

# **Intercultural Competence for the Global (German) Manager**

## **— Seminar Design —**

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**“Who understands others as well as oneself will be granted success in a thousand encounters.”**

*A 3000-year-old Chinese proverb on dealing with foreigners.*

*The above Chinese proverb summarizes well the demands placed on today's global player. The basis of any successful overseas adaptation is not so much learning about a new culture as it is acquiring a better understand of your own background. Once this is understood, the acquisition of intercultural competence can begin.*

*This two-day seminar addresses this challenge by first clarifying the (unconscious) behavior and thinking patterns of the German business person and then to contrast this with the rules and (hidden) core values of three important trading partners (American, Chinese, Polish). Through group feedback, lectures, role plays and discussions, the participants gain the feeling and knowledge of what it means to be interculturally competent. The language of instruction is primarily in English.*

### **Seminar Goal:**

Create an understanding of one's own culture and the acquisition of intercultural competence will be the focus. The main points of interest will deal with communication and behavior strategies, which can considerably influence negotiation and conflict resolution.

### **Who should attend:**

Managing executives, group leaders, engineers, technicians

### **Seminar Contents:**

#### **1. Examining the concept of "culture"**

- The unspoken assumptions of German values
- Theoretical frameworks of Edward Hall and Geert Hofstede
- The need to stereotype others

#### **2. Discovering German, Chinese, American and Polish cultural values**

- Historical analysis of the German, U.S., Chinese and Polish psychologies — values, ethics, traditions
- Motivation in conflict: How do Germans differ from others?
- Examining German "solide Ausbildung", American "time is money", Chinese "guanxi", Polish "chivalry"

#### **3. Exploring different communication styles — German, American, Chinese and Polish**

- General meaning of communication
- Importance of non-verbal messages and culturally-biased perception
- Contrasting U.S. and German communication styles — need to be liked versus credibility and objectivity

#### **4. Negotiating and Resolving International Conflicts**

- Conflict resolution in multicultural teams
- Success principles used in international conflict resolutions
- Learning to be a good (intercultural) negotiator

#### **5. Learning how to be interculturally competent**

- The cross-cultural "swinger"
- Dealing with the relativity of cultural values

Interactive exercises, discussions, case studies from China, Poland, and USA, role playing confirm the above topics

### **The Seminar Trainer:**

Patrick Schmidt, an American by birth and education, has been more than 20 years active in the field of intercultural training. The focus of his seminars is international personnel work, the cooperation in multinational teams and transfer of management methods. His book "*Understanding American and German Business Cultures*" is also published in German "*Die amerikanische und die deutsche Wirtschaftskultur im Vergleich*".

**Length of the Seminar: 2 days**

**Workshop Design for a two-day**

# **Intercultural Competence for the Global Manager**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Training Purpose</u>
<b>DAY 1</b>		
15 mins.	<b>Brief self-introduction</b>	Opening & establishing credibility
	<b>Icebreaker activity</b> (Arabic intro)	Establish a climate of group participation in examining cultural values
15mins.	<b>Expectations of both trainer &amp; participants</b>	Developing cross-cultural awareness
 <i>Transition: After exploring the expectations of participants and trainer, introduce the workshop objectives that refers and reinforces (corrects) the expectations that have been expressed.</i>		
30 mins.	<b>Participants introduce themselves;</b> stress cross-cultural experiences and why they need to improve their intercultural awareness	Participants get to know each other; information sharing
45 mins.	<b>Examining the term <i>culture</i></b> □	Awareness that each culture believes it has the only right solutions to life (ethnocentric)
	<b><i>Driving too fast</i></b> □ case study —	How cultural values can affect decision making

**Transition:** *After examining the term culture, we will discuss how social researchers have designed theoretical frameworks to explain why people from different countries do things in different ways.*

60 mins.	<b>Examining basic cultural concepts</b> of Edward Hall & Gert Hofstede	Viewing cultures from low & high context, time, uncertainty, power distance, motivation
45 mins	<b>Analyzing cultures</b> through variables with case studies	Participants learn how to identify the core values of a culture
60 min.	<b>LUNCH</b>	
20- 30 mins.	<b>Examining the term <i>stereotype</i></b>	Group activity involves why we need to "pigeon-hole" others and become aware of ethnocentrism
30-45 mins.	<b>Reaching consensus</b> on subconscious ethnocentric statements	To point out fallacies & biases in commonly held attitudes. Provoke discussions

**Transition** *□ We have looked at some counterproductive stereotypes and prejudices which we might have about people of other cultures. Now, we will examine German values as they contrast with values in China, Poland and the U.S.A.*

40 mins.	<b>Quotations of foreign visitors;</b> the common stereotypes Germans, Americans, Poles and Chinese	Group activity involves questioning why we do things the way we do, looking for the logic behind our actions, looking at ourselves from a different viewpoint
15 mins.	<b>Discovering Germans, American Chinese and Polish values through.</b> editorials from <i>New York Times, FAZ, Gazeta Wyborcza, The People's Daily</i>	Seeing German, American, Chinese and Polish values through the media
15 mins.	<b>Discovering Germans, American Polish and Chinese values through.</b> proverbs	Seeing German, American, Polish and Chinese values through common sayings
60 mins	<b>Contrasting international business values</b>	Examining decision making and problem solving in cross-cultural teams
15 mins.	<b>Ending the first day</b> Questions or relevant comments	Questions, answers, discussion
	<b>Homework</b> <i>□ read chapter 2 of "Understanding American and German Business Cultures" □ psychology of Germans and Americans</i>	Becoming conscious of how German values are so different from American

## DAY 2

30 mins.                    **Welcome and review** of previous day. Discussion of homework                    Set the stage for activities of day 2

**Transition**☐ *How do the different perceptions discussed earlier illustrate the various ways the communication was received.*

45 mins.                    **Examining communication**  
Introduction and discussion on how we communicate                    Introduce the idea of different communication styles and its impact on cross-cultural interactions

45 mins.                    **Comparison of German and American communication styles**                    Differences of style due to cultural values

60 mins.                    **Studying behavior contrasts**  
German, American, Polish, Chinese; positive and negative attributes  
Role play "Negotiating a Deal", "At the hotel reception".                    Illustrate how Germans, Americans, Poles and Chinese misunderstand each other because of different communication styles

60 mins.                    **Creating & acting out** of German businesspeople in the USA. Humorous role playing activity                    Applying theoretical knowledge to real-life situations. Exercise in self-perception and implications of one's own cultural assumptions

60 mins.                    LUNCH

20 mins.                    **Creating a "snapshot" of German, American, Polish and Chinese values**                    Becoming aware of one's own cultural preferences in order to become more cross-culturally effective.

**Transition**☐ *We have up to now study cultural differences from a behavior viewpoint. Another important aspect is supporting and leading global teams.*

60 mins.                    **Conflict resolution in multicultural teams**                    Becoming more sensitive to & aware of multiple global values

30 mins.                    **Applying successful principles in multicultural groups**                    Bridging the cultural gap within global teams

**Transition**☐ *When going abroad and settling down in a new culture, there is a period of adaptation, known more commonly as culture shock. It is a time of psychological disorientation. Let us discuss it and how one can best overcome it.*

30 mins.                      **The symptoms of culture shock**                      Description of the occupational hazards of living overseas. Familiar things are no longer familiar

30 mins.                      **Characteristics of the Interculturally Competent Person**                      Becoming conscious of what it means to be sensitive to other cultures; developing a global mindset

**Transition**☐ *What have you learned in the past two days? What tools can we use to continue our cross-cultural development when we are in a different culture. What more do you need to learn?*

10 mins.                      **Suggestions for further reading, extensive bibliographies**                      Where to go for more information

15-20 mins.                      **Group analysis of main points covered in workshop**                      Summary

**Participants do the summing up**                      Action plan for the *Intercultural Manager*☐

**Question**☐ **What was German, American, Chinese or Polish about this workshop?**                      To reinforce the idea that what we do, even in a workshop, reflects our culture

## References

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