

# The Importance of Culture when Managing Cross Border Projects

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# Agenda

- Globalization and the Changing Role of the Project Manager
- The Importance of Cultural Understanding
- Highlights of Various World Cultures
  - Asia
  - North America
  - Europe
  - Latin America
- Applying Cultural Savvy
  - Project Success

# Globalization

- Cross Border Projects Increasing
  - New players
  - New cultures
  - New regulations
  - More complicated

**= Greater Challenge**

# Cultural Sensitivity

- Critical to Success
- My Exposure
  - Growing up
  - Adulthood
  - Professional Success
    - Timex
    - China

# Cultural Savvy

- Aids Communication
- Establishes Immediate Rapport
- Enhances Team Motivation / Buy-in
- Builds Positive Relationships
- Enables Cooperation
- Postures the PM for Success

# Testimonial

“I would definitely recommend Mark for future projects. At the beginning of this project, I thought that his work plan was impossible within our required timeframe. However, he proved me wrong. He has phenomenal cross cultural skills and patience in developing the relationships which are required to get people to go the extra mile and exceed expectations.”

# Culture

“It is not right or wrong, good or bad, it is just different”

Mark Hehl - March, 1996

# Overview of Major World Cultures

- North America
- China
- India
- The Philippines
- Latin America
- Europe
  - North
  - South

# North American

- Legal
  - The contract governs; not what is said / promised
- Poor at negotiation
- Direct

# North American

- Not warm and friendly at the beginning
- Will not joke at the beginning
- Asks direct questions

# North American

- Assertive and forceful
- Prompt and responsive
- “Time is Money”
  - They really believe this!
  - Advantage
- One language
- Straightforward
- Assertive
- Challenges authority

# China

- Dignity
  - Face
  - Mianzi
- Mutual respect
- Respect for authority
  - Obedience
- Humility
- Courtesy

# China

- Considerate
- Polite
- Well-mannered
- Modesty
- Do not show emotion
- Will not use “**No**”

# China

- Develop relationships first
  - Guanzhi
- Enquire about family and personal life
  - Expect personal questions
- Invest in relationships
  - It will pay dividends

# India

- Caste System
- Be on time
- Slow decisions
- Family orientation
- The boss is right
- Relationship value

# India

- Women
  - Shaking Hands???
- Head Shaking
- Develop Trust
- Accept refreshments
- Double Standard???

# The Philippines

- Warm
- Friendly
- Laid back
- Positive outlook
  - Good during a crisis
- Eager to please foreigners
- Non Aggressive
- Eager to learn

# Latin America

- Regionally Diverse
  - Not all the same!
- Warm/Friendly
- Tactile
  - “Abrazo”
- Time Attitude

# Latin America

- Formality
  - Señor
- Meet with Decision Maker
- Relationship Orientation
- Social Conversation First
  - Family

# Northern Europe

- Similar to North America
- Be on time
- Conservative dress
- Language sensitive
- Move to business fast

# Southern Europe

- Relationship Focus
- Laid Back
- Tactile
- Moves to Business Slower
- Dress
  - Italy
  - Shoe color

# Applying Cultural Savvy

- Avoid Stereotyping
- Be Genuinely Interested
  - Culture
  - History
  - Enjoy the Experience
- Stop, Look & Listen

# Applying Cultural Savvy

- Research & Learn
  - Culture
  - History
  - Language Basics
- Ask Questions
- Communicate their way
- Show Respect

# Best Investment

## **Cross Cultural Training**

Project Manager

All Team Members

Both Directions

**A Critical Investment!**

# Questions

Thank you for allowing  
me to be of service!

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