



Business Champions
School

Workplace Excellence

Chapter 6

CMM201

Communication skills

Lecture

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Learning Your Workplace Culture

Diversity in Your Workplace: Some Important Concepts

NEXT STEP

After weeks, or more likely months, of job seeking, the day you have been waiting for will finally arrive. You will begin your life as a professional.

Beginning a new job, even if it's a promotion or a different position within the same company, brings with it almost as many emotional ups and downs as job seeking.

Section One

Learning Your Workplace Culture

Learning Your Workplace Culture

Just as every other new employee does, you will learn about your workplace's organizational culture through an assimilation process.

The assimilation process is really part of a much larger phenomenon known as socialization—the experiences that shape our attitudes, perceptions, emotions, and communication choices.

From the day you were born, your parents, your siblings, your relatives, your friends, your teachers, and even strangers have been working to socialize you into the culture or cultures that make up their experiences.

What is culture?

Culture is the rules of living and functioning in society. It is how you talk, behave, dress, and think is heavily influenced by the ways others have socialized you into various cultural groups.

What is Organizational culture?

Quora

Google

An organizational culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that have been invented, discovered, and/or developed by a group as it learns to cope with problems of external adaptation and internal integration in ways that have worked well and are considered valid, and, therefore, can be taught to new members of the group as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to a problem.

How does Culture influence business communication?

Preparing for Diversity

Culture influences business communications by increasing the relevance of cultural knowledge and understanding. Workplaces are increasingly more diverse. Business communication is more likely to include contact with people from different cultures and with companies in different countries. A lack of cultural understanding can cost a business a contract or create stress in the workplace. Because poor communication can affect the bottom line, businesses institute training to prepare employees for cross-cultural communication. Businesses that succeed in the global economy are willing to learn about foreign cultures and prepared to view cross-cultural communication as a necessary skill.

How does Culture influence business communication?

Nonverbal communication

Cultural influence on business communication can come from nonverbal communication. Extra effort is often needed to understand the importance of nonverbal communication in multi-cultural situations. Nonverbal communication includes gestures, body positioning and facial expressions. Gestures and behaviors that you commonly use might have different meanings to people from other cultures.

For instance, in the United States it is appropriate to beckon someone with the palm of your hand facing up, but that gesture is considered rude in Korea and in other countries. The simple act of placing your feet on your desk could lose your company an important contract with a Saudi Arabian business.

Diversity in your workplace

Some Important Concepts

Diversity in Your Workplace: Some Important Concepts

Part of the assimilation process involves getting to know the people who make up your organization. A common mistake among so-called professionals is neglecting to take an inventory of others in the working environment. In today's world, getting to know your diverse workplace is important for two reasons.

First, for you to succeed in any professional environment, you must be aware of and sensitive to differences between yourself and others.

Second, your ability to communicate effectively when encountering difference (e.g., ethnicity, race, language barriers, religion, spirituality, marital status, sexual orientation, age) is an essential component of professional excellence.

How do I prepare for the diverse workplace?

Cultural Competence

The term cultural competence refers to the level of knowledge a person has about others who differ in some way in comparison with himself or herself.

Cross-cultural attitude strategies that help you to develop and enhance one's ability to practice effective communication in intercultural situations:

Practice openness

by demonstrating acceptance of difference.

Demonstrate humility

Through suspension of judgment and the ability to learn.

Be flexible

by demonstrating acceptance of ambiguity.

Be sensitive to others

by appreciating cultural differences.

How do I prepare for the diverse workplace?

Cultural Competence

Cross-cultural attitude strategies that help you to develop and enhance one's ability to practice effective communication in intercultural situations:

Show a spirit of adventure

by showing curiosity and seeing opportunities in different situations.

Practice positive change or action

by demonstrating a successful interaction with the identified culture.

Use a sense of humor

Through the ability to laugh at ourselves.

How do I prepare for the diverse workplace?

Cultural Competence

These attributes will guide you in developing cultural competence:

- Self-knowledge and awareness about one's own culture.
- Awareness of one's own cultural worldview.
- Experience and knowledge of different cultural practices.
- Attitude toward cultural differences.

Section Two

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Gender

You may not think of men and women as being part of different cultures, but men and women are indeed part of very different cultures.

Try to understand others' communication style to reduce conflicts.

1. Giving Orders

Men and women often differ in the way they give orders. Many women are conditioned by the culture of maintaining harmony in relationships. Several well-respected studies have shown that women tend to soften their demands and statements, on the contrary, men tend to be more direct in their statements.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Gender

Try to understand others' communication style to reduce conflicts.

2. Emotions and information

Women prefer connecting through conversation, while men prefer connecting through action. **Based on “Psychology Today – Men, Women, Emotions and Communication”, when a woman wants to talk, she wants to share her emotions and thoughts to others, while a man tends to share his ideas and suggestions and avoids talking about his feeling.** Take note that this doesn't mean that men won't talk about their feelings, but they might be uncomfortable while doing so.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Gender

Try to understand others' communication style to reduce conflicts.

3. Communication pattern

Women and men have different conversations patterns. Women tend to punctuate the conversation with affirmative noises, for instance, “Uh huh” and “OK” to let you know she is concentrating and listening. On the other hand, men prefer to sit quietly and focus on what is being said. As a result, it doesn't mean that he doesn't agree on what you are saying. So, when talking to a guy, don't feel nervous or weird when he is not giving responses to you.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Gender

Try to understand others' communication style to reduce conflicts.

4. Asking questions

Men ask questions for one purpose only – to gather information. But for women, asking questions serves for two purposes – to gather information as well as asking questions which they already know the answers. But why are they asking things that they already know? As mentioned above, women wish to maintain harmony in relationships, they want to show interest in what others have said to cultivate relationships. Therefore, you tend to see women asking more questions in business.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Ethnicity and Race

Race

Race is the categorization of people based on physical characteristics such as skin color, dimensions of the human face, and hair. The old typology placed people into one of three races.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to a social group that may be joined together by factors such as shared history, shared identity, shared geography, or shared culture.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Ethnicity and Race

Major mistake you do;

Rely on nonverbal cues to detect someone's ethnic background, you do so without taking into account that what you see visually may not always be accurate.

Solution

Remember that what you see visually through nonverbal dimensions of physical appearance does not always shape accurate perceptions of another person's ethnicity.

Although this term tends to have a negative connotation, stereotypes merely describe the way humans categorize or understand.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Ethnicity and Race

Stereotyping

Stereotypes are generalizations about the personal attributes or characteristics of a group of people.

How to avoid?

When developing professional excellence as it relates to cultural competence, it is important to begin by knowing yourself.

Ask yourself these questions?

What are your experiences with this ethnicity?

What stereotypes (positive or negative) do you hold?

What questions or concerns do you have about communicating with someone from this ethnicity?

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Ethnicity and Race

Stereotyping

How to avoid?

The next step is to evaluate the professional context, through:

Researching a culture to increase your understanding of difference.

Ask questions of the person with whom you are communicating in the professional context.

Open and respectful communication is a must when getting to know people of diverse ethnic backgrounds in the workplace.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Ethnicity and Race

Stereotyping

For example

when James traveled to India on business, he researched ethnic differences. He learned that the custom in India is to get to know the other party prior to doing business. In New York City, he had always made it a point to do business first and, once an agreement was reached, then go for dinner or a drink. Understanding this difference increased his cultural competence. When Suzette traveled from France to Iowa for a business meeting, she greeted her coworker, Sam, with a hug and a kiss on each cheek. She noticed that Sam seemed a bit uncomfortable. Instead of ignoring her perception, she asked, “What is the customary greeting in the United States?” Sam explained the simple handshake, and Suzette increased her cultural competence with perception checking.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Language

THINK WITH ME

Have you thought at all about globalization and how it will influence your career?

Keeping your own professional goals in mind, how do diversity and globalization impact the industry or profession in which you're interested?

One way globalization will affect your communication is through differences in accents, dialects, and languages. The word accent refers to a person's pronunciation of various words in a language.



Be
aware

“Language differences will compound other cultural differences that surely exist.”

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Language

What should we do?

Be prepared to ask and answer many questions to ensure a clear understanding.

Try to avoid the common mistakes of losing patience and giving up.

Try to avoid speaking louder or, even worse, yelling at another person when a language barrier is present can often lead to frustration and further misunderstanding.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

People with disabilities

Remember

Not all disabilities are visible, such as heart disease, depression, or asthma.

Many people have temporary disabilities which are equally as limiting as permanent disabilities.

Not everyone with a disability wishes to discuss it or its limitations. Wait until you know an individual before asking personal questions.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

People with disabilities

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

Tap someone who is deaf on the shoulder or wave your hand to get his or her attention.

Write notes if you don't sign (short sentences; common words).

Wheelchair Users/Mobility

Position yourself at the same eye level by sitting down if engaged in a long conversation with someone who uses a chair.

Treat the chair as part of the user's personal space; do not touch or lean on the chair.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

People with disabilities

Speech & Language

Allow time for the person to speak, as they may need more time to respond to you.

Avoid the urge to interrupt or complete a sentence for the person.

Learning Disability/ADHD

Realize that this is rarely visible evidence of learning disabilities.

Use multiple methods to deliver information.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

People with disabilities

Chronic or Acute Health

Examples: Cancer, Asthma, Emphysema, Diabetes, HIV/AIDS, Sickle Cell

Understand that each person has unique set of symptoms and treatments.

Do not treat the person as if they are contagious.

Learning Disability/ADHD

Understand that social skills may be impaired.

Be sensitive to emotional stress or triggers.

Be patient.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Generational Differences

For example

You are a recent college graduate and just began your dream job writing for a local publication. At your first staff meeting, the editor-in-chief says that the lead story for the next issue is an exclusive interview with the chief of police about recent violent incidents involving officers that made national headlines. You immediately express interest in conducting the interview, because the chief is a close family friend and you could potentially get him to answer some hard-hitting questions that no one else could. The editor-in-chief ignores you and instead gives the interview to one of the older, more experienced staff writers. After the meeting, the older writer pulls you aside and tells you that you are too new and too young to be trusted with such an important story, and that at future meetings you should keep quiet and do what you are told. Although you were eager to hit the ground running by showing your willingness to work, you did not account for the hierarchical structure of the publication, one based on generational differences.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Generational Differences

How to manage communication with various generations?

Communicating to a Traditionalist (born 1922-1945)

They're very directive and prefer to be communicated to formally and through the written word (think...memos). They take satisfaction in doing a job well, so make sure that you share with them how much you respect their experience. When it comes to providing feedback, no news is good news, so only approach them with something that is paramount to their performance.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Generational Differences

How to manage communication with various generations?

Communicating to a Baby Boomer (1946-1964)

Baby boomers are known to be workaholics, desire high quality in their products and services, and aren't afraid to question authority. They want to be collegial leaders, so working with them, as a team member is relevant and valuable. Communicate in person, but try to avoid meetings, one-to-one will be the best method

Communicating to Generation X (1965-1980)

Having a conversation immediately after an event is more relevant than waiting too long. They like hearing feedback, so give it freely, but also remember that autonomy is important to them, so inspect what you expect. To fire up small talk, feel free to talk about both personal and professional lives.

Examples of Diversity in Professional Contexts

Generational Differences

How to manage communication with various generations?

Communicating to Millennials (*1981-2000*)

The folks from Generation Y are always wondering about what is next. They are entrepreneurial, goals oriented, and feel comfortable with multitasking, so they feel free to create participative conversations. We all know that they like to communicate electronically, so send SMS messages, e-mails, and social media wall posts. They want their work to be meaningful, so provide feedback continually and put them on teams with other bright and creative people.

Thank you