WHAT IS “CULTURE”?

CULTURE IS:
THE WAY OF LIFE OF A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHICH IS PASSED DOWN FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER THROUGH LEARNING

WHY IS CULTURE IMPORTANT?

The American Culture Today

- Not a Cultural Cookie Cutter or Melting Pot
- Patchwork Quilt
- Salad Bowl
- Mosaic or Tapestry

Changing demographics
Not just in urban areas
“Globalization”
Minorities in USA Today

12% African American
13% Hispanic
4% Asian and Pacific Islanders
1% American Indian

Culture is like an Iceberg.
Most of it is UNDER the water

Generalization vs. Stereotype

- Cultural Generalization
  - Never applies to everyone in every situation
  - Only a first “guess”
  - Discard it when no longer accurate or useful

- Cultural Stereotype
  - Applies to everyone in every situation – no exceptions
  - Retained even when no longer accurate or useful

BEHAVIOR
BELIEFS
VALUES AND
THOUGHT PATTERNS
Personality Types

- Intolerant to Ambiguity
  - High Uncertainty Avoidance
- Overly Task Oriented
  - High Need for Individual Achievement
- Overly Closed-minded & Inflexible

CULTURAL CONTINUUMS

To Do - To Be

- Earned Status
- Ascribed Status
- Affiliation
- Stability
- Inequality
- Reliance on Others
- Interdependence
- Cooperation
- Collectivism
- Shame
- Caste Rigidity

THE BREAKDOWN OF COMMUNICATION

- We send messages, not meaning
- TO DO people tend to be trust words—especially written words
- TO BE people use all senses

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

The "Iceberg Analogy" of Culture

Guilt
Caste Rigidity

Realistic Cultural Empathy is NOT

- Sympathy
- Agreement with
- Identification with

THE BREAKDOWN OF COMMUNICATION

We send messages, not meaning

TO DO people tend to be trust words—especially written words

TO BE people use all senses
CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN NONVERBAL NEGOTIATING BEHAVIOR

BEHAVIOR (TACTIC)  JAPANESE  AMERICAN  BRAZILIAN

SILENT PERIODS  5.5  3.5  0 (Number of silent periods greater than 10 seconds, per 30 minutes)

CONVERSATIONAL OVERLAPS  12.6  18.3  28.6 (Number per 10 minutes)

FACIAL GAZING  1.3  3.3  5.2 (Minutes of gazing per 10 minutes)

TOUCHING  0  0  4.7 (Not including handshaking, per 30 minutes)

What Doesn’t Fit?

• Nice weather we’re having!

• Sunny, high in the 70s.

• Haven’t we met before?

Communication Styles

A ➔ B

Communication Styles

A ➔ B
**Communication Styles**

- A to B

**Project Timeline**

- Stage One: 0 - 6 Months
- Stage Two: 6 - 12 Months
- Stage Three: 12 - 18 Months
- Stage Four: 18 - 24 Months

**Cross-Cultural Conflict**

- QUESTIONS:
  - How do you know if it’s a conflict?
  - Is it escalating or de-escalating?
  - When do you resolve it?
  - When it is beyond resolution?
  - How do you resolve the conflict?
THE VALUE OF CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING
AND COMMUNICATION

- Serving clients more effectively
- Creativity
- Awareness of culture—our own and others
- Self-awareness

Dr. Gary Weaver

Other Resources

- Hall, Edward. Beyond Culture.
- www.interculturalpress.com
- www.imi.american.edu
- gweaver@american.edu

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Thank You

Questions?

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