



Cultural Background in Business Communication

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Recall...

Hall in Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel (2010: 25)

- There's no boundaries between culture and communication.
- Culture is communication & communication is culture
- Because we learn about culture through communication and at the same time, communication is a reflection of culture.
- None of the human aspects are not touched and changed by the culture.

Deddy Mulyana in Rakhmat (2010: 24)

- The relationship between culture and communication is important to understand before we understand about intercultural communication, therefore through cultural influence people learn to communicate.
- The ways we communicate, the circumstances of our communication, language and style of the language we use, as well as our nonverbal behaviors, it is a response to the function of our culture.

Definition

- Intercultural communication is defined as situated communication between individuals or groups of different linguistic & cultural origins.
- This is derived from the following fundamental definitions: communication is the active relationship established between people through language, and intercultural means that this communicative relationship is between people of different cultures, where culture is the structured manifestation of human behavior in social life within specific national and local contexts: political, linguistic, economic, institutional, and professional.
- Intercultural communication is identified as both a concept and a competence. Intercultural competence is the active possession by individuals of qualities which contribute to effective intercultural communication and can be defined in terms of three primary attributes: knowledge, skills and attitudes.



Increased and improved communication in today's internet age has led to intercultural communication. People talk and communicate across states, cultures, and/or religion. While technology has made communication faster and easier, it is important that intercultural communication is handled with a lot of sensitivity.



WHAT CAN POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

People encode and decode or interpret messages basis their values, beliefs, culture, and assumptions. This could lead to greater misunderstanding.

How to improve Intercultural Communication?

- Research about the culture of the other party. This will reduce the chances of making sensitive remarks and hence can avoid confusion.
- Slangs and idioms should be avoided. Choose specific and relevant words.
- Be an attentive listener. Check for understanding. Ask questions if there is a doubt.
- Understand the importance of intonation while communicating. Stress on a specific word can change the entire meaning of a sentence.
- Check your body language/gestures. Some countries might find a particular gesture as offensive as compared to other countries/cultures.



In China while exchanging visiting card, one must accept it with both hands and have a good look at the card. One should not keep it in his/her pocket immediately.

Also, if you are visiting China and are having a meal with a Chinese host, make sure you leave some food in the plate. It implies that you are full and can't have more. If you eat all ingredients on the plate it could mean you are still hungry and want more.



To understand various cultures is interesting and could go a long way in making intercultural communication fruitful and worthwhile.
