

## CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Definition – Cross-cultural communication occurs when people with different nationalities, styles of working, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, sexual orientation, etc. communicate. It tries to negotiate, exchange, and intermediate cultural differences via verbal and non-verbal forms of communication.

Cross-Cultural Communications deal with the exchange of information between people belonging to different cultures. It is not necessary for the exchange of words to be successful or not. Even if both the parties are trying to attempt the same, it will be considered as Cross-Cultural Communication.

Several negotiations take place across cultures using the actions and other sign languages due to the absence of a common language. The exchange of knowledge is the priority rather than focusing on other aspects.

Every typical person has a style of communication that signifies the culture he or she belongs to. There is no doubt that we all come across a cross-culture situation where we need to establish a meaningful conversation. Most people often find a need for communication across cultures during their working hours.

## PRODUCTIVITY AND CULTURAL CONTINGENCIES

Cultural contingency: means that the most productive practices for a particular nation will depend heavily on its culture. This lesson for both expatriate and local managers to accept is neither home nation's nor host nation's practices are used exclusively.

Cultural contingencies are illustrated by theory Z, an integrative model of organizational behavior proposed by William Ouch. It provides a useful way in which behavioral instructions must be adapted to fit the organization's cultural environment:

- Long-term employment
- Non-specialized careers
- Individual responsibility
- Concern for the total person
- Less formal control systems
- Consensus decision making
- Slower rates of promotion

The Features of Theory Z

## Managing Cultural Diversity Involves Transformation: 5 Strategies To Succeed

In today's modern world, technology is only one of the factors giving many companies the opportunity to recruit the best people, from all around the world. This translates to people from different countries, cultures, and ways of life put together in offices or remote work spheres.

The benefits of diversity in the workplace are numerous and very much appreciated, but managing cultural diversity involves transformation which is not always an easy task. For this reason, thinkers has suggested some of the best strategies that you can put into practice in your organization. Let's review them:

## 5 Strategies to Manage Cultural Diversity in The Workplace

Here are 5 strategies to help transform your organization as well as manage differences and avoid cultural issues in the workplace:

### 1. Hiring

Your recruitment approach is one of the most important drivers of diversity in the workplace. Biased hiring decisions and processes that do not aim for diversity can lead to a homogenous workforce. Here are some recruitment strategies for organizations to hire a diverse workforce:

- Widen your applicant search by posting job ads on diverse job boards
- Optimize your job postings by writing inclusive descriptions and avoiding gender-coded language
- Train your recruitment team on how to tackle unconscious bias to create awareness

### 2. Communication

Organizations must ensure culturally inclusive communication with employees in order to manage a diverse workforce. All procedures, safety rules, and other important information should be designed properly in order to overcome cultural and language barriers.

Translating materials when possible as well as using symbols and pictures is a great way to make everyone feel included. This will make your message easier to understand for all employees regardless of their native language.

Also, give people enough time to think before and during meetings or presentations as language barriers may prevent them from expressing their thoughts and questions clearly. Ideally, send out meeting agendas in advance to allow members enough time to prepare for it.

### 3. Religious Accommodations

Another important aspect to keep in mind when managing cultural diversity is religious differences. As an employer, you are required to provide workplace religious accommodation. This includes schedule changes, dress code exceptions, and excused absences from programs that might be conflictive with the employees' beliefs.

Some of the accommodations you can provide are:

#### Schedule Changes

You should provide schedule flexibility to allow your employees enough time to perform religious activities like prayer days, or Sabbath. Even New Year, Christmas, and other common holidays are celebrated on different days depending on culture and religion. It is important for you to be aware of this and allow schedule modifications if needed.

#### Exceptions To Dress Code

Some religions do not allow women to wear pants or short skirts, while others require them to wear religious head scarfs or skull caps. Other religions prohibit men from cutting their hair and beard, which may not adhere to your established dress code.

Generally speaking, you have the right to set boundaries, create dress codes or grooming standards including wearing jewelry or displaying piercings and tattoos. But when an employee argues that your policies conflict with their religious beliefs, you may opt to make an exception.

### **Excused Absence from Programs**

As an employer, you are free to include religious expressions in your meetings, training material, and other functions. You may also choose to include spiritual practices and express humanist beliefs.

However, considering the cultural differences of a diverse workforce, you must allow employees whose religious beliefs conflict with your program, to be excused from attendance.

### **4. Team-Building**

Effective team-building practices are essential when managing cultural diversity in the workplace. Making sure everybody feels like they are an important part of the group will make team members more open and comfortable around each other, potentializing the benefits of cultural competence.

You can come up with different team-building activities such as off-site trips or have informal gatherings for lunch. Activities like scavenger hunt will get everybody collaborating and encourage them to work together, or a "circle of appreciation" to get everybody acknowledging good traits about each other.

### **5. Intercultural Interaction**

The best way to show your employees that you appreciate and respect cultural differences is by being open to their traditions and values. Avoid embracing or promoting only one culture in your workplace and make an effort to learn more about the characteristics of your employees' traditions.

For example, during the holiday season, make sure decorations are varied to represent the different cultures, or include popular dishes from different countries at employee gatherings.

### **Best Organizational Practices**

Managing the challenges of cultural diversity also requires organizations to have policies and practices in place. This will ensure that employees' rights are protected and the company stays compliant with government regulations.

Consider the following.

### **Policies and Procedures**

You must develop concrete policies that outline the company's expectations regarding employees' conduct. Express your commitment to making sure everyone is treated with dignity and respect at all times. Also, specify procedures to follow in case of a violation of any given



policy.

Your policy should include the proper procedures to report a discriminatory incident and the disciplinary actions an employee may be subject to.

### **Zero-Tolerance Policy**

Organizations should put in place a zero-tolerance policy to handle misconduct and specific behaviors that will not be tolerated. These include offensive jokes about ethnicity, gender or religion, slurs, name-calling, and any other intentional abusive behavior. Remember, a key to the implementation of a zero-tolerance policy is communicating it effectively to your employees. Review it with all new hires and include it in your employee handbook.

### **Sensitivity Training**

Sensitivity training in the workplace is important to make sure all employees understand how to co-exist with a culturally diverse range of people. Creating self-awareness, empathy, and tolerance are some of the main objectives of this type of training program. To achieve effective sensitivity training, you can complement employees' education with diversity and inclusion training as well as provide them with an open, judgment-free environment. Make employees feel comfortable discussing concerns regarding day-to-day interactions with their co-workers.

### **Managing Diversity in the Workplace: Management Process**

You have a key role in transforming the organizational culture so that it more closely reflects the values of our diverse workforce. Some of the skills needed are:

- an understanding and acceptance of managing diversity concepts
- recognition that diversity is threaded through every aspect of management
- self-awareness, in terms of understanding your own culture, identity, biases, prejudices, and stereotypes
- willingness to challenge and change institutional practices that present barriers to different groups

It's natural to want a cookbook approach to diversity issues so that one knows exactly what to do. Unfortunately, given the many dimensions of diversity, there is no easy recipe to follow. Advice and strategies given for one situation may not work given the same situation in another context.

Managing diversity means acknowledging people's differences and recognizing these differences as valuable; it enhances good management practices by preventing discrimination and promoting inclusiveness. Good management alone will not necessarily help you work effectively with a diverse workforce. It is often difficult to see what part diversity plays in a specific area of management.

To illustrate, the following two examples show how diversity is an integral part of management. The first example focuses on the area of selection, the second example looks at communication:

#### *Issues*

- How do you make the job sound appealing to different types of workers, such as people with disabilities?

- How can recruitment be effectively targeted to underutilized groups?
- How do you overcome cultural bias in the interviewing process, questions, and your response?

### *Strategies*

- Specify the need for skills to work effectively in a diverse environment in the job, for example: "demonstrated ability to work effectively in a diverse work environment."
- Make sure that good faith efforts are made to recruit a diverse applicant pool, particularly underutilized minorities and women.
- Focus on the job requirements in the interview, and assess experience but also consider
- transferable skills and demonstrated competencies, such as analytical, organizational, communication, coordination. Prior experience has not necessarily mean effectiveness or success on the job.
- Use a panel interview format. Ensure that the committee is diverse, unit affiliation, job classification, length of service, variety of life experiences, etc. to represent different perspectives and to eliminate bias from the selection process. Run questions and process by them to ensure there is no unintentional cultural or institutional bias.
- Ensure that appropriate accommodations are made for disabled applicants.
- Know your own cultural biases. What stereotypes do you have of people from different groups and how well they may perform on the job? What communication styles do you prefer? Sometimes what we consider to be appropriate or desirable qualities in a candidate may reflect more about our personal preferences than *about the skills needed to perform the job.*

