Cultural Diversity and Other Issues in Business Communication

ビジネス・コミュニケーションにおける文化の多様性と諸問題

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Introduction

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Introduction

There is no denying that communication is important in all aspects of life. In terms of business communication, the language that deals with business transactions is thought of as business communication. According to Guffey, communication is defined as "...the transmission of information and meaning from one individual or group to another." In Guffey's words, communication involves five steps: idea formation, message encoding, message transmission, message decoding and feedback. Thus, Guffey emphasizes that the receiver must properly receive the sender's meaning of the message. Too often in business and politics, as well as in our daily lives, messages are not received as originally intended by the sender and misunderstandings occur. We often encounter people who may be able to speak eloquently, but unfortunately are bad in listening to what others are saying. They may be able to send good messages, but since they are lacking in the receptive quality of being a good listener, they are highly likely to misunderstand the intention of the sender. This in turn creates further complications. Some obstacles in communication may simply be distractions, misinterpretations, difference in values, and lack of language skills. We have all experienced some form of another of communication breakdown. The question is what do we do about clashes due to differences in values, or cultural backgrounds.

Through the Internet and e-mail, different cultures are very accessible. However, complications may arise since different cultures may translate into different customs or

¹ Mary Ellen Guffey. *Business Communication Process and Product.* 3 rd ed. (Cincinnati: South-Western College Publishing, 2000), 10.

beliefs. The sender and receiver may be misinterpreting the basic essence of the message because of differences in language usage, or culture. How can we avoid this misunderstanding and how does this fit into the marketing concept? By analyzing cultural diversity in a marketing context, let us attempt to seek optimal business communication.

Changes in Communication

The role of business communication in today's highly internationalized world is crucial and at the same time highly intricate. Today's business is becoming complex with factors such as advancement of information technology² and the restructuring of business organizations. In recent years, we see the basic trend of firms switching from vertical to horizontal restructuring of management. Instead of the traditional, top to bottom decisionmaking structures, new horizontal business organizations are beginning to be implemented. By flattening management hierarchies and by discarding managerial layers, costs can be cut. As a result, efficiency results between decision makers and front line workers. The only problem is that these changes make communication skills by each individual even more crucial. No longer can executives rely on their assistants to write letters for them. Even the executives are being required to use the e-mail to ensure smooth communication in/out of his/her company3. Porter [2004]4 analyzes that Japanese firms may be better suited for horizontal organization than their Western counterparts. Porter emphasizes that this ability to "...achieve interrelationships coupled with an increasing ability to innovate," may prove to be the new competitive advantage for Japanese firms following their history of competitive advantage in low labor costs, quality and productivity. Therefore, according to Porter we should be able to see more and more horizontal organization in Japanese firms in the future.

Everyone must be a skilled communicator since communication determines the outcome of everything. To penetrate into the global market share, companies of all sizes and backgrounds are expanding out of local markets and going out into the global market. In 2004⁵ in Japan a total of \$565,751, 801,000 dollar-based worth of goods was exported. In terms of region of exports (dollar-based), Asia=\$274,043, 855,000; North America=\$134,653, 767,000; Western Europe=\$88,675, 655,000; and the Middle East=\$16,393, 787,000. Meanwhile, a total of \$455,253, 893,000 dollar-based worth of goods was imported. In terms of region of imports, Asia=\$205,571, 360,000; North America=\$70,984, 164,000; Western

² For detailed analyses see Morokami and Nemoto, eds., Global Management and Its Adjustment Mechanisms (Global Keiei No Chyosei Mechanisms) (Tokyo: Bunshindo, 1996), 147-171.

³ Eri Shiozawa, "Fundamental Applications of Business Communication," *Meidai Shogaku Ronso*, No. 87-1~4 (March, 2005), 171-182.

⁴ Michael Porter. Competitive Advantage. (New York: Free Press Export Edition, 2004), 414.

^{5 2004,} External Economic Policy Site. Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. http:///www.meti.go.jp/statistics/index.html

Europe=\$62,924, 118,000; and the Middle East \$63,058, 980,000.

The importance of technology in business communication is clear. Information technologies are not an exception; they have greatly affected our lives. The Internet, the Web, voice mail, fax, video-conferencing are all contributing factors shaping the global market. From the demand side, consumers are armed with information by being able to choose and purchase from a near infinite variety of Web sites. From the supply side, the e-mail is replacing the telephone as a means to communicate reducing transaction costs and time. Thanks to e-mail, we do not have to worry about time lags or time differences when sending messages abroad.

Previously, when we had to telephone the other party, the first point of concern was what the local time was and whether the call would be at a "good timing." We can assume that if the call is at a good timing the receiver would be more receptive; whereas, if the call is at a bad timing, the receiver may not be as receptive and in some cases may develop a negative feeling towards the business transaction even before the actual dealings commence. People are not machines, but are highly emotional beings likely to base their decisions on their feelings. Therefore, in approaching the other party, contact should be done tactfully. With the fax machine, conditions are a bit better than the conventional telephone (if the ringer sound is silenced) since the receiver can choose when to read the fax letter.

Unfortunately, there are many drawbacks to this high information content world. On the news, we often hear about crimes using the Internet. The endless chase goes on between the computer hackers attempting to outsmart everyone by going into others' computers. From credit card skimming to invitations to group suicides, many illegal or immoral dealings are also taking place over the Internet in Japan. However, in terms of both convenience and cost, the e-mail (the Internet) revolutionized communication and made life and business transactions a lot easier for many of us. The key is to find the right balance.

Cultural Diversity

It is difficult to go a day without using goods that are not imported. In some cases, some component of the product may have been imported and then assembled in a different country. Recently we see a product with a label reading that it is designed in Japan; however, the actual product's components are manufactured in a developing country where costs of labor are much cheaper. In this way, business is becoming more international and as business changes from local to higher international content, the structure of business must also adjust to cultural diversity.

In every stage of business, in both aspects of supply and demand, identifying differences in cultural norms will prove to be crucial for the success of the business. On the

supply side of the economy, domestic values or culture of the host country must be understood, evaluated, and in some cases, policies may have to be adjusted or replaced to fit into the local culture. This adjustment or replacement may either be major, minor, or local depending on the circumstances. One result may be that local employees' work incentive may improve substantially. Employees' morale may improve since they may feel accepted by the employed company. Meanwhile on the demand side, for the potential customers holding different value systems, a business entity that is making an effort to fit into the local culture will likely be accepted more readily than one that is simply doing business as if it were at home.

The so-called gurus in business communication, Fons Trompenaars and Woolliams⁶, in *Marketing across Cultures*, give the following metaphor, "Culture, like an onion, comes in layers." This metaphor is simple but clear. The thin outer layer of culture is the part that is easily observable and exists everywhere such as factories, houses, food, traffic and people. Underneath this outer layer is the second layer that is the domain of norms and values. This domain cannot be observed or touched since it deals with intangible values such as good or bad; right or wrong. This layer is subjective and interpretations may differ among people. The innermost layer or core is the most essential one in understanding concepts of marketing across different cultures. Therefore, in order to understand the innermost layer, or core, Trompenaars and Woolliams utilize the seven basic dimensions of culture originally taken up in *Riding the Waves of Culture*⁷.

Analysis of Generalizations

In analyzing marketing, Trompenaars and Woolliams emphasize that culture must be treated as a context, not simply a factor. They take up marketing applications of how to deal with the basic marketing dilemma arising from globalization. When the organization globalizes, costs in production processes can be saved. However, there is always the problem of how to deal with the local factors. The organization must adapt their products and services to the local consumers' demands. Focusing on the seven dimensions of culture, let us study their analyses.

Tromenaars and Woolliams' seven dimensions or marketing dilemmas compare opposite concepts existing in cultures. For example the first dilemma of universalism-particularism compares universalist cultures in which all in all, general rules and obligations must apply to all. These people look for single answers and follow rules believing that everyone must also abide by them. Meanwhile, the particularist cultures place

⁶ Fons Trompenaars and Peter Woolliams. *Marketing Across Cultures*. (West Sussex, England: Capstone Publishing Ltd., 2004), 15.

⁷ Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner. Riding the Waves of Culture. (London: McGraw Hill, 1998)

importance on the bond between family and friends. These personal relationships come before single rules. The people in this culture react to particular needs that are optimal under particular circumstances not general regulations of society as a whole.

According to Trompenaars and Woolliams⁸, Japan is right next to the Netherlands in terms of data measuring orientation of particularistic vs. universalistic. Therefore, it would seem to signify that Japan is only slightly particularistic than the Netherlands. We do not know on what grounds the authors classify the Japanese as being a particularistic culture while the Dutch are universalistic. The Dutch prefer universal products that are described as being of a limited variety, available in large quantities, with a reasonable quality and a low price. Meanwhile, according to Trompenaars and Woolliams' data, Sweden is the most universalistic country while South Korea is the most particularistic. The authors note that the Swedish furniture brand IKEA⁹ has been very popular and successful in the Netherlands. As a matter of fact in 1984, IKEA gave up marketing in Japan; however, IKEA is presently preparing for their grand opening (approx. 42,500 sq. meters) in Funabashi, Chiba prefecture in spring, 2006 as well as other stores in Kanagawa prefecture and Tokyo. It would be interesting to examine how IKEA will do in Japan.

The authors cite examples of how the Japanese are more particularistic than most western countries. In their eyes, Tokyo is made up of a collection of "villages" with small mom-pop stores. They state that the Large Scale Store Law¹⁰ is regulating supermarkets and chain stores. Since houses and refrigerators are small, shopping is done daily and the service is highly individualized with everybody knowing everybody else. Flath [2000]¹¹ states that, "The Large Store Law more reflected than shaped the structure of Japan's distribution sector." Flath analyzes the inevitability of small stores in Japan.

Is this an over exaggeration of the present lifestyle in Tokyo? Although many still shop daily by bicycle or on foot at local shops, clearly the American style of shopping at large discount supermarkets and shopping centers are becoming more and more common especially for younger generation Japanese, who drive cars. The further away we get from the center of metropolitan Tokyo, as the cost of land is cheaper, we see more of these large style shopping complexes. In the outskirts of Tokyo, in Nagano, Tochigi, Yamanashi, Kanagawa, Chiba and Shizuoka prefectures we even see American style outlet malls¹² selling brand name products at discount prices. In Japan, it is feared that this phenomenon of local mom-pop stores going out of business will cause problems such as increase in crime rates. Also as these small businesses disappear, there is worry that this will lead to the disintegration of one tradition specific to Japanese culture. Therefore, this problem should

⁸ Fons Trompenaars and Peter Woolliams. *Marketing Across Cultures*. (West Sussex, England: Capstone Publishing Ltd., 2004), 53.

⁹ See http://www.ikea/jp/ for more details.

¹⁰ For more details, see http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/distribution/data/e 91112 aj.html.

¹¹ David Flath. The Japanese Economy. (Oxford, England: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), 292-308.

¹² See http://www.pocketmate.net/leisure_guide/outlet.htm for more details.

be dealt as a sociological issue as well.

In terms of marketing, the main dilemma is the global-local dichotomy. Trompenaars and Woolliams note that firms are torn between customizing to local customer needs or following a global standardized approach. By continuous integration and learning from the best methods, this dilemma is reconciled by "transnational specialization.¹³" For example, the brand may be global but local touch is added to suit the tastes of local consumers. The Danish toy, Lego's case is cited as one example. Lego found out that in general, German kids and American children differ in the way they played with Lego. In Germany (right next to and being a little more universalistic than the Netherlands), where the children are trained to follow instructions, they made exact duplicates of the ones shown in the enclosed instruction booklets. Meanwhile, in the U.S. (right next to Sweden in being universalistic), where originality is considered very important, most children were not concerned at all about the enclosed instruction booklet. They started experimenting on their own new ideas. They came up with their own originals that they were perfectly content with.

It would be interesting to examine where the Japanese children stand under similar circumstances. Most likely the Japanese children's reaction would be close to that of the Germans since following directions and group harmony is emphasized more than originality. However, in Japan this trend has been changing in the past years in which the importance of originality is being reexamined in education. Primary and secondary education curriculums are being revised to incorporate education nurturing creativity and originality instead of fact memorizing and problem solving calculations that were considered to be more important than creativity or originality. Returning to the topic of Lego, unfortunately data was unavailable but it would be interesting to examine how Lego's performance in Japan compared to past data and what kind of marketing strategies are implemented in Japan. These are topics worth looking into in the future.

The next dilemma in marketing taken up by Trompenaars and Woolliams is individualism versus communitarianism. This dilemma deals with the analysis of how people interact with others. It is concerned with the conflict between the individual and the group to which the individual belongs. An individualist culture sees the individual as more important than the individual's group or community. On the other hand, the communitarianism culture sees the community as more important than the individual. That is, the individual exists in order to serve the community. One dilemma in this dimension in terms of marketing is whether to focus on satisfying individual customer's needs or to focus attention on creating a trend or fashion. Another dilemma exists from the viewpoint of customer, the customer may be satisfying individual wants, or on the other hand,

¹³ Fons Trompenaars and Peter Woolliams. *Marketing Across Cultures*. (West Sussex, England: Capstone Publishing Ltd., 2004), 60.

¹⁴ Ibid., 62.

may feel satisfied from the sense of belonging to the community.

According to Trompenaars and Woolliams, Japan, not surprisingly, is the most community-oriented society while the U.S. is the most individual oriented. On the other hand, the authors point out that individualistic cultures such as the U.S. and U.K. consider self-reliance, or independence as very important. Taking up Yakult's (a Japanese company manufacturing yogurt related products) marketing experience in the Netherlands, the authors analyze how the same marketing strategies used in Japan did not succeed in the Netherlands¹⁵. In Japan, the so-called Yakult ladies dressed in company uniforms deliver door-to-door in their local neighborhood. However, this type of personalized marketing strategy was not popular among the individualistic Dutch, who felt that their privacy was being violated by these unannounced sales visits. Moreover, it was difficult for Yakult to find Dutch women willing to wear company uniforms. As a compromise, Yakult redirected their marketing strategies in the Netherlands to elderly homes and other public places such as train stations.

We can see that Yakult's strategies may have proven to be successful. Comparing the Yakult total sales data¹⁶ for 2003 and 2004, we can see that Yakult, in fact, sold more in Europe (trailing right behind American sales figures) compared to Oceania and other Asian countries not including Japan. This is rather surprising considering the proximity of the other Asian markets compared to that of the European market.

In Western societies, we all know that unlike Japan in which adulthood is granted when one reaches twenty years old, becoming physically independent from parents from an early age is often the first giant step and is highly encouraged. Most colleges and universities in the U.S. recommend freshmen to leave home and enter dormitories even if a commute from home is feasible. Many British children attend boarding schools and become independent from their parents at an early age. In most cases, although going to school away from home does not directly signify financial independence, physical independence from parents prepares them for the final step to adulthood. However, in Japan it is still common for children to live with their parents while attending college or university and even after getting a full-time job. Perhaps the social problem, NEET¹⁷ (Not in Employment, Education, Training) becoming more and more serious in Japan, may be attributed to Japan's highly communitarianism culture. Although this topic is beyond the scope of this paper, future research from this approach may shed light on how to cope with this social problem.

The third dilemma in marketing the authors take up is specific versus diffuse. This dilemma or dimension deals with degree of involvement in customer relationships. South

¹⁵ Ibid., 67-68.

¹⁶ See http://www.yakult.co.jp/kessan/index.html for more details on Yakult's sales figures.

¹⁷ See http://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/NEET and http://www.mhlw.go.jp/wp/hakusyo/ for more details on NEET.

Korea and Japan came out first and second respectively in terms of being diffuse (high context), while the Netherlands and U.S. came in first and second respectively in terms of being specific (low context). In Shiozawa [2005]¹⁸, we mentioned how Japanese tend to be especially diffuse or evasive at the negotiating table. Instead of a flat "no", "difficult" is often used to express non-acceptability of the negotiation terms.

In their analysis, Trompenaars and Woolliams point out that Japanese share a great amount of information and practice the so-called, "soft sell" France seems to be relatively more "specific oriented" than the U.K. and equal distance in ranking from Japan and the U.S. However, the authors also point out the holistic, high context-dependent marketing of France. Like Japan, the French TV commercials are hard to understand even if one understands French

The TV commercials and general ads are good examples of diffuse, high context culture in Japan. In general, Japanese communication tends to be very vague. The message is so implicit some Europeans and Americans (low context) in Japan often have difficulty understanding what the advertisement is trying to sell. Compared to American style advertising of simple, specific and clear, Japanese are happy with the "image" that the product sends out to the holistic customer as a person. For example as analyzed in Shiozawa [1999]²⁰, American celebrities, except for endorsements of major brand name goods, rarely appear on TV commercials to advertise "tea" since it will be bad for their image as a "movie star." However, for Japanese celebrities, to win the contract to appear on major promotional ads for even everyday household products signifies status. They are paid high guarantees and it is a main source of income for many of them.

Another point taken up by the authors is service. Service is a major factor in diffuse societies. Singapore (diffuse culture) Airlines is known for its benchmark service in customer service. In Singapore, service involving personal relationship is considered one of the most important concepts in marketing. We analyzed in Shiozawa [1997]²¹ how Japanese department stores and gasoline stations go to extremes in providing services to their customers. We showed that under rational behavior, the Japanese choose commodities with better services. Service is provided in the hopes that customers will like the previous way they were treated so much they will come again. Thus, service adds a new dimension to the commodity.

The dilemma between neutral and affective orientation is the fourth market dimension

¹⁸ Eri Shiozawa, "Fundamental Applications of Business Communication," *Meidai Shogaku Ronso*, No. 87-1~4 (March, 2005), 171-182.

¹⁹ Fons Trompenaars and Peter Woolliams. *Marketing Across Cultures*. (West Sussex, England: Capstone Publishing Ltd., 2004), 74.

²⁰ Eri Shiozawa, "Business Communication under Asymmetric Information," *Meidai Shogaku Ronso*, No. 81-1-2 (Feb., 1999), 271-291.

²¹ Eri Shiozawa, "International Trade and Comparison of True Cost of Living Indexes," *Meidai Shogaku Ronso*, No. 79-1-2 (Feb., 1997), 249-266.

which Trompenaars and Woolliams study²². This dimension centers on the display (affective) or concealment (neutral) of emotion. Japan ranks number one in concealing emotion while Kuwait is the opposite extreme. Japan, as just stated above, provides service to customers even to excess. It is interesting how the authors note that although geographically close to Japan, South Korea's service industry only provides good customer service to those who are accepted as "friends." This lack of good service to total strangers in South Korea may mean that good future business opportunities for high-level customer service may exist for western companies, or for that matter, even Japanese companies.

In terms of presentation styles, the authors cite examples of how Taiwanese and Chinese in general, do not think too highly, and in some cases, may be suspicious of over enthusiastic salespeople's presentation. The Dutch presentations are neutral in orientation and are misinterpreted by Americans that Dutch do not believe in the products they are presenting. The Germans also misunderstand Dutch informal presentation style as being unprofessional. In terms of this dimension, the Germans are closer in orientation to the Americans than to their Dutch neighbor. However, the authors state that German advertising tends to have a serious, neutral tone. Jokes are rarely used and advertisements show the "objective" product features²³. Meanwhile, the Irish and Americans appreciate and understand advertising using humor as the main ingredient. Therefore, the question is how do we reconcile affective and neutral cultures. When in contact, it is important to avoid value judgments but to understand the basic differences in cultural orientation. The next step is to analyze how this general difference (similarity) in orientation will affect marketing styles and select the optimal choice.

The next dilemma is achievement versus ascription. This dimension deals with relative status given to an individual in society. Some societies ascribe status by virtue of gender, age, class, education, etc. Meanwhile, some societies put weight on individual achievement. Instead of "who you are," or ascription, achievement-oriented cultures look for what you have done. Asian countries such as South Korea seem to place importance on ascribed status, while Ireland, the U.S. and U.K. consider achieved status as important. In ascribed societies, products are not only purchased for their function but are purchased so that the owner may attain satisfaction from the status that goes with being a proud owner of that product. The authors cite examples of how Rolex and Mercedes are popular in ascribed societies for different reasons than in achievement-oriented societies. According to Trompenaars and Woolliams, Japan ranks second trailing South Korea as an ascription oriented society. The authors cite examples of how Japanese advertising uses Caucasian Hollywood stars because Japanese ascribe status to Caucasians. To a certain degree, this

²² Fons Trompenaars and Peter Woolliams. *Marketing Across Cultures*. (West Sussex, England: Capstone Publishing Ltd., 2004), 83.

²³ Ibid., 91.

²⁴ Ibid., 97.

may be true, however, with the recent South Korean movie boom in Japan, famous South Korean actors and actresses are very popular among Japanese and are appearing on Japanese advertisements.

It may be that in general, Japanese have a tendency to ascribe status to people with fame and fortune. This is one factor explaining why Japanese spend so much on famous brand name products such as Hermes, or Chanel. The basic trend applies both to South Korea and Taiwan as well. In addition, Asian culture ascribes status to age and experience. In Japanese, the tone and mannerism of speaking becomes honorific to people who are older or more experienced (the *senpai* and *kohai* relationship in Japan). In the U.K. and the U.S. advertising, product tests results are often shown to prove the superiority of one product to another; this form of advertising is quite rare in Japan.

The sixth dilemma concerns internal versus external control²⁵. This dimension deals with how different cultures react to their natural environment. Some cultures feel that they can control their surrounding environment while others feel that they can only be controlled by it. Japan is the most externally oriented (accepting the external environment) while the U.S. is the most internally oriented (dominating the environment). In terms of marketing, externally controlled countries lean towards a market pull (making what can be sold) while internally controlled countries seek technology push (selling what can be made). In technology innovation, externally oriented countries such as Japan utilize product and process innovation to modify and refine an already invented product in order to satisfy customers. Meanwhile internally oriented countries such as the U.S. inventing original products is a means of self expression and respected than refining something which had been already invented by someone. Trompenaars and Woolliams state, "The usual practice in America is deviance-correcting feedback. You have an innerdirected purpose..."26 On the other hand, they state, "The outer-directed Japanese produce a variety of outputs in the expectation that some will be more acceptable than others... The customers tell you which deviation they prefer and the result is deviance-amplifying feedback."27 This is why Japanese products are customized to be user-friendly. The basic attitude of Japanese companies is to continually improve (kaizen) products in order to satisfy customers (outer-directed).

It is interesting to note that although right next to the U.S. (in terms of data concerning inner-directed), the direct sales approach or hard sell approach is not appreciated in France. The authors point out that the French like indirect subtle expressions that "requires the meeting of minds" This is clearly different from the straightforward Anglo-American way of thinking. Previously in the third dimension, we analyzed how Japan was

²⁵ Ibid., 107.

²⁶ Ibid., 112.

²⁷ Ibid., 113.

²⁸ Ibid., 113.

considered a diffuse, high-context culture as opposed to being specific and how Japanese share a great amount of information and practice the so-called, "soft sell". Therefore, in this respect, the French are relatively closer in orientation to the Japanese than to the Americans. In addition, according to the authors, South Korea, although Asian, is very internally oriented, trailing the U.S. and France. Further research is necessary if marketing in the South Korean market is a possibility.

The last dilemma related to time, arises because time is given different meanings in different cultures. Trompenaars and Woolliams analyze three elements of time: sequential versus synchronic; short-term versus long-term; present versus future versus past²⁹. For most Americans time tends to be sequential because it is an objective value. In the U.S., short-term is valued over long-term and the present is focused more than the future. The expression, "Time is money", and "Time to break even" sum up the U.S. concept of time. Product cycles are accepted and push strategies are popular in the U.S. Like the U.S., the British lean towards a sequential orientation of time. Meanwhile, Japan tends to be synchronic and long-term. The Japanese "Just in Time" system is a synchronic pull strategy in which the future deadline with the customer is set and work time is calculated to be just in time to meet the deadline. Perhaps it is due to this synchronic orientation of time that the Japanese are patient enough to wait in long lines to have lunch or dinner. South Korean, Taiwan and Singapore are also cultures in which time is synchronic. Singapore's economy is open 24 hours, 365 days a year. Although sequential in orientation, we can observe similarities between Singapore and the U.S. economy.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

In terms of cultural misunderstandings, experts note that misunderstandings in communication occur because of the slow speed of oral communication relative to our speedy brain. We cannot explain our words before the receiver misinterprets the meanings, etc. The communication gap may be based on the seemingly awkward actions taken by either the sender or the receiver which may simply be the norm and perfectly acceptable in their culture. In most cases, misunderstandings or unwillingness to accept the other's culture may lead to further communication breakdowns causing the problem to take on a worse case scenario. Mutual understanding can only be achieved through a willingness to accept the other's culture and to a certain extent bend one's own rules. High quality communication skills facilitate and quicken this mutual understanding process.

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