

Sahar Consulting, LLC.



D.I.A.L.O.G.™ Signature

2016

# Leadership in Cross-Cultural Environment CSDA Conference



Sahar Consulting, LLC  
9970 Wheatland Ave,  
Shadow Hills, CA 91040

818 861 9434

818 352 0851

[www.saharconsulting.com](http://www.saharconsulting.com)

Intellectual property of, and is proprietary to **Sahar Consulting, LLC**, not to be disclosed, in whole or in part, without the express written authorization of Sahar Consulting, LLC. It shall not be duplicated or used, in whole or in part, for any purpose other than to be educational material for the session

## **Leadership in Cross- Cultural Environments**

As leaders we are always under construction, it is our responsibility to bring together all the people involved and putting them as a first and foremost priority; that doesn't mean just giving people what they want, and catering to their every single want and need It means providing a safe environment for the employees to be successful. A leader's job is not much change what they got but learn how to use what they have.

Leadership is an interpersonal process by which an individual influences the behavior and attitudes of others from different walks of life to be aligned, and achieve a common goal. A leader can never be a leader without **FOLLOWERS**

**LEADERSHIP IS NOT ABOUT YOU, it is about the people you lead and about working for a higher purpose than oneself**

### **Leaders have H.E.A.R.T.:**

- **H:** Human Relationship builders
  - **E:** Empathy
- **A:** Awareness & Acceptance
  - **R:** Respect
  - **T:** Trust

Employee Engagement as per the Gallup research 2010- 2012

- 18 % of employees are “actively disengaged”
- Effects
- actively disengaged employees cost between \$450 and \$550 Billion annually
- Less than 30% are engaged

### **Inspirational Leaders:**

Inspirational leaders are hard to come. Many we know in our lives or heard about as Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, and Mother Theresa.

The reason they are inspirational is that they knew **WHY** they were doing what they were doing, not only the **WHAT** and **HOW**. Many leaders know **WHAT** they are doing, and **HOW** they are doing it but very few know the **WHY** which is the most important point in Leadership- sharing a **VISION** that has so much passion and is so strong that the followers will embrace it and will make it their own. Inspirational leaders share the inside out and not outside in process

### **Cross- Cultural Leaders:**

Leading a productive, innovative, quality minded multigenerational, multicultural and diverse team in an evolving workplace and marketplace is far more complex than ever before. Smart leaders know that cross cultural competence drives organizations' revenues and success

The essence of global leadership is the ability to influence people who are not like the leader and come from different cultural backgrounds. To succeed, global leaders need to have a global mindset, tolerate high levels of ambiguity, and show cultural adaptability and flexibility.

### **Diversity**

Diversity in a nutshell is about dignity, respect and being a human being which is what all of us have in common. It is about what characteristics make each one of us unique.

Diversity includes the main protected classes: **R.E.G.A.R.D.S.**: Race, Ethnicity, Gender, Age, Religion, Disabilities and Sexual orientation but it is also about education, geographic location, marital and parental status, jobs, titles, socio-economic factors as well as difference of thoughts.

**What Diversity is not?**

1. Political correctness, compliance, or box check
2. Minorities: Definition: Power not numbers
3. Black and white
4. Blame, guilt or fault, not about "Them" about "Us"
5. About Therapy / Meritocracy
6. Tolerance

**MEANING OF INCLUSION**

An inclusive environment allows employees to maximize their personal potential and the potential of the organization. It's about removing barriers such as prejudice, discrimination or favoritism so employees and the organization can achieve their goals in creating a culture that welcomes and supports people with fresh ideas and approaches tapping into the diverse hidden talents.

**Diversity and inclusion should not be presented as a program, but as a philosophy. Otherwise, employees may see it as the "flavor of the month."**

**Advantages of Diversity**

1. It is the right thing to do.
2. Broader set of talents/ skills - It helps to build synergy in teams
3. Enhances communications skills - Better Problem solving/ Decisions
4. Increased productivity/ stocks
5. Increase market share/ better service to diverse customers
6. Lower litigation expenses
7. Creative cooperation and cross Pollination of ideas
8. Fairness, equality, humanity

**The Business Case for Diversity:**

- A. The *changing demographics* in the US.
- B. *Globalization and increase of diverse customer base*
- C. *Generational gaps*
- D. *Increasing number of dual-income families and single working mothers*
- E. *Civil rights laws*
- F. *Outsourcing and offshoring*
- G. *Internet*
- H. *Women executives*
- I. *Change of socio-economic factors as the EU, NAFTA etc.*
- J. *Rise of Asian countries like India and China*

The real payoff of diversity comes through creating an environment of inclusion, the process of leveraging each unique individual to strive toward a common goal and objective.

## Culture

Every diverse group has an identity- this identity is the **Culture**. It is the lens that we see the world through. It is the base of our beliefs, values, perceptions, and assumptions. It is important to note that individual differences exist in each groups. **Culture** is behind everything we feel, do, say, and perceive, it also controls our behaviors.

**Cross-cultural awareness** is a crucial part of leadership in any modern organization if they want to find their place in the global market or even within the multi-cultural domestic market.

### Intercultural Effectiveness

To adapt to new cultures one must learn to suspend at least some culturally based reactions. This does not mean that one should give up one's identity, values or culture. But one must learn to manage culture shock

The collective programming or wiring of the human mind acquired over time that distinguishes the members of one human group from another through their behaviors that include self-worth and esteem, thoughts, customs. Language, rituals, communication, action, values, and beliefs and that also guide decision making.

We all have **bias and prejudice** and discussing them is risky as it is easily misunderstood or mistaken for racism. Culture can be different within the same group; not every conflict between people from different cultures is due to cultural problems Culture provides people with:

- (1) A general design for living, and
- (2) Patterns for interpreting reality, translated in their behaviors

**Acceptance (Not Tolerance)**, an open mind, and patience are the minimum requirements for improving our relations with others.

### What Culture is not?

- 1- Right or wrong
- 2- About individual behavior
- 3- Inherited

Every diverse group has an identity- this identity is the Culture. It is the lens that we see the world through. It is the base of our beliefs, values, perceptions, and assumptions. It is important to note that individual differences exist in each groups and that is the challenging part.

## Definitions

- **Culture Ethnicity:** Sharing a sense of identity with a particular religious, racial or national group.
- **Race:** A biological concept that defines groups of human beings based on a set of genetically transmitted characteristics.
- **Cultural Awareness:** To be knowledgeable about one's own thoughts, feelings, beliefs and sensations as well as the ability to interact with others.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** The recognition that there are differences between cultures, reflected in the ways they communicate

- **Cultural Destructiveness:** forced assimilation, subjugation, rights and privileges for dominant groups only
- **Cultural Blindness:** differences ignored, “treat everyone the same”, only meet needs of dominant groups
- **Bias:** First learnings; Lens we see the world through influencing us on what is right and wrong, and shape the way how we act and react to certain things that gives a subjective point of view. It is a personal preference with a tendency that interferes with the ability to be impartial, unprejudiced or objective
- **Stereotypes:** Is a preconceived idea that attributes certain characters (in general) to all the members of a class or set. It is an oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences. Even positive stereotypes have a negative impact.
- **Ethnocentricity:** we make assumptions that others will act/ feel /think the same way that we do that creates misunderstandings and frictions as we set expectations accordingly. Our way is the best way. .
- **Prejudice:** Prejudice is an unfavorable opinion or feeling formed beforehand or without knowledge, thought or reason. It is a judgment or opinion held in disregard of facts that contradict it. It is a suspicion, intolerance or irrational hatred of other races, ethnic groups, occupations, etc. Prejudice is also prejudging, making a decision about a person or group of people without sufficient knowledge.
- **Discrimination:** Discrimination is the behavior that can follow prejudicial thinking. Discrimination is the denial of justice and fair treatment in many arenas, including employment, housing and political rights.

## Cross-Cultural Competence



**Cultural competence** refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures.

Culture represents "the values, norms, and traditions that affect how individuals of a particular group perceive, think, interact, behave, and make judgments about their world.

Culture affects every single aspect of life, if leveraged can be a great force if not can be a minefield; the following are examples of culture influence:

- Meeting styles, work styles, and customer service
- Time management, performance, and entertaining
- Leadership, conflict resolution, and negotiation
- Communication, marketing, and employee engagement

## Cultural Patterns:

We are *culturally programmed*. We respond, react and interact with each other based upon our culture, ways that are personal. We trap ourselves with our emotions, habits, judgments and our own ethnocentrism or Fear – Fear can generate frustration, anger and defensiveness; and, it may lead us to reject others. Fear causes us to move away, avoid and recoil; it creates a lack of confidence and vicious cycles of negative emotions. i.e., “*I don’t like talking to those people...they’re so loud...they make me nervous*”

## Cultural Competence Iceberg:

1/10 of the culture shows at the surface, while 9/10 is hidden under the surface.



### Hostefede: 4 elements

#### Cultural Characteristics:

##### 1- Individualism VS. Collectivism

- **Individualism:** A cultural orientation in which people belong to loose social frameworks, and their primary concern is for themselves and their families.
- **Collectivism:** A cultural orientation in which individuals belong to tightly knit social frameworks, and they depend strongly on large extended families or clans. **(Hispanics)**

##### 2- High Power Distance VS. Low Power Distance

- In countries with a **high power distance**, bosses are afforded more power, Titles are used, formality is the rule, and authority is seldom bypassed. India is a country with a high power distance.
- In countries with a **low power distance**, people believe that inequality in society should be minimized. Managers and employees see one another as similar. Employees to get work done in countries with a low power distance.

##### 3- High Uncertainty Avoidance VS Low Uncertainty Avoidance

- Cultures with **high uncertainty avoidance** are concerned with security and tend to avoid conflict. People have a need for consensus. The inherent uncertainty in life is a threat against which people in such cultures constantly struggle.
- Cultures with **low uncertainty avoidance** are more tolerant of ambiguity. People are more willing to take risks and more tolerant of individual differences.

#### 4- Masculinity VS. Femininity

- In cultures that are characterized by **masculinity**, assertiveness and materialism are valued. Money and possessions are important, and performance is what counts. Achievement is admired.
- Cultures that are characterized by **femininity** emphasize relationships and concern for others.

We need to feel comfortable in being uncomfortable – if we do not constructively call out our differences we will create policies, procedures, programs and environments that reflect the majorities' culture because we are not calling out our differences to see how we need to shape things differently.

#### U.S. CULTURE in a nutshell

- 1- The most individualistic country of any studied.
- 2- On the power distance dimension, the United States ranked among the countries with weak power distance. Its rank on uncertainty avoidance indicated a tolerance of uncertainty.
- 3- Masculine culture with a short-term orientation.

### Cultural Components

- 1- Sense of self & Personal space. How people think about themselves
- 2- Communication, Language, Silence, listening, Context.
- 3- Dress, appearance, and Body adornment
- 4- Time & Time concept
- 5- Relationships: Flags, maps, geography
- 6- Values, attitudes, Religion, Beliefs, symbols, colors, numbers
- 7- Food, Feeding habits, Gifts
- 8- Stereotypes: Racial, ethnic, cultural, or religious
- 9- Mental processes and learning (Abstract thinking vs. rote memory).
- 10-Work habits& practices

### Barriers to Culture Competence

1. Our own bias, stereotypes, and Prejudice
  - Bias: Mental discrimination
  - Prejudice: Opinion not based on facts
  - Stereotypes: rigid mental picture
2. Assuming and Judging
3. Lack of experience with others that are different
4. Fear of differences / Unknown/ Others. Being in the **COMFORT ZONE**
5. Communication conflicts

## **Barriers to Communication**

- 1- Physical
- 2- Psychological & Perceptual
- 3- Language
- 4- Gender
- 5- Generational
- 6- Culture, race and religion

To have better communication, be an **active Listener**; maintain eye contact, ask questions.

## **As an Individual**

1. Watch own bias, stereotypes, and Prejudice
  - Bias: Mental discrimination
  - Prejudice: Opinion not based on facts
  - Stereotypes: rigid mental picture
2. Do NOT assume and Judge especially based on your perceptions
3. Do NOT reject others just because they are different-
4. Need to have a mindset of acceptance not only because of compliance but because it is the right thing to do
5. Embrace experiences with others that are different; share stories, food, ask questions
6. Do NOT stay in your comfort zone and have fear of differences / Unknown/ Others
7. Watch Communication conflicts that arise because of miscommunication, and body language misinterpretations
8. If you are a manager or supervisor it is YOUR duty to make sure that all employees are treated fairly, equally and are given the opportunity and chance to become the best they can creating a positive working environment

## **As an Organization**

- 1- Create an inclusive culture throughout the whole organization for both internal and external customers
- 2- Train the leadership teams as directors, managers, and supervisors
- 3- Make sure that all the policies, systems, processes and organizational climate have ZERO tolerance for prejudice, harassment or discrimination
- 4- Involve employee representatives to gain credibility
- 5- Assign responsibilities of Diversity and inclusion to leadership roles
- 6- Hold all employees accountable for their behaviors

### **The consequences of not embracing/ applying diversity**

- 1- Low employee morale creating hostile work environment thus decreasing productivity
- 2- High rate of absenteeism
- 3- High turnover rate
- 4- Monetary, law suits and punitive damages, Tarnishing the organization's reputation

## Solutions Steps to apply Diversity

1. Start with a **Cultural audit** to grasp your internal demographics
2. Challenge stereotypes, prejudice and bias
3. **Tolerating Ambiguity/Uncertainty**: Being able to respond to unpredictable situations without getting stressed and cranky.
4. **Being Flexible**: Being able to readjust quickly and effectively to changing situations.
5. **Showing Respect**: Being able to behave in respectful manner towards others.
6. **Having Patience**: Being able to stay calm, stable and persistent in trying situations.
7. **Being Resourceful**: Being able to respond skillfully and promptly in new, uncertain situations. Seek information about the cultures of those with whom you interact.
8. **Listening Carefully**: Being able to pay close attention to what is being said.
9. **Observing Attentively**: Being able to watch and make mental notes of behavioral patterns of others in order to better understand meaning of behavior.
10. **Personalizing Observations**: Being able to recognize and accept that one's personal perceptions may not be shared by others; knowing and accepting that "my way is not the only way. **Do not assume transferability**
11. **Paying Attention to Your Feelings**: Being able to self-reflect on one's thoughts, feelings, and stress level.
12. **Displaying Empathy** (Put yourself in other people shoes): Being able to vicariously feel the thoughts, attitudes and experience of another. Results from respecting and interacting with diverse others.
13. **Having a Sense of Humor**: Being able to laugh at oneself and with (not at) others; finding humor in the irony of life.
14. **Suspend Judgement**: Seek first to understand than being understood; Observe and actively listen; Be willing to allow people to feel what they feel
15. **Find common grounds** like a common business goal or objective
16. Conduct **Diversity training** and/ or leadership/ team building
17. **Host a Cultural Generational Awareness Week**. Post photos that represent the cultures/ generations. Include icons and popular expressions. Play music that is popular to each culture/ generation
18. **Learn about other cultures** beside yours. Ask questions, learn history, characters, motivation, and work preferences. Respect others.
19. **Be Culturally Neutral**– There is no better or worst
20. **Perceptiveness** – the ability to closely observe and appreciate subtle information in the speech and behavior of others.
21. **Valuing personal relationships** – the ability to recognize the importance of interpersonal relationships.
22. **Integrate DO NOT assimilate- Ability to work on International/ Multi-cultural teams**– Integrate Diversity to create competitive edge and advantage
23. Apply these findings

## ACTION PLANNING

To bridge the cross cultural gap effectively as a leader; the behavior I will work on over the next 2 months is:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Two actions I will take to improve my skills in modeling this behavior are:

1. 

---

---
2. 

---

---

I will ask the following person(s) for help:

---

---

---

## **Thank you**

**All the pictures used in the workbook are copyrighted and are used SOLELY for the purpose of education and learning**

This workbook is the intellectual property of, and is proprietary to Sahar Consulting, LLC and it is not to be disclosed, in whole or in part, without the express written authorization of Sahar Consulting, LLC. It shall not be duplicated or used, in whole or in part, for any purpose other than to be educational material for the Bridging the generational gap workshop training for the “CSDA Conference”. The workbook can’t be used in part of whole in the same program/ similar or different programs if not facilitated by Sahar Consulting, LLC.