Cross-Cultural Communication in Global Business

Dr Geetha J, Associate Professor
Department of Business Management
R.G.Kedia College of Commerce,Hyderabad

Abstract

Learning how to interact successfully with individuals of various cultures is the focus of organisational cross-cultural communication, which aims to teach employees these skills. Language hurdles, changes in high-context vs low-context, disparities in nonverbal behaviour, and power differentials are some of the most significant factors that might impede communication between cultures. It is helpful to be aware of how people from different cultural backgrounds and groups are similar to and different from one another while speaking with those from a variety of cultural backgrounds and groups. Verbal and nonverbal communication skills are becoming more valuable in increasingly diverse workplaces, making it more necessary than ever for workers to possess these skills. It is essential for the success of any company that operates in a multicultural environment to have good cross-cultural communication abilities. Through attentive cross-cultural communication, misunderstandings may be avoided, and genuine relationships can be developed with people from various cultural backgrounds. The study of cross-cultural communication is the study of the similarities and differences in how individuals from different cultures interact with one another and those from other cultures. This includes studyinghow individuals from different cultures interact with those from other cultures. People of various cultures can speak with one another when they canrecognise and respect the unique characteristics that each culture brings to the table. For understanding on both sides, there must first be a level of knowledge with, or a desire to learn about, the cultural norms and practises of the other party. Exchanges that are spoken, as well as those that are nonverbal,can have symbolic depth and importance that is inferred from them. For there to be communication that is both clear and successful, it is necessary to have background knowledge of beliefs, norms, and perceptions. Acquiring knowledge is essential for effective communication across cultural boundaries. Tosuccessfully communicate across cultural barriers, one must first be aware of the difficulties they may encounter and then actively work to overcome them. In the same breath, one must accept that their efforts may only sometimes bear fruit and adjust their strategy to this realisation. For instance, if there are problems with communication, it is essential to attempt to work constructively through them rather than getting defensive or aggressive since it is more probable that cultural differences are to fault for the problem. When talking with people from various cultures, going at your own pace and avoiding making assumptions about the other person's motivations is essential

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Introduction

One way to ensure that you completely understand what is being communicated is via active listening. However, even attentive listening may fail to catch misconceptions when word meanings vary between languages and cultures. When trying to communicate across cultures, it often helps to have someone in the middle who is fluent in both languages and cultures. They can convey both the meaning and tone of a spoken language. For instance, before being presented to individuals from a culture that does not converse together in such a powerful manner, they may soften remarks that might be regarded as proper in one culture but not in another. They may also manipulate the tempo of the conversation. While members of particular cultures go right to the point, others take the time to get to know one another by discussing topics other than the topic at hand. Some group members may feel uneasy if the main issue is discussed too soon. A knowledgeable mediator or arbitrator can explain the situation and provide solutions to the parties involved. However, third parties can add unnecessary hurdles to the communication process. It might seem like prejudice, even if there is none if a mediator has the same background as one of the parties to a dispute but not the other. It is usual for mediators to be more sympathetic or understanding toward someone of the same cultural background as themselves, even if this is not their intention. However, the possibility for misunderstandings across cultures grows when the mediator is from a different culture. Taking more time for verifying and re-confirming understandings at each level of the conversation or negotiation process is acceptable, as is participating in further talks concerning the process and how the discussions are being carried out. (Hill, 2014)

Objective of paper

1. Discuss about Need For Communication Across Different Cultures
2. Discuss about Issues That Can Arise When Conducting Business Across Cultures
3. Discuss about Cross-Cultural Training Is Important.

The Need For Communication Across Different Cultures

Cross-cultural communication in the workplace involves interacting and communicating with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. With the rise of internationalism and globalisation, this is a pressing concern. Overcoming disparities in nationality, religion,

boundaries, culture, and behaviour are all essential concerns of effective cross-cultural communication.

Communicating effectively across cultural boundaries is a must in the corporate world. There will always be a need for cross-cultural communication amongst workers, colleagues, consumers, and clients due to the variety of people in cities and nations. A company's bottom line might benefit from employees being sensitive to cultural norms and practices. The advantages of cross-cultural knowledge may be seen in many areas, including improved worker interaction, better customer interactions, and efficient client management.(P.J, 2010)

Certain principles can improve your cross-cultural communication abilities, but true proficiency can only be attained by cross-cultural awareness training, language learning, overseas travel, and cultural immersion.

- Speaking Skills: Cross-cultural communication relies equally on active listening and articulate expression. The ability to communicate effectively has little to do with one's accent, grammar, or vocabulary. Instead, encouragement, affirmation, appreciation, and properly wording requests or expressing sensitive viewpoints go a long way toward improving cross-cultural communication.
- Observation: People's clothing, body language, interactions, and actions may reveal much information about other cultures. Remember that not all behaviours have the exact origins of those in your society. Inquiring about different cultures is a great way to learn more about them.
- Patience: Every human being is unique, and it's essential to acknowledge and appreciate that there will always be cultural differences that might be vexing and perplexing. Patience is most certainly a virtue in this situation. Respect is earned, and intercultural understanding is fostered through perseverance.

Flexibility: The key to effective cross-cultural communication is an open mind and a willingness to change. When people from different backgrounds work together to identify, accept, and address their similarities and differences, they can break down barriers to communication, trust, and innovation.By meeting these requirements for effective cross-cultural communication, you may boost your ability to connect with people from other cultures and increase your chances of having fruitful interactions with them.(Bartell, 2003)

Issues That Can Arise When Conducting Business Across Cultures

Since companies are increasingly looking outside for opportunities, new developments are inevitable. Despite companies' best efforts, doing business across international borders presents additional complications. One of the most pervasive problems in international trade is the language barrier. Commercial transactions need to take place in a mutually understood language. Even if two people aren't native speakers of the same language, there still has to be some agreement in the words they use to avert disaster. Furthermore, more and more executives are seeing issues inside their organisations due to a failure to address cultural differences adequately. This is not a worldwide issue. It's as simple as two individuals from different cultures being unable to communicate successfully. Most of the time, this happens because companies need to put more emphasis on this topic during training. For a company to effectively prepare for the challenges of cross-cultural communication, it must first get a thorough understanding of those challenges. In general, they are self-evident. They areapparent opportunities that companies should always take advantage of. However, enterprises often overlook them, which ultimately leads to their demise. The most prevalent and severe of these issues is a communication breakdown. This often arises when upper-level management and supervisors need more skills to interact effectively with their staff. Employees only fare well when they are kept informed. This difficulty in communicating across cultures stems less from an inability to convey the message than from a failure to exchange relevant information.(Cameron, 1984)

When communicating with persons from another culture, it's necessary to use careful word selection and proper diction. You need to know the appropriate jargon to convey your message correctly and avoid using terminology that can insult the listener. Most employees have good intentions when they use derogatory language, but the fallout is frequently severe and challenging to repair. In this situation, it is preferable to err on the side of caution. They will only struggle once companies actively work to improve their cross-cultural communication skills. Due to a lack of education on the finer points of various cultures, more communication between individuals is often needed. Profitability at corporations may be increased with some work to fix this.(Hans, 1978)

Fixing Communication Gaps Across Cultures

- Meetings: Hold gatherings to educate workers about cultural differences. Establishing a solid working connection amongst coworkers early on is essential; a low-stakes introduction helps do that. Your personnel will be more prepared to handle unexpected events if they are familiar with the target culture's language, rules, and standards of appropriate conduct. Altering one's assumptions may improve interpersonal dynamics on the job.

- Activities: Create exercises highlighting language's importance to our daily lives. Spend one day, for instance, without speaking a word. Go to everyone to write an agreement detailing what they intend to gain from experience, how long they can keep quiet (with what caveats), and how they will manage to get through the day without speaking. After spending a day with a language barrier, most participants find empathising with those temporarily living in a foreign country easier.

- Workshops: Facilitate seminars and share advice on improving cross-cultural communication in the workplace. Individuals behave by the norms of their society. Behaviours may be interpreted differently by those of diverse cultural backgrounds. Employee participation in preventing conflicts resulting from a lack of cultural awareness can be bolstered through strategies like active listening (rephrasing what is said to ensure understanding can be achieved) and the use of multiple forms of communication (written, audio, and visual).

- Coaching: Prepare workers to mediate workplace disputes arising from cultural differences. Allow workers to practise responding to problems from perspectives other than their own. Participants may learn to appreciate cultural differences via role-playing activities in which they are paired off. Ask each couple to provide an example of a cultural difference that led to a recent argument. Ask everyone to give an example of anything they find objectionable or out of the ordinary. Invite everyone to share how the issue is addressed in their cultural context. Get everyone involved to think of a solution to the problem. Ask the pairs to share their findings with the rest of the group.

- Take it Slow: The rapidity with which native speakers often talk is a frequent source of criticism from those who are not fluent in the language. It's helpful to vary your speech rate depending on your audience, whether a new English learner or a native English speaker from a different culture.However, remember that the effect may be insulting if you slow down too much.

- Active Listening: "Active listening" is a proven method for bridging cultural gaps in communication. Restating the other person's words and asking follow-up questions are also parts of this strategy. In a discussion between people of different cultural backgrounds, this is an excellent method to make sure nothing gets lost in translation.

- Small Size Information: In a discussion between two native speakers, even a single statement may convey a wealth of information. That's why it's essentialnot tosimultaneously overwhelm your audience with too much information, as suggested by specialists in cross-cultural communication. Avoid using complicated, multi-part statements and instead stick to clear, straightforward directions and explanations.

- Cultural Assumptions: If you've ever travelled internationally, you know how much of our ability to understand one another depends on our shared cultural values and attitudes, both in what we say and how we say it. When communicating with someone from another culture, it's best to avoid jokes, slang, and cultural allusions that might mislead or confuse them.

- Adopt for Friendly Formality: North American English speakers tend to have a relaxed and friendly tone in conversation, even when speaking to strangers or new friends. Someone of a different culture may feel uneasy or offended by this method. Maintaining an air of respect requires adopting a more official tone of voice at the beginning and gradually relaxing it as the relationship becomes more comfortable between you.

Accept intercultural communication stress and learn.

Some workers may inappropriately and wastefully cc supervisors on more emails and papers than is necessary. The issue may be quickly resolved by informing the worker of what is anticipated from that setting. Educating workers on what is expected of them in various locations might solve this issue. When managers micromanage too much, workers may feel they need to be given more responsibility. Managers often assume that their workers would give them more excellent credit when making decisions, even if the employees themselves would like to take the lead. Rather than labelling employees' attitudes and actions as good or bad, a productive staff will strike a balance between the two. Accepting advice from culturally similar people who seem more receptive and empathic might be helpful in these situations. Do not take responses to you personally, especially if they are considered disrespectful in your society. The burden of communicating across cultures is something you should try to accept. Previous

intercultural experience or the novelty of it, known as "culture shock," might influence stress. Those who have yet to travel much or see other cultures may find the burden of doing so more significant. They have developed excellent intercultural abilities and the ability to learn and adapt quickly, thanks to their life experiences. People unfamiliar with culture might learn about its conventions by watching local television and channels. One may understand what to anticipate and how to adjust based on the local cuisine, music, sports, history, mannerisms, tales, and even the colour scheme.(Rudzki, 1988)

Cross-Cultural Training Is Important.

There are several advantages for firms and employees that participate in cross-cultural training to address diversity in the workplace. This is aided by understanding one's background and the backgrounds of others, as well as common misconceptions, stereotypes, and worldviews. They will also be able to appreciate the perspectives, values, and customs of others who are different from themselves. Trainingassists in acculturation to new cultural contexts and forestalls many potential issues. By creating a harmonious atmosphere, they will be better able to cooperate and accomplish the group's goals. Education may break down barriers, leading to more trusting relationships and fluent conversations. As people's awareness of the world grows, so does their capacity to learn from it. Cross-cultural dialogue relies heavily on active listening. Training improves people's ability to listen and comprehend, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively. Exercises help boost employability by fostering a knowledge- and trust-based communication system and a cohesive company culture.

Use group exercises and attentive listening to demonstrate cultural sensitivity. The primary training activity in multinational corporations or colleges is low-context communication. Students from high-context cultures may need to be acquainted with it. Teachers may advise what to include in an opening statement or paper. People from societies where praising oneself in an introduction is frowned upon would appreciate this feature.(Rymes, 2008)

Importance Of Design Thinking In Corporate Communications Across Cultures.

In their internal communications, multinational corporations such as Apple and Microsoft, amongst many others, emphasise the significance of design thinking as an essential component. A human-centred approach, empathy, and creativity are the crucial components of good cross-cultural communication; design thinking is an efficient process for resolving complex challenges by applying these three principles. Additionally, it enables us to forecast stakeholders' expectations about different communication situations. Schemas are thought patterns that humans tend to build due to their predisposition to believe in patterns. Schemas are mental models that help people think and behave consistently in recurring scenarios. The practice of design thinking challenges these conventional ways of thinking and contributes to developing novel modes of seeing and communicating. Connecting with people of other cultures and exchanging ideas by listening to their tales and demonstrating empathy is possible. It is usually best to have formal and informal contact with the stakeholders in this context to define the audience for the message and the objective of the communication. When you understand their requirements, preferences, and goals clearly, you can betterdetermine an effective communication strategy by conceiving the appropriate message, content, medium, and approach. The process of iterative contact with the various stakeholders may continue in parallel until the development of assets such as movies, posters, emails, data sheets, media write-ups, etc., depending on the circumstances. By engaging in many groups brainstorming with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, design thinking makes it possible for the stakeholders to connect with different cultures and situations successfully.(Van Hook, 2011)

Ethics in cross-cultural communication.

Companies may be subject to different ethical and legal requirements while operating abroad as at home. Therefore, communicators must know these variations when writing for audiences in nations with distinct cultural norms, ethical standards, and legal systems. Businesses must make choices on how to address the moral norms of other cultures. Since it is more challenging for women to get into leadership roles in the workplace, western countries that sell mobile phones to Muslim countries must determine whether to leave women out of their marketing materials. However, this must be accomplished without contributing to the country's already entrenched forms of prejudice. People mean that when

discussing a "moral minimum" of ethics (Thomas Donaldson, 1991). It's safer not to explicitly contradict preconceived notions and cultural conventions by including images of women acting contrary to their typical roles. But there's nothing wrong with becoming an activist; the millennial generation and the media generally see groups that fight injustice positively.(Deardorff, 2015)

Conclusion

In this article, we have explored the challenges associated with communication and ways in which people may enhance their ability to communicate across cultural boundaries. Intimacy across cultures emphasises shared experiences and interpersonal connections, while uniqueness places a greater emphasis on distinctive characteristics and autonomy. Maintaining a healthy equilibrium between the competing requirements for originality and closeness is essential to effective communication. Specific phrases and acts can stereotype, intimidate, and offend other persons and cultures. A compassionate and sympathetic attitude toward the sentiments of others is essential. This predicament needs to lend itself to a more complex resolution. Nevertheless, one should be aware of the costs and benefits, and to be successful, one has to strike a balance between the two.

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