

THE EFFICIENCY OF MANAGERIAL PROCESSES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-CULTURAL RELATIONS

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Culture and cultural differences play an important role in international companies, at work of multicultural teams and at international meetings. Different understanding of approaches, different cultural patterns may cause that it is not possible to efficiently and successfully execute good intentions and ideas. Effective cross-cultural management and communication between the countries is essential in order to work efficiently together and build a strong union. Managing a truly global multinational company would obviously be much simpler if it required only one set of corporate objectives, goals, policies, practices, products and services. Companies that want to be successful in foreign markets have to be aware of the local cultural characteristics that affect the way business is done.

It can also be observed that cultural differences occur within the same country, city or even social group. Understanding your own values and cultural perspectives before going into your meeting will help you deal with prevailing cultural issues. For example, Australian managers are known to value honesty and creativity. However, if Australian managers work in India, they will realize that Indian managers place a stronger emphasis on values such as obedience, loyalty and trust [1].

A fairly obvious cultural divide that has been much studied is the one between. On the one hand, the countries of North America and north-west Europe, where management is largely based on analysis, rationality, logic and systems, and, on the other, the Latin cultures of the southern Europe and South America, where personal relations, intuition, emotion and sensitivity are much greater importance.

Managerial communication is communication in a management context to achieve a desired result (writing a memo, interviewing an applicant, running a meeting, preparing a presentation). To be effective in any given culture, however, managers should consider the following seven issues before they begin to communicate:

1. Setting communication objectives
2. Choosing a communication style
3. Assessing and enhancing credibility
4. Selecting and motivating audiences
5. Setting a message strategy
6. Overcoming language difficulties
7. Using appropriate nonverbal behaviors

Before entering into a diverse workplace or travelling abroad, managers are encouraged to increase their cultural intelligence or CQ which is constituted of a number of competencies. A cross culture competent manager will display some, if not all, the following competencies:

- Awareness that they are not fully informed of any one culture
- Preparedness and coping strategies for cross cultural situations
- Develop respectful and cooperative relationships with all individuals from differing backgrounds.
- Develop a strong sense of your own value system and realize that other people and nations have their own unique value system.
- Patience and understanding of other's values and behaviors [2].

People in various countries may view and interpret the same facts differently. The meanings given to them are a place where the different cultural traditions can be seen the most. The knowledge of cultural differences may help the workers operating in multicultural environment to reduce the possible misunderstandings and it enables them to foresee the possible reactions of their partners. The workers who are ready to admit, understand and respect the cultural differences of other nations and to take helpful steps have a great advantage at fulfilling tasks in multicultural environment. Intercultural management is not only a marginal area but it has been gaining more and more significance for international as well as purely national companies, if they want to succeed in the demanding competitive environment. The development trend in this area goes towards converging individual nations, communication and understanding of intercultural differences, which represents a possible way to mutual cooperation reaching beyond the contemporary borders of individual states or groups [3].

So, the largely Protestant cultures on both sides of the North Atlantic (Canada, the USA, Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Scandinavia) are essentially individualist. In such cultures, status has to be achieved. You don't automatically respect people just because they've been in a company for 30 years. A young, dynamic, aggressive manager with an MBA (a Master in Business Administration degree) can quickly rise in the hierarchy. In most Latin and Asian cultures, on the contrary, status is automatically accorded to the boss, who is more likely to be in his fifties or sixties than in his thirties. This is particularly true in Japan, where companies traditionally have a policy of promotion by seniority. A 50-year-old Japanese manager, or a Greek or Italian or Chilean one, would quite simply be offended by having to negotiate with an aggressive, well-educated, but inexperienced American or German 20 years his junior. He would also want to take the time to get to know the person with whom he was negotiating, and would not appreciate an assertive American who wanted to sign a deal immediately and take the next plane home.

In northern cultures, the principle of pay-for-performance often successfully motivates salespeople. The more you sell, the more you get paid. But the principle might well be resisted in more collectivist cultures, and in countries where rewards and promotion are expected to come with age and experience [1].

Another example of an American idea that it doesn't work well in Latin countries is matrix management. The task-oriented logic of matrix management conflicts with the principle of loyalty to the all-important line superior, the functional boss. You can't have two bosses any more than you have two fathers. Andre Laurent, a French researcher, has said that in his experience, French managers would rather see an organization die than tolerate a system in which a few subordinates have to report to two bosses.

In discussing people's relationships with their boss and their colleagues and friends, universalists and particularists are distinguished. The former believe that rules are extremely important; the latter believe

that personal relationships and friendships should take precedence. Consequently, each group thinks that the other is corrupt. Universalists say that particularists ‘cannot be trusted because they will always help their friends’, while the second group says of the first ‘you cannot trust them; they would not even help a friend’. There are many more particularists in Latin and Asian countries than in Australia, the USA, Canada, or north–west Europe [2].

Today, numerous businesses operate on an international or European level, mergers between companies from different countries have become very common and for these businesses to work efficiently management and employees have to be aware of cultural differences and understand how to use them to their advantage, instead of seeing them as an obstacle.

Literature references

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