and *Beyond Culture*)

- **The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently….and Why, by Richard E. Nisbett, Free Press, 2003**

  (An insightful look at the key differences between the way the East and the West view the world based on research in cultural psychology; includes explanations as well as suggestions for bridging the differences)

- ***The Global Nomad's Guide to University Transition.*** **Quick, Tina L. Forward by Ruth van Reken (2010).**

  (For students who have been living outside of their home country and are going through the transition of both culture change and entering university)

- ***Working GlobeSmart: 12 People Skills for Doing Business Across Borders,*** **by Ernest Gundling, Davies Black Publishing 2003**

  (The author has gathered insights of many country and regional experts who have helped thousands of global managers succeed in complex multicultural business environments; provides practical skills -based advice.)

Websites

http://www.geert-hofstede.com/

https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/

http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/country-profiles.html

http://www.culturecrossing.net/index.php

http://www.getcustoms.com

http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

http://www.forvo.com/

http://expatwomen.com/

http://www.theexpatview.com/Resources.html

http://www.expatbookshop.com/

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