

Cross Cultural Skills

Introduction

Cross cultural communication at work in order to be effective and productive must be managed. This means ensuring that staff, managers and senior employees all appreciate what it takes to work with (and in) different cultures. Such an appreciation may come naturally to people such as those that are well travelled, with mixed heritage or simply have good communication skills; others are less flexible and may struggle to show empathy towards the other or something different. Although it is the latter that may need the more specialist attention, all employees benefit from learning about cross cultural communication at work.

This course centres on the impact of culture upon communication in the workplace, and how different cultures view their cultural norms of communication as being 'normal' and therefore other styles as 'abnormal'.

It helps participants address this problem, giving them greater understanding of both communication styles and how these effect the different ways different nationals will approach communication.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Define 'What is Culture?'
- List the generic cultural traits of the people with whom they work
- Demonstrate an understanding of culture and its impact upon the working environment
- Demonstrate improved communication skills
- Effectively read body language in its cross-cultural context
- Explain the different styles of working with people of different cultures
- Solve communication problems that occur due to culture
- Manage challenging situations that may be caused by differences in culture
- Formulate a plan for more effective team work using their cultural awareness

Content

A sample of what is covered includes:

- What is culture?
- Understanding our personal cultural heritage
- What is an 'organisational culture'?
 - Does your company have a 'culture?'
- How does a country culture impact on organisational culture and vice versa
- Why we feel comfortable with some cultures, but not others
- Why do we feel comfortable being communicated to/with in certain ways and not others?
- Cultural stereotypes and exploring their myths and realities
 - Is your behaviour typical?
 - How are you perceived?
 - How do you perceive others?

- Objective versus subjective culture
- Where culture comes from
 - Values
 - Beliefs
 - Religion
 - Location
- Culture as a norm of distribution
- Improving business communication across cultures: exploring our core beliefs and attitudes
- Working with specific cultures (tailored to needs of participants)
 - Group exercise - how to deal with
 - Group debrief on each nationality
 - Role play

During this course participants will be able to access generic cultural differences of the specific, tailored cultures.

This course uses the models developed by Trompenaar and Hofstede and Richard D. Lewis. As such it covers understanding cultural difference in a number of dimensions:

- Uncertainty avoidance
- Masculinity/femininity
- Power distance
- High context/low context
- Individualism/collectivism
- Achievement/ascription
- Time consciousness (monochronic vs polychronic chronemics)
- Personal Space (personal/physical proxemics)
- Touch and culture (haptics)
- Clothing and personal display
- Gesture
- Gaze
- Facial expression
- Etiquette - dining, dress and manners

