

inter-cultural intelligence *is more* *than* diversity training



KnowledgeWorkx International is represented in Southern Africa by dr Gustav Gous and recently appointed the experienced consultant, dr Fritz Hölscher as the manager for South African operations.

Inter-Cultural Intelligence is the ability to deal with the reality of differing cultures on all levels in a creative, innovative and meaningful way, so says Dr Gustav Gous MD KnowledgeWorkx Southern Africa.

Business is an Inter-Cultural affair. Therefore Inter-Cultural Intelligence is a necessity to survive whether as an individual or to stay in business. You need intercultural acumen almost everywhere: working with, buying from and selling to people from different cultures or corporate cultures. Intercultural intelligence is also especially needed in newly formed BEE management teams and in big corporations with internal cultural differences.

There is a need for understanding on four cultural levels:

- 1 Self Culture:** Understand your personal culture-blend
- 2 Company Culture:** Understand your company's culture-blend
- 3 Culture of the country hosting your business:** Understand the culture of your base country and the culture-blend of your host country (for multi-nationals) or destination culture (for overseas clients).
- 4 Client Culture:** Understand your client's personal or company culture-blend.

The old approach

The problem with past attempts to understand culture was that it focused on:

- Gross generalizations: "The Chinese are like this and the Germans are like that". The issue is that all Germans are not the same: The archetypal German, Zulu or Afrikaner is a figment of the imagination and does not correspond to the reality that people are unique. In the past, cultural orientation was based on a 'group' profile concept, but there is now greater understanding that culture is not homogeneous. There is no such thing as

typical African or Afrikaner culture.

- It also only focused on do's and don'ts: How to present business cards, what bodily gestures to avoid. This approach helps you for a day or two but does not go deep enough. It gives a fish instead of giving you a fishing rod.
- Traditional cultural definitions narrow culture down to national culture. The problem is that the passport you carry cannot be your final defining cultural factor. It does not leave room for the biggest growing culture group in the world namely 'The Internationals' This is the proverbial son of an English diplomat with a Dutch wife, who grew up with his parents in Indonesia, Japan and Nigeria and is presently working in Dubai contemplating marriage to an Indian woman.
- A further problem is that diversity training, until recently, focused on surface behaviour and traditions instead of on the underlying factors giving rise to these behaviour.
- Diversity training very often has a too narrow focus on racial diversity or on gender or gay issues.

The new approach is twofold

- 1 First is to map the underlying individual cultural factors in a person.** It works with a new concept called individual culture. The latest tool on the market is cultural mapping assessment tool to measure twelve cultural defining factors. The best way to describe it is to call it the Meyers-Briggs of culture. The instrument measures polarities in 12 cultural dimensions such as: Status: (achieved vs ascribed), decision making

(rules vs relationships) expression (reveal vs conceal), communication (direct vs indirect) and many more.

- 2 The second step is to provide navigational or bridging tools,** to empower people to bridge their differences or to navigate through the minefields of Inter-Cultural business dealings. The tools have been developed by a group of senior consultants in different countries. It gives you the ability to deal with incompatibility.

The applications for the Cultural Mapping & Navigation© tools are:

Intercultural negotiating, leadership, presentations, communication, motivation & team development. It also has great application value in mergers, joint ventures, stakeholder alignment, designing rewards and incentive schemes in culturally diverse companies, expatriate postings etc.

The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but will be the ones who cannot read or map cultures and act without Inter-Cultural Intelligence.

The goal of the Cultural Mapping & Navigation© programme of KnowledgeWorkx International is to turn people from cultural critics into cultural learners.

Expensive mistakes have been made due to a lack of Inter-Cultural Intelligence. The Cultural Mapping & Navigation© programme consists of 1. Cultural Awareness & Appreciation (CA); 2. Cultural Mapping (CM); 3. Inter-Cultural Bridging (ICB); and 4. Inter-Cultural Excellence (ICE).

More information on

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