



Global business and intercultural skills

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“90% of the strategies fail, because people think and behave differently” (HBR 2015)

Today, the intellectual capacity of a company's staff defines its success in the market, depending on who works in them. That is, companies like Microsoft, Apple, Google, Cisco, have dedicated themselves to looking for highly trained people of excellence, no matter where they are on the planet. This mechanism is also repeated in various areas, whether in the academic world, in bilateral projects, in entrepreneurship.

In other words, diversity at work has increased in recent decades and today more than ever it is a reality, but it depends on cultural intelligence whether partners, bosses or the staff of these companies and projects achieve a successful joint work. By this, I mean that the correct management of cultural differences is the parameter to decide whether these differences will affect or benefit a company, enterprise or project.

“89% of new hires leave within 18 months due to culture fit issues” (Leadership IQ, 2016)

Business cannot be separated from people and their cultural environment. Understanding culture develops credibility, affects the way personal relationships develop, the way of negotiating, dealing with suppliers, and inspires workers, showing them how they should be.

The products, services and customer expectations are different in each culture, and that must be clear to plan and structure properly. The way we interact in phone calls, in conferences, in negotiations, in how we manage time or present deadlines, will give the guideline to follow in our venture or company.

Understanding culture affects the way we run our business, and that will translate into financial results. In fact, understanding the culture is as important as using the correct currency, if we are to succeed in today's business world.

We easily get carried away by what we see. If our colleagues, partners or clients dress similarly to us, have the same business interests, speak the same language (although we have an international language such as English), use the same brands, their office will look like ours, we eat almost the same things, we use the same laptops, our cell phone is of the same brand and model, then we will think that we are on the same frequency and that we will understand each other without any problem. What a distant idea! We must not be fooled, as these are superficial factors.

“79% of the potential is lost in a team due to interaction gap (3Circle Partners, 2016)”

In order to work properly, it is necessary to develop intercultural skills that lead us to a global mindset. We can have a lot of work experience, have excellent expertise, speak several languages, have travelled and worked at international companies, however, we have never heard, read or put our intercultural skills into practice because perhaps we do not know tools as e.g. cultural models. With these instruments, we can make a difference in personal and professional development when working globally.

Globalization has managed to cross borders quickly, frequently and easily, either by immigrating or from the comfort of an office in front of the computer. But it can be dangerous, if you are not aware of the differences that exist because we feel so "close."

For a global world, a global mindset is necessary which is "the ability to recognize and adapt to cultural cues so that you intuitively identify global opportunities and are effective in dealing with people of different backgrounds." (Charlene M. Solomon Michael S.)

Here, I share some practical tips you can start with:

- Reexamine your own cultural values.
- Don't judge or value situations, just observe and try to understand.
- Adjust to the signals that others transmit to you.

If what you are looking for is the key to success in the global world, then you will have to get down to work and immerse yourself in the world of interculturality, to find the answers to the situations that may be overwhelming you.

Remember ... BEING intercultural is the key to the future!

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