



Intercultural management (CULT)

Part 1

INCONEXT

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Preface

The communication is concurrent from business, management activities. The qualitative and apropos transmsion of information is the essential component of a successful business. The presentation (promotion) of products and services of the company, search for business partners, conversance of business environment and conditions, business negotiations, all these and many other business activity elements are performed with a help of communication. When communicating in our native language with the representatives of the same culture we naturally do not pay attention to the details of intercommunication, i.e., both parties perfectly know the rules, nuances, customs of their culture.

The organisation functioning in a global market often has to communicate with the representatives of other cultures, whose communication rules, nuances, and customs may significantly differ from ones customary to us.

The ignorance of these factors may highly aggravate the exchange of information. The misunderstandings, sometimes even a conflict may arise. Under such circumstances the efficient inter-cooperation is practically impossible.

In the module of intercultural management the information about international communication models is presented, the main types of business cultures are described.

The main business subcultures are described, international etiquette and business protocol are reviewed, non-verbal behaviour is analysed in the material.

At the end of the programme the basic reasons of intercultural conflicts are summarised and standard methods of their solution are presented.

1. Models and assumptions of intercultural communication

The concept of a term „culture“ itself is intended for attempts to systematise the structure of the individual's activity including behaviour, system of values, art, beliefs, language, customs, clothing, rituals, religion, behavioural manners, law and legislation, morality, honour code.

The adjective „intercultural“ is for the comparison of several or some different cultures, for the description of their intercommunication, for the definition of values, beliefs, understanding of behavioural norms.

In business this entire systematised and reasonably used information significantly contributes to the success of negotiation between the representatives of different cultures, as well as to the efficient settlement of arguments arisen.

When starting to prepare for the negotiation or settlement of arguments between different cultures, it is worth to take cognizance of some essential suggestions leading to proper result of the process:

1. Realise that culture may substantially affect the activity;
2. It is necessary to orient how and what kind of effect the cultural differences of the parties make to the process of negotiation or to the solution of a problem;
3. Take cognizance of your partner's/opponent's culture;
4. Create a negotiation plan and behavioural model taking into account your partner's/opponent's culture;

Ones who seek for favourable negotiation and communication results in alien environment should adjust their behaviour focusing on the following rules:

- ⤴ Adjust your behaviour to an external environment;
- ⤴ Have a wider attitude;
- ⤴ Behave with flexibility and tolerance;
- ⤴ „... when visiting a strange country behave same as the people around you“

The information of intercultural communication may be grouped into the basic models analysing the essential features of communication means:

1. A verbal (wordy) communication, which analyses the features of rendering the information delivered by words:
 1. Tone, loudness of voice
 2. Information content (of a wide content, i.e., the communication rendering lots of additional information, and of a narrow content, i.e., the communication providing only essential information)
 3. Communication features using voice transmission technologies (telephone, video connection, audio connection, etc.)

4. Communication in not a native language;
2. Nonverbal communication, describing information conveyance by emotions (mime, gestures, interruptions, specific voluntary and involuntary physical and physiological (e.g., sweating) factors);
3. Analysis of behaviour based on mentality (nationality, race, climatic zones, etc.)

The moments of intercultural behaviour characteristic to the named models are more properly presented in the following themes. The part of verbal cultural communication - the technique of communication in not a native language requires a separate description.

The simplest and the least time for the preparation requiring way of communication to speakers of other languages is embracing the interpreter's services. In order to obtain a qualitative information conveyance with a help of interpreter, it is necessary to consider the suggestions of the professionals:

- ⤴ When speaking with a help of interpreter often make pauses in order the interpreter not to lose the main idea being conveyed and to render it precisely;
- ⤴ Speak in short sentences – an interpreter will transform them into the grammatical structure of other language more quickly and more precisely;
- ⤴ Use a direct speech (the simplest verbal constructions);
- ⤴ Choose typical words (a precise translation of tricky synonyms really extends a translation process);
- ⤴ Provide information by recording figures (almost in all languages they are written the same (in Arabic figures) and have the same expression);
- ⤴ Keep a polite eye contact with a talker (use a nonverbal language, which does not need an interpreter);
- ⤴ ...avoid jokes (they are hard to translate);
- ⤴ Before the conversation discuss with an interpreter special technical terms, which will be used in the conversation;
- ⤴ Prepare in advance and take advantage of visual material during the conversation (diagrams, graphs, tables, pictures);
- ⤴ Tolerate and be prepared to the interruptions made by the interpreter (mostly they are made by an interpreter because he understands that the limit of information amount presented by you, which could be translated qualitatively at one go, was reached);
- ⤴ Fixate by a written document the agreements reached verbally;

2. The main differences of a business culture: business culture and culture of relations

Referring to the statements of R. Gesteland (1997) the contemporary culture of business world may be divided into:

- a) oriented towards business relations;
- b) oriented towards personal relations;

<p style="text-align: center;">CULTURES ORIENTED TOWARDS BUSINESS RELATIONS: Western and Northern Europe Great Britain North America Oceania South Africa</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CULTURES MODERATELY ORIENTED TOWARDS BUSINESS RELATIONS: Southern and Eastern Europe Mediterranean Area Western Asia (Singapore, Hong Kong)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CULTURES ORIENTED TOWARDS PERSONAL RELATIONS: Arabian Peninsula countries The major part of African continent Latin America The major part of Asian continent</p>
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Table 1 Distribution of business cultures (R. Gesteland 1997)

The main differences of business cultures may be grouped under the attitude to the subjects of a business negotiation:

5. The orientation of a business negotiation. The representatives of the culture oriented towards business relations are concentrated on a business deal. The details of deal, terms, price, delivery conditions, and guarantees are the basic elements of a business deal. The elaboration of these elements takes the most time of business negotiation. The communication channel (direct conversation, phone conversation, communication via Skype), personal features of an opponent are only the means for the benefit obtained from a business deal. Due to this in the countries of the culture oriented towards business relations the sales by phone, telemarketing, the Internet trade are popular. And on the contrary, the representatives of the culture oriented towards relations, during the business deal pays the main attention to the opponent, his personality, behaviour. It is difficult to work with unknown persons for the representatives of the culture oriented towards personal relations. Due to this reason the business deals are highly protracted, i.e., first, one gets acquainted with a business partner, and later the details of the deal are started to

coordinate. In the cultures oriented towards personal relations the priority is given to personal communication, direct conversations, what also prolong the duration of a deal.

6. Formalisation of the business relations. In the business-oriented cultures, business relations are based on the established order, rules, and documents. In the business relations official structures are referred to (legal entities), i.e., embassies, associations, law firms, etc. The representatives of the cultures oriented towards personal relations in business negotiation the priority give to personal contacts. Business deals are guaranteed not by written agreements, but by personal sponsorship, recommendation. Business relations are developed referring to personal contacts, natural persons (ambassadors, ministers, businessmen, officers, authorities).
7. Communication. The cultures based on business relations give priority to the content of information. The information is presented clearly, briefly and quickly. The negotiation is held forthright, the real objectives of the negotiation as well as the desirable results are reported openly. The attention is paid to the time wasted for negotiation. The opponent's clothes, manner of communication, behaviour are the secondary matters, which should not put into the shade the content of negotiation. E.T. Hall considering such a way of communication suggests to call the business-oriented cultures the „narrow context cultures“. In the cultures oriented towards personal relations on the contrary – communication style, manner of speech, observance of ceremonies and customs have an advantage against the negotiation content. Many factors modelling a negotiation form but not a content are used, the direct answer is avoided, in particular delicately the disclaimer, disagreement are expressed. The description term for the business cultures oriented towards personal relations suggested by E.T. Hall is the „wide context cultures“.

It should not be forgotten that the classification of separate countries under the priorities or orientation in business relations has a very wide range. For example, when analysing and comparing the EU states belonging to the business-oriented culture of a narrow context, such as Denmark, Germany, and Great Britain, the obvious differences are noticed: the British, comparing to the Arabs, are liable to business relations, however when comparing them to the Dane and especially to the German, already they may be attributed to the culture of a wider context, more oriented towards personal relations (M. Djursaa).

After the review of the differences of business cultures a conclusion may be made that the communication in characteristic to them manner between the business subjects belonging to opposite groups is doomed to failure, a conflict is programmed in the relationship. The representatives of the cultures oriented towards personal relations consider the colleagues from business-oriented cultures as impolite and aggressive. In the business-oriented culture the

colleagues from culture of personal relations are deemed to be unreliable, unpredictable, „wasting“ time and inconcrete.

In order to reach the set goal of business relations it is important to take cognizance of, perceive and consider the business culture of other party of a deal. The adjustment of results, negotiation process, terms and expectations considering the culture of a business partner is the basis of a successful business dialogue.

Showing of knowledge about and respect to the culture of a business partner and his language is one of the most elementary ways to gain over the sympathies of the opponent.

Scheduling of longer terms, postponement and adjustment of deadlines regarding business partner's culture type is a condition for business deal not to get into impasse due to lack of time, not to occur the annoyance due to longstanding coordinations and to help to retain the control under the business deal and systematic striving for the task set.