THE CULTURE MAP:
Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business
Overview of Today’s Presentation

• Cross-cultural mindset

• Culture Map tool to decode cultural differences

• Learning more

• Q&A
Recently, I was speaking to some British members of a global team that had started working with the French. They were frustrated! They said, “You know those French! They are so disorganized and chaotic. So unstructured. We just don’t know if we can work with those French!” Later in my discussions I interviewed some members of the team in India. I was struck by what they said: “You know those French. So structured and linear. So inflexible. How can we work with them?”

**Participant question:**
Why do the members of the team have such a different impression of the French?
“You know those French, they are...”
After 12 years of working in local roles in Seoul, Jang Su-Jin was delighted to join a team made up entirely of North Americans. Su-Jin was invited by her new American boss to attend a first meeting in San Francisco. She prepared the entire flight over from Korea. Upon arrival Su-Jin briefly met and said hello to her American colleagues. Although having many things she would have liked to say, during the meeting Su-Jin spoke almost not at all. Later her boss sent her an email saying, “We were pleased to have you at our meeting last week! Next time we would like to hear your voice more!”

Participant question:
Su-Jin’s situation is a common one. In meetings some cultures speak more frequently than others. What are some of the cultural reasons this might happen?
What is happening?

Why isn’t she saying anything?
TASK-BASED RELATIONSHIP-BASED TRUSTING
But This. . . .
“You know those French, they are...”
LINEAR TIME

UK

SCHEDULING

France

FLEXIBLE TIME

India
Germany  UK  France  India

LINEAR TIME  SCHEDULING  FLEXIBLE TIME
Is it important for a manager to have at hand precise answers to most of the questions that employees may raise about their work?

Study conducted at INSEAD
Leading across cultures

“What is a good manager?”
### Egalitarian cultures:

- It’s ok to disagree with the boss openly even in front of others
- It’s ok to email or call people several levels below or above you
- People are more likely to move to action without getting the boss’ okay
- If meeting with client or supplier less focus on matching hierarchical levels
- With clients or partners you will be seated and spoken to in no specific order

### Hierarchical cultures:

- An effort is made to defer to the boss’s opinion especially in public
- Communication follows the hierarchical chain
- People are more likely to get the boss’s approval before moving to action
- If you send your boss they will send their boss. If your boss cancels their boss also may not come
- With clients or partners you may be seated and spoken to in order of position
What is happening?

Why isn’t she saying anything?
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Communication

It looks like we’re going to have to keep working on this project in the office on Saturday.

I see.

Can you come on Saturday?

Yes, I think so.

That’ll be a great help.

Yes, Saturday is a special day.

How do you mean?

It’s my son’s birthday.

How nice I hope you all enjoy it.

Thank you. I appreciate your understanding.

Mr. Lee

Mr. Jones
Communicating conclusions

Multi-cultural teams need **explicit communication**.

**Build awareness** of communication styles on your teams.

When in doubt, **ask for feedback, summarize** and **recap**.

Create **ground rules and team norms in meetings** that balance participation and comfort levels with silence.

**Invest time** in building strong working relationships.
Change happens

Cartoon by Tim Whyatt
Continue your learning

See Definitions of the Cultural Dimensions and create custom maps
https://simulations.insead.edu/culture-map

Find out what your cultural profile is