

Cross-Cultural Business Tips



Author Daniel Tschudy

Winning on the Cross Cultural Battlefields.

Global leadership in today's context.

Yes, in a perfect world, a global leader masters all psychological, philosophical, geographical, geopolitical and anthropological elements. A true superman with an excellent global understanding and great experience in EQ and CQ (emotional and cultural intelligence). Possibly multilingual, sensationally communicative, and equipped with all relevant tools, including lots of travel- and meeting-time at disposal. Wishful thinking, for sure. Such a person does not exist.

To be a true global leader has become such a complex task, that one single person cannot fit the job anymore. It's now a matter of very inter-active management teams, who support their leader in a manner which allows them together to inspire, teach, lead and control global teams and interest groups (suppliers, clients, employees).

Specialists from all back-grounds must therefore join in such group-leaderships. Representatives from HR, of course, but also education experts, communication and media specialists, political analysts, financial wizards, and even life-balance advisers and motivation providers. But then, global leaders need one more element, a tool which cannot be bought, stolen or even learned. Either one has it, or not: EQ. Emotional Intelligence, expressed through charisma, feelings and connectivity. The other key is a deep-rooted tolerance, or better acceptance, about other people's values, beliefs, interests, and behaviours. An ability, which probably can be learned best, once again, from parents. Yet a crucial tool to be really successful in today's rushed and over-connected global business environment. Because the business world is not *one*, regardless of quick air-connections, video-conferencing and quick data-access. It's more complicated.

Preparation in advance

But companies still make the same mistakes: For example, expatriates obtain their destination-training upon arrival at their new post, rather than *before* the actual decision-making about their new job. However, if the expatriate for whatever reasons is not performing well in the new destination, the

subsequent correction measurements substantially delay the ongoing business project and become extremely expensive. It is estimated that global corporations spend EURO 200'000+ for a repatriation effort (transport home & new assignment for former expatriate, replacement efforts, communication to employees, clients, media, etc.). Not to mention the time and energy required by HQ to supervise the transaction.

Yet, unfortunately, CQ is hardly ever part of the research and preparation work prior to a merger & acquisition, prior to an opening of a branch office in a foreign environment or prior to employing an expatriate. Also, Due Diligence-reports seldom contain soft-factor issues, such as status, gender, communication behaviour, etc.

But even experienced managers still see the world as *one identical market* and they plan sales and marketing according to geographic-logistical frameworks (i.e. air-connections or travel time). Why otherwise would a "region" such as EMEA (Europe, Middle East & Africa) be so popular in international enterprises? For substantial global business activities, EMEA makes no sense, really. Europe is such a diversified continent itself (just look at the difficulties within the EU), and so is Africa. In the Middle East, maybe, business practices and cultural behaviours are somewhat similar between Saudi Arabia across the Sinai to Morocco. Or are they?

New global business territories

Anyway, Geert Hofstede, another respected cross-culturist, suggested in his concept 'Globe', that there are ten cultural clusters:

Anglo Cultures (including Britain & US), **Arab Cultures** (from 'leader' Saudi Arabia to Maghreb), **Confucian Asia** (China /Japan as major players); **Germanic Europe; Nordic Europe; Eastern Europe** (Russia dominating), **Latin Europe, Latin America** (different to Latin Europe), **Southern Asia** (India & Indonesia) & **Sub-Sahara Africa**

That's quite interesting and surely more cultural-needs-oriented than the old business system (east vs west or established vs emerging markets). Maybe Hofstede's names for the above regions sound a bit old-fashioned, but his proposal certainly allows a more sensible approach to the regional needs and cultural behaviours. And thus can become a valuable element for global leaders to be globally successful.

About the Author



Daniel Tschudy, coach, consultant and publicist in cross culture competence, offers keynote-speeches, presentations to corporate management groups, expatriate-coaching, and cross-cultural seminars.

Tschudy talks and teaches about values, behaviours, communication, negotiations and business practices in the global battlefield; with focus on the emerging markets in Africa, Arabia and Asia. Specifically featured are also China and Japan.

info@tschudy.com
www.tschudy.com

daniel tschudy

