



Cross-Cultural Communication

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Abstract: Communication is a process through which we share our thoughts and visions. It is an act of giving, receiving, and sharing information. Communication acts as a bridge in our personal as well as professional lives. When we want ourselves to be listened to, understood, and given importance, our communication with others needs to be strongly built. Communication is the ultimate key to establishing strong ground for any relationship. There are different types of communication. Here we will discuss Cross-Cultural Communication.

Keywords: Communication, Information, Professional Cross-cultural.

I. WHAT IS CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION?

It is a sphere where people from different cultures, ethnicities, races, and regions have their communications within themselves. It can also be termed as a field of study where people find similarities and differences among different cultural groups to bridge the gap of communication.

II. IMPORTANCE IN THE MODERN WORLD

Cross-cultural communication can be a challenge, but in this era of globalization, it is very important in almost every sector of our life. Be it education or the workplace, we have to deal with cultural differences. With the growing and rapidly changing environment in the workplace, the most difficult part is to understand how to communicate effectively with individuals who speak a different language or depend on some distinct means to reach a common goal. This is where cross-cultural communication comes in rescue.

- It results in excellent interaction with the other.
- It helps in good workplace relationships.
- Help people to respect the unlike beliefs.
- Gets to know the different cultures and traditions.
- It imparts creativity from others.
- Improves productivity.
- Improves adaptability.
- Gets the opportunity to know about one's own culture from a different perspective.
- Helps get rid of presumptions or prejudices.
- It also helps in building interpersonal skills.
- It connects people from all over the world.

Cultural differences might present themselves even within a specific country or territory, not just internationally—for example, people from New York might approach work and life differently than people from Los Angeles, despite sharing the same language and nation.

III. BASIC ELEMENTS

Language

Verbal communication is how people most explicitly convey information from one person to another, so knowing how to speak different languages greatly empowers people to connect across cultural divides. Once you overcome language barriers, you remove the greatest obstacle to free-flowing communication. A conversational level of fluency might be all that is necessary.

Non-verbal Communication

Sometimes body language—such as eye contact or facial expressions—might be all it takes to communicate certain information across cultures. Still, non-verbal communication often takes on different meanings among different cultural groups. For instance, an inoffensive hand gesture in one culture might be offensive in another.

**Social Norms**

Different cultural norms lead to different communication styles. For example, in high-context cultures (such as in Japan and China), people talk about a subject gingerly rather than take a blunter approach. By contrast, low-context cultures (such as in the United States and Germany) generally prefer more direct forms of communication.

IV. FEW STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Here are four tips to help you improve cross-cultural communication in your organization.

Embrace Agility

The inability or unwillingness to adapt to change is a common barrier to cross-cultural communication. Often, people are reluctant to accept new things due to an unconscious fear that doing so will change their culture or belief system in some way, Goodman explains. If these assumptions are not questioned, actions can be detrimental to personal and organizational growth. By becoming aware of unconscious barriers or subconscious biases, people can become more open to adapting.

“When an organization becomes too set in its ways, it can halt improvements because they are not open to trying different ways of doing things,” Goodman says. Instead, organizations need to be focused on continuous improvement, which requires a certain degree of flexibility and willingness to try different ways of doing things. Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to this problem. Rather, the best way to address the issue often involves getting started on an individual level.

To begin, consider stepping out of your comfort zone and trying new things in the workplace. In terms of cross-cultural communication, one of the best ways to embrace this idea is to try new methods of doing things in ways that can help you better understand the perspectives of others.

Be Open-Minded

Similarly, closed-mindedness is another barrier to cross-cultural communication that can hinder the success of an organization. “People get caught in the trap of thinking that there is one right way to do things and everything else is wrong,” Goodman points out.

On a personal level, becoming more open-minded can be as simple as learning more about an idea that you wouldn’t have considered otherwise. Being exposed to new viewpoints and making the effort to understand them can have an impact on how you make decisions moving forward.

On the other hand, when you’re in a situation where you must work with a closed-minded individual, Goodman suggests you ask questions and look for opportunities to offer a range of thoughts for your audience by providing reliable and valid pieces of data. Leveraging accurate data can be a powerful tool when convincing someone to consider other ideas. By discussing options and listening, you can build trust.

However, presenting this information in an effective way can be a challenge. If people feel overwhelmed by the information or do not trust its validity, it can have the opposite effect. Be sure to carefully identify and present the information to successfully encourage others to approach other ideas with an open mind.

Facilitate Meaningful Conversation

A lack of communication in an organization can exacerbate cultural differences between individuals. In an environment that does not allow for open communication, people tend not to speak up or share comments and feedback with one another.

So, how might members of an organization facilitate open conversation and freely interact with each other? Although the organizational culture is unlikely to change overnight, making the effort to spark conversations on the individual level can be a step in the right direction. “One of the best ways to get started is to connect with someone who might have a different perspective from your own,” Goodman remarks. “Start a conversation with someone in another department ask questions, and try to gain a better understanding of their point of view by actively listening.”

Not only will this allow you to gain an understanding and appreciation for another person’s perspective, but it will also help to build strong relationships in the workplace. Goodman recommends “being curious, asking questions, and being open to different points of view”. Encouraging meaningful interactions also has a significant impact on the overall environment by creating a comfortable space where team members can openly share their thoughts and ideas.

**Become Aware**

Another important step to improving cross-cultural communication in the workplace is to become more culturally and self-aware. On a personal level, you should make an effort to acknowledge your own implicit biases and assumptions that affect the way you interact with others. Although this may be easier said than done, you can start by making a conscious attempt to empathize with your audience and gain a better understanding of their point of view. At the organizational level, Goodman recommends starting with an audit of internal communications. Throughout this process, you should be asking how your mission and company values are defined, whether or not they are inclusive, and whether the team's various cultures have been taken into account. Performing this analysis will give you a good idea of the state of your corporate culture, including areas in your organizational communication strategy that you can improve to better serve your team members and achieve your goals.

Be Friendly

Though people of different cultural backgrounds might characterize the specific actions of friendliness differently, approaching intercultural communication with a friendly attitude is easy to appreciate universally. When you act with common courtesy and goodwill, team members will understand your desire to communicate with them in their own cultural vernacular—even if you might occasionally miscommunicate or misinterpret what they're saying.

Educate Yourself

Try your best to increase your cultural understanding on your own. It can prove offensive when you act as if it's another person's responsibility to tell you how to adapt to and interact with someone of their culture. Consult trusted advisors and resources on how to best converse across cultural boundaries. Human resources departments for a wide variety of companies are also doing what they can to provide cultural training resources for employees of all backgrounds.

Embrace Humility

Surmounting cultural barriers might lead to embarrassing miscommunications or unfortunate misinterpretations at times, so remain humble, forgiving, and open-minded in these circumstances. A culturally sensitive work culture will allow for occasional mistakes like this, so long as it's apparent they were made in good faith.

Keep an eye out for unconscious biases

You might believe you have no preexisting points of view about various cultures, but keep a vigilant eye out for signs you might be acting out of prejudice or bias. By addressing these sorts of preconceptions and stereotypes, you lessen the chances of acting on them and decrease the possibility of offending someone.

Remain adaptable

Keep an open mind in any work environment or situation in which you might need to engage in cross-cultural communication. Adaptability will serve you and your team members well as you seek to understand one another's different cultural contexts and work together as optimally as possible.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, cross-cultural communication is a vital skill in today's interconnected and diverse world. The ability to effectively communicate across cultural boundaries is essential for building positive relationships, fostering understanding, and achieving success in various personal, professional, and social contexts. To navigate the challenges of cross-cultural communication, individuals must cultivate cultural awareness, sensitivity, and adaptability. By recognizing and respecting cultural differences in language, nonverbal communication, communication styles, norms, and etiquette, individuals can minimize misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Active listening, open-mindedness, and a willingness to learn from other cultures are key components of successful cross-cultural interactions. It's important to approach cross-cultural communication with empathy and a genuine interest in bridging gaps, rather than reinforcing stereotypes or biases.

As globalization continues to connect people from different parts of the world, mastering the art of cross-cultural communication becomes increasingly valuable. Whether in business, diplomacy, education, or personal relationships, the ability to communicate effectively across cultures enriches our experiences, promotes harmony, and contributes to a more inclusive and interconnected global community.

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