DEALING WITH CULTURAL CLASH

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Abstract: General information about culture clash, types of culture conflicts,the factors that cause it in business and its solutions are given in detail in the following article.

Key words: cultural clash, conflict, issues, communication, company, difference.

Culture clash -a situation in which the diverging attitudes, morals, opinions, or customs of two dissimilar cultures or subcultures are revealed. This may occur, for example, when people in different professions, such as academics and business people, collaborate on a project. See also culture conflict; culture shock.

The two types of cultural conflicts are primary conflict and secondary conflict. Primary cultural conflict pertains to fundamental values in a cultural group, while secondary conflict is cultural conflict that does not involve values that are seen as critical to the groups conflicting.

Culture clash can be caused by a multitude of reasons:

Differences on issues such as expenses and pay.

Lack of agreement on workplace formality.

Opposing behavioral norms.

Conflicting operating styles.

Opposite views on advertising and promotional

That's a lot of different cultures around the world that needed to absorb our corporate culture.

Fortunately, certain principles that make for a winning corporate culture are universal, whether you are in Malaysia or Australia, Norway or India. How so? Because they all relate to people, and people are the crux of any organization's success. A few of those principles include:

• Open communication is critical. Always encourage employees to speak up if they spot a problem or have a suggestion. A corporate culture that promotes such open communication can work well anywhere in the world because it spurs people who have a different take on things to share their thoughts. If employees feel comfortable speaking out, that can help a U.S. company operating in a foreign land avoid missteps.

When we were working with a Korean contractor, open communication revealed that our contracting strategy would cause their management team to "lose face" if we stuck to our standard. The contract was modified, which won the work for us and saved the Korean company 30% over their normal costs. Open communication requires active listening!

Smart hiring practices make a difference. It's possible to take a new hire and train them to fit into your corporate culture, but it's even better to hire people who are a good fit to begin with. Whatever your values are, you want to make sure the new people you hire share those values, and that's important both at home and abroad. A bonus is that, once you bring on good people, they often know other good people and can help you recruit. After thanking people for choosing to join our company, we always asked them to name the five best people they had recently worked with, and those names went onto out "talent magnet" chart. In year eight, one of those targets answered that "they are all here, so I decided to join them."

• A spirit of belonging helps promote a passion for work. People want to belong to something, which is why they buy the jersey of a favorite sports team or bumper stickers supporting a favorite cause. For some reason, though, this sense of belonging rarely happens where people work. But you can go a long way toward making people passionate about their work if you organize activities where they can get to know each other as people, not just coworkers. In many cultures, people already like to spend time with coworkers outside of work, so for them it comes naturally.

We had a simple lunchtime airplane competition organized by people from different departments and different age groups to get some cross-fertilization and "bust silos" in the company. At this event, which helped to bring family into the corporate culture in a positive way, parents built and decorated planes with their kids. Pictures of the event and names of participants were posted at the coffee bar and put in the naewsletter that was mailed to team members' homes to maximize impact. This helped build a sense of belonging that spread across the company and into the home.

You really can break down the barriers that appear to separate people in different parts of the world by respecting their local cultures—and inviting them to belong to yours as well.

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