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Competency & Performance Solutions

Celebrating our Differences

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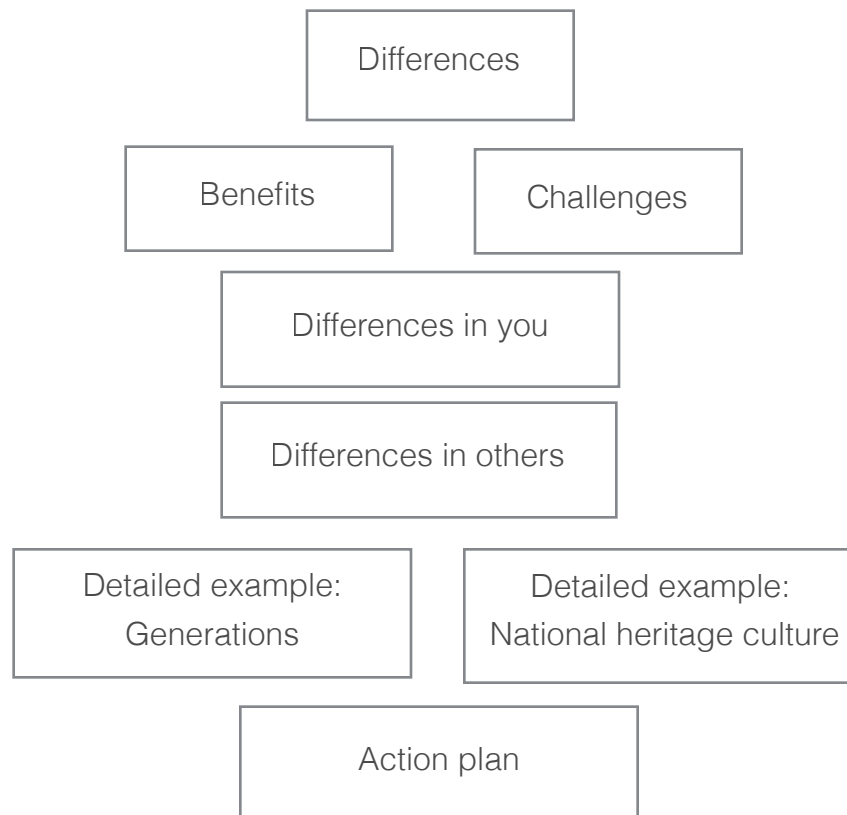
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1 Overview and objectives

At the end of this program, participants will be able to:

1. Give examples of how differences create success in communities & organizations.
2. Note the scientifically-proven challenges of differences, and accept that people are naturally wary of differentness.
3. Understand that the beginning of exploring differentness lies in understanding oneself, using a fish analogy. ("What water do you swim in, Mr/s Fish?")
4. Explore and celebrate different ways in which they are diverse.
5. Commit to enjoying the differentness of others.
6. Explain the different generations, after working through a Generational Jigsaw.
7. Define different cultures as different, rather than right or wrong.
8. Plan three action steps towards celebrating differentness in their organization and community.



2 Diversity creates success in communities & organizations

Differentness is a recipe for success in the Age of Knowledge (as long as everyone contributes).

A group of computer gamers solved a medical research problem that mystified scientists for over ten years. They did it in three weeks.

1. Diverse management teams increase business profits by 34% to 60%. (Google search: Ilene Lang.) In Norway, public companies must have 40% of their Boards made up of women, because of this research.
2. The US Congress studied new businesses success. If the founders are diverse, the new business is much more likely to succeed, stay in business and create jobs. One woman or one minority founder are enough to make a clear difference.
3. Immigrants are a great source of diversity. 29% of Florida businesses are owned by immigrants. A quarter of America's small business creators were immigrants. Forty percent of Fortune 500 companies were started by immigrants or the children of immigrants.

Why? And why does ANY difference work?

Different people have different knowledge and experiences. They ask different questions. They process information and approach decisions differently.

Different generations, genders, race/ethnicities, sub-cultures, have different networks, collections of knowledge, priorities and ways of seeing the world.

Each language has different words. These carry clusters of meaning, and affect the way the speakers of that language think. Each profession trains people to think in different ways.

What is good for organizations, communities, colleges etc?

1) Differences. Different generations, cultures, genders, experiences, professions, health/abilities, socio-economic backgrounds etc.

- Look for diversity of experience, viewpoint, knowledge, small business, large business, sales vs purchasing etc.

2) Collaboration and communication. No matter how much anyone sees or knows or thinks, the main benefits of differences come from sharing varied knowledge and perspectives. These create value for the organization and the community.



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Points to Ponder:

Diversity

The term "diversity" often means differences of culture, background and experience among individuals and groups.

Such differences include, but are not limited to, differences of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and disabilities, as well as political and religious affiliation and socioeconomic status.

Difference

Science is alerting business to differences. Some invisible illnesses are as challenging as any visible "disability." Differences (not on the diversity list) are as beneficial to business success and innovation as any of the "formal diversities."

Disadvantage

Have we diluted "diversity" into "differences" and therefore failed to help historically-disadvantaged groups and minorities?

This is fiercely-debated question.

3 Differentness can be a challenge

Differentness can cause many misunderstandings.

1. Otherness can be scary.

Humans are naturally wary of new and different situations or people. We have been ethnocentric for a long time, but our wariness of differentness applies to many situations:

- *Would you run into a dark cave, an unknown building or a forest?*
- 2. We're somewhat hard-wired to be careful of "other tribes." That may be "people who are not like me" or "people who support a different football team" or "people from a different city/state/country" etc.
- *Is it easier to believe that unknown people in unknown parts of the world are nasty, or easier to believe that people from your neighborhood are nasty?* _____
- *Would you leave your child with a stranger?* _____

This is a natural and scientifically-proven human trait. Most societies teach their children to avoid strangers, and only to trust the people they know. In a diverse world and a global economy, adults often have to unlearn these lessons to trust new friends and colleagues.

Very simply... we like and trust whom and what we know, and have become comfortable with.

Think of one time you have drawn back from someone because you didn't know much about their culture, age group, profession, disability, language, responsibilities or any other factor you noticed about them?

2. Otherness is interpreted, not directly understood.

We meet many others but we **are each living in our own world**. We interpret the words and actions of others through our own assumptions, expectations or experiences. We filter or "choose" what we see.

Words or actions can have many meanings in a complex world of unique others. Everyone interprets the world from his or her own perspective.

Customers and co-workers interpret you, your actions, words and emails through their own life-experiences and world views.

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Bubble football - each in their own world.

4 Understanding differentness means understanding oneself

The best route to understanding others is to understand ourselves.

The more we understand...

- how we see the world,
- how we interpret the behavior of other people,
- our assumptions.



We learn to communicate better, and to get better at building trust and respect in relationships.

Think of one thing you know about yourself that influences the way you assess others, or respond to others?

4.1 Differentness: what water do you swim in, Mr/s Fish?



We are all like fish, swimming in water. We are so used to our lives, experiences, cultures, assumptions that we forget they are there, as a fish forgets the water is there.

Quiz

1) Which drink has a good amount of ice?

2) If you are driving in a safe neighborhood, and it is 3 a.m., and you come to a traffic light where you can see all roads clearly, and there are no cars at all, can you go through the red light?

3) Is this man wearing a t-shirt that is underwear, or suitable for wearing out?

4) If two medium-sized businesses end up in a lawsuit, that is probably the end of their business relationship. True or false?



4.2 Finding your own diversity

Using items from the boxes available, think about how diverse you are. In our individual diversity we have many rich experiences and ways to connect with others.

Find someone who shares your identity. Share a story or two with a partner and the group.

Traditional ideas of diversity

Military service and experiences
serving or as a veteran

Illnesses and disabilities, including
invisible illnesses

Religious/spiritual beliefs,
influences and traditions

Race and ethnicity in your
heritage

The socio-economic history of
your life

Genealogy, culture and heritage in
your family and life

Health, exercise and dietary
traditions in your family

The political beliefs that you held
or met with during your life

Gender roles and experiences

Sexual orientation and identity



What about differences like...

Places you have lived

Your nation of origin (USA/other)

Places you have traveled

The languages you speak

Your communication style

The foods you like



Some other kinds of difference

Your professional background,
knowledge and outlook

Sports you have played/followed

Your interests in pets, animals,
the environment etc.

Skills you have learned

Hobbies you enjoy

Technology in your life

Educational experiences

Your generational traits

Your personality style



Our lives are shaped by...

Being a son or daughter

Being a spouse or partner

Raising a child / children

Being a brother / sister, first, middle or
last child etc.

Having grandparents or grandchildren

Community service roles

Being a caregiver or other
responsibilities you carry

5 Enjoying the differentness of others

If the best way to understand others is to understand ourselves, then it is worthwhile enjoying the journey of celebrating and exploring identity.

Each step of the journey will show you more about how your worldview came to be, and why you see the world (and other people) as you do.

This life-long journey may help you understand the life-design of your family and friends. There are no rights and wrongs in culture, and all lives make sense from the inside.



Reaching the goal. Differences are valuable, interesting.

1. I think of different ways of life as just...different.
2. People are simply born into different lives and experiences.
3. I can trust people who are different from me.
4. Differences are no threat to my life choices. It is okay for us to be different.

Gaining momentum. We're getting to know each other.

1. I can feel how on-going contact with other is becoming more comfortable.
2. I've talked about being different - now similarities feel more important than differences.
3. I often think "It's not right or wrong, it's just different."
4. I find myself thinking that people are simply people, and that we are all very similar.

The start of change: Different feels awkward but I'm understanding it.

1. I'd be more comfortable if you were like me.
2. My culture feels more comfortable.
3. My values and beliefs feel nice...not that I'm saying that yours are wrong, of course!
4. I feel that it would be better to do things my way.
5. I'm not sure why, but it would be easier if you were more like me and my group.

Starting out. Different feels out of my comfort zone.

1. My culture, values and ways feel as if they are better than yours.
2. I feel as if you should be more like me. I am not sure why.
3. I am in one group. Different people are in another group. I trust my group.

Leaders and managers have a greater need to understand differences.

The journey to understanding and celebrating differences is more demanding and urgent for leaders.

Challenging conversations and crucial decisions come upon leaders without warning.

As the golf pro said to the amateur, frantically practicing 5 minutes before a golf game: "It's too late now - if you didn't bring it with you, you ain't gonna find it out there, during the game."

No one stands on the first tee and
tries to hit a bad shot!

Hilton Ross-Munro



I was recently given a T-shirt with a wonderful motto on the back:

"You can't hate someone whose story you know."

But these days, in our haste, we don't have time to get to know each others' stories, to be curious about who a person is, or why she or he is behaving a particular way.

Listening to colleagues - their diverse interpretations, their stories, what they find meaningful in their work - always transforms our relationships. The act of listening to each other always brings us closer.

Margaret Wheatley

5.1 Generations

One easily-visible group difference is the generational that surrounds everyone.

Jigsaw instructions:

- Form groups of five or more. Your group has a color and is your home group.
- Each person from your group will study one generation.
- You will leave your home group, and meet with your specialist-subject counterparts in an expert group. There you will prepare to teach your home group about this generation.
- You will return to your home group, and teach them about the generation you studied, and learn about the generations that they studied.

You are your home group's expert on Matures aka Traditionals or “the Silent Generation”

Your objective is to understand the Mature generation as co-workers and customers.

Afterwards, return to your Home Group and teach your group about Matures, their world-views, assumptions, and comfort levels.

Born before 1946, many remember: the 2nd World War, the Korean War, the New Deal.

Values: The Traditionals' values go back to 1800 (the Industrial Revolution). They tend to believe in thrift and sacrifice. Trust and hard work are valued. They see themselves as a generation who sacrificed.

Authority/Structure: they grew up in an era when military-style hierarchies were common in business. It is disagreeable to disagree (“don’t mention politics or religion”). Order, hierarchies and a clear chain of command.

They communicate more comfortably within structured hierarchies and traditional codes of conduct. They like time-honored traditions. Formality comes naturally to many of them. They grew up in a more formal era.

Use of time: American Matures are usually ‘monochrones’. Monochrones approach time and tasks in a linear, sequential process. Time is treated in segments, like the divisions on a ruler. Matures prefer to make appointments well in advance. (This is the only way arrangements could be made before email, cell phones or texting.)

Approach to information: Matures usually begin at the beginning of information, and proceed through it at a deliberate pace. They were educated with linear thinking processes and generally do not like multi-tasking or “skip around” thinking. This is a challenge for those who are used to compressed communication (Twitter) or “website thinking.”

Writing: They like well-paragraphed, well-spelled snail-mails, although many now use email. They usually despise emoticons (except when writing to grandchildren).

Technology: Some Matures are very computer-savvy, but most are uncomfortable with technology, especially the rate of technological change.

Fears: Matures fear disrespect for their experiences. They may feel challenged by the changing, unstructured world they live in.

The Age of Complexity makes many Traditionals **nostalgic for a simpler world.**



What Matures/Traditionals do you know, as customers or people?

What have you learned, from personal experience, about what Matures need from you in relationships and communication?

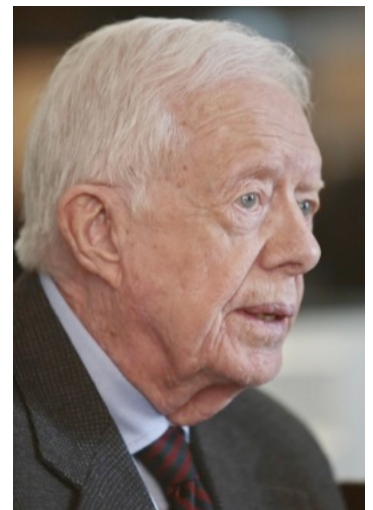
Please tell your expert group what you know from your experience.

Your personal tips:



Tips for communicating with Matures: (which resonate with you?).

1. Show respect. Be a bit more formal. Give your full attention. Don't text/email etc while talking. Keep your word. Trust and sincerity matters a lot to them.
2. Listen. Use active listening skills with the appropriate body language or verbal cues. Ask for advice. They have a wealth of knowledge. You may learn, and they will feel respected.
3. Communicate the way they do. Communicate in a sequence from the start to the finish (verbally and in writing). Don't jump around. Don't send one-line emails without openings and closes. That sounds terse, curt and rude to them.
4. Go slower. Don't spring surprises on them, or go too fast. They may find it hard to process information like this.
5. Matures tend to be serious about work as a time to do work, however, they were taught to make polite conversation, which feels slow to younger generations. Some Matures enjoy telling stories of their experiences or are lonely. If you are under pressure, say so immediately. "I'm sorry I'm so busy today..."
6. Don't expect them to share very private thoughts. They are called the "Silent Generation" because they were brought up to keep many thoughts and some memories private.
7. Avoid controversy. They didn't grow up with the Internet, the Onion or the Daily Show, and may be more easily offended than younger generations.
8. Don't expect technological skills unless you check that seniors have these first. Conversely, don't automatically assume that they are "techno-peasants" - you might be surprised.



You are your home group's expert on Baby Boomers

Your objective is to understand the Boomer generation as co-workers and customers.

Afterwards, return to your Home Group and teach your group about Boomers, their world-views, assumptions, and comfort levels.

Born 1946-1964, there are two Boomer groups. Older Boomers (1946-54) and Generation Jones (1954-63).

Older Boomers remember: The assassinations of John F. and Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., the start of space travel, the Vietnam War, anti-war protests, the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the sixties (hippies, the pill and free love, recreational drugs).

Generation Jones/Younger Boomers remember: Neil Armstrong, the moon landing, Watergate, Nixon's resignation, the Cold War, the oil embargo, gas shortages, inflation.

Values: Boomers often see work as the answer to most problems. Long hours, even without praise or thanks. They value money, job titles, awards, and signs of success and appreciation. A lot of Boomers value giving and community service.

Information processing: Boomers are "technological immigrants." Many struggle to keep up with technology. Some older and blue-collar Boomers process information almost like Matures. However, your best Geek might be a Boomer too. Don't assume.

When writing to a Boomer, begin with context. Then present the details in a logical order. The Boomer may be comfortable jumping around in the data, but remember that this generation was educated through linear processes.

Boomers often prepare for meetings. They usually believe in reading documents and thinking before the meeting.

Boomer challenges:

1. Boomers believe in work and face-time at the office and desk-time at home. Boomer bosses may have conflicts with younger staff who see work as results, instead of time-at-work.

2. Boomers grew up with command-and-control management, and may struggle with collaborative leadership.

3. Boomers were raised when information was power and on a need-to-know basis. Today, the value of information is in transparency, managing information overload, and selecting important information from data streams.

Fears: Boomers are often fearful in the current economy, worrying about employability, benefits, technological skills, respect, employer/corporate disloyalty, burnout, the personal cost of long hours at work, or a world where hard work and long hours are not enough, and their skills will not be valued.



What Boomers do you know, or work with?

What have you learned, from personal experience, about what Boomers need from you in relationships and communication?

Tell your expert group what you know from your experience.

Your personal tips:



Tips for communicating with Boomers: (which resonate with you?).

Boomers are a very visible generation.

1. Try to understand their preoccupation with their work. They may have an all-encompassing identification with it. Also try to understand the fears and insecurities the new economy has created for them.
2. They have experience in understanding goals. When you have an objective, explain it. Share your thinking, and present options or explain the reasoning behind your thinking. Let them contribute.
3. Communicate with some structure. Give some context and then details. They will be keen to work with you when they know that working with you is not about reading your mind, or dragging information out of you.
4. Boomers are still the most innovative generation in history and still want to make a difference. Show them how you can work together to do this.
5. Accept mentoring - they may have much to teach. Hear them out, and consider their points of view.
6. Offer reverse mentoring, especially on technological issues. They often take coaching from their own children and will take it well from younger people in the workplace too.



7. Be direct, but respectful, when communicating. Boomers are usually "about getting the work done." They prefer clear, specific feedback (even if it is negative) to unhelpful pseudo-politeness.



You are your home group's expert on Generation X

Your objective is to understand Gen X as co-workers and customers.

Afterwards, return to your Home Group and teach your group about Gen X, their world-views, assumptions, and comfort levels.

Born 1964-1977, Generation X remembers Desert Storm, the Challenger explosion, Y2K, Monica Lewinsky, Tiananmen Square, the Fall of the Berlin Wall, layoffs, Vietnam vets, and widespread disillusionment with leaders, governments and corporations, TV evangelists/ churches and economies.

Values: Gen X values respect and rewards for performance and results (not years on the job or face-time at work). Studies show they value work-life balance (benefits, vacation time) and meaningful work. They want to work for the right person, in the right atmosphere. They value education, skill with technology and good personal networks. They believe that their skills are a protection from uncaring corporations. Financial security is important, and they are quite cynical and indifferent to job titles (as long as they get paid).

Education and influences: Gen X is the smallest generation (48 million in US), and the best-educated generation in history. They grew up as the first generation to have two parents in the workforce. Nickname: the Latchkey Generation.

Technology: Gen X took to technology quickly, seeing computers as a time- saving tool to help with work-life balance and networking. Xers are usually technically proficient, but not digital natives. They are addicted to being connected, but they go online for relevant material and information. They expect value for the time they spend on-line.

Diversity: At least 1 in every 7 Gen X individuals is an immigrant. Diversity is often important to Generation X, and they generally support globalization. Xers value cultural fluency and want people to understand their (and other) cultures.

Networks and politics: Gen X changed business communication. They replaced silos with casual networks, and brought on-going personal relationships into business. As corporations laid people off, Xers built trust- based, technology-based, and peer-based networks.

We have almost forgotten that, before Gen X, there was very little cross-functional communication between departments. Inter-departmental communication was done by senior managers. Gen X changed this by having friends throughout the organization and mixing communication and socialization into the world of work.

Fears: Gen X became the first generation that could expect to earn less (in real terms) than their parents. The price of homes, children's education, healthcare, aging parents, are all worries. Some GenXers feel threatened by Gen Y's technologically superior talents.



What Generation Xers do you know, or work with?

What have you learned, from personal experience, about what Gen-X needs from you in relationships and communication?

Tell your expert group what you know from your experience.

Your personal tips:



Tips for communicating with Generation X:

1. Use email or text as a primary communication tool. Conference calls, texting and instant messaging work well too. Long meetings do not go down well.
2. Communicate informally. Keep it short. Ask them for feedback, and provide feedback.
3. Expect cynicism about any “corporate hype” - be straightforward.
4. “Get it right” on-line: your company’s website speaks volumes to both Gen X and Generation Y. Make on- line business easy: e.g. easy access to on-line purchases. If you are hiring, job links should be easy, and your website should confirm receipt of applications and resumes.
5. GenXers worry about Internet privacy issues. Your website should show that it is secure and that payments, recruitment, etc. are secure.
6. Watch your on-line brand. Monitor your on-line employment brand. Gen X will use their technical skills and online resources to research any education resource or employer. They will check your reputation on the Internet, with friends, and on message boards.
7. Have honest and accurate overview of job expectations. Highlight opportunities for learning, training in marketable skills and building relationships.



8. Attract good Gen X employees with flexible schedules, good training and technology. Emphasize accomplishments rather than tenure. They want recognition, open and honest communication, and employee-friendly work-places.

You are your home group's expert on Generation Y

Your objective is to understand Gen Y as co-workers and customers.

Afterwards, return to your Home Group and teach your group about Gen-Y, their world-views, assumptions, and comfort levels.

Born 1978-1995, this generation remembers Oklahoma City, 9/11, the Columbine school shootings, and computers available to everyone. They grew up with answers to all their questions (the “teachable moment”). Mr. Rogers told them they were winners. There were prizes for all. They remember Hurricane Katrina, the Pacific tsunami and the Iraq War. Some think the US fought Russia in WW2.

Values: Technology, teamwork, transparency, diversity, global thinking, community service, loyalty to friends and family. Many are brand-conscious. They like tech toys, being connected 24/7, environmental responsibility and contributing to society. Educated in teams, the Millennials work well in groups.

The ‘Trophy’ Generation: This ‘most wanted generation in history’ were born in relatively affluent times. They often had supportive, affirming parents, who may still hover around them. They thrive on feedback and expect recognition and explanations. Many Gen Ys have high expectations of their careers and ability.

The ‘Why?’ Generation were taught to question, speak up and challenge. They expect answers to their questions. They don’t see outspokenness as disrespectful, but as a source of innovation and process improvement.

Need for direction: Studies show that Gen Y’s need better long-term thinking. They want meaningful work, but managers of Gen Ys often say that they benefit from clear direction, and need a lot of input. They work well with lots of small, specific, clear deadlines.

The Instant Generation want things microwaved, Fedexed, downloaded, texted now! (Quick ... just txt it!)

Communication & skills gaps: Many Gen Ys may need help with communication, managing work, critical thinking, decision making. Their education has been affected by weaknesses in the education system, the costs of higher education, and cut-backs in training during the recession.

Technology: The Millennials are “natives” of the tech world. Their brains are literally wired differently. However, they are only savvy about certain kinds of technology. For instance they may not have solid Microsoft Office knowledge (but they learn it quickly).

Fears: Gen Y fears greedy corporations with no ethics, and boring, go- nowhere “putting in face-time” jobs. They like fun, creativity, multi-tasking and variety, so they fear repetitious work. They were often told they would be “special and wonderful” so are disappointed by hierarchical cultures, lack of transparency, “corporate BS” and “be quiet and do what you’re told to do” cultures.



What Generation Ys do you know, or work with?

What have you learned, from personal experience, about what Gen-Ys need from you in relationships and communication?

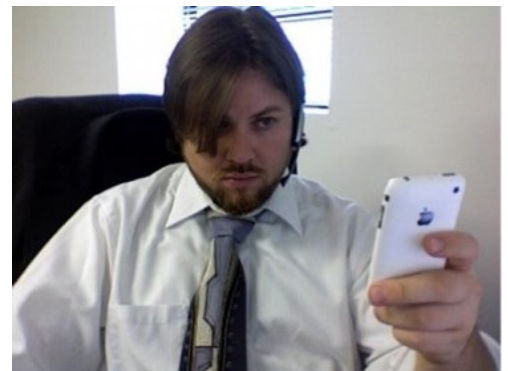
Tell your expert group what you know from your own experience.

Your personal tips:



Tips for communicating with Generation Y:

1. Gen Y needs respect (as do all generations). They often have real input in family discussions so they react badly when younger people are dismissed, or treated as cheap labor. Do not sound like a parent in the workplace, or talk down to them by emphasizing “Well you’re so young.”
2. Ask - and listen. You don’t know what they want. You don’t know how they want to be rewarded.
3. Good communication with Gen Y begins and ends with feedback. They need and expect attention, and they wilt working without feedback. Try to notice (and comment on) what they have done, or done well.
4. Listen to their ideas and feed their “can do” attitude and entrepreneurialism. Engage them in starting projects, especially in teams. Mix generations together so that people can learn from each other.
5. Give reasons. Explain relevance, and show how they’re making a difference. Try not to grouch if Gen Ys need a fun environment, as long as the job gets done. They often work in bursts.
6. Coach the confidentiality of communications (the Federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, etc.). They need to know that company information needs to be confidential.
7. Coach communication skills, including phone and face-to-face skills, even self presentation. Gen Ys prefer to communicate from behind electronic devices and voice mail. Help them out.
8. Text, and have IM or Skype open when working on projects.
9. Assume they check you out on line, and that they’re venting about you online. (They probably are.)



You are your home group's expert on Generation Z

Your objective is to understand Gen-Z as co-workers and customers. Afterwards, return to your Home Group and teach your group about , their world-views, assumptions, and comfort levels.

Born from 1995 onwards, this generation, called Generation Z, or the iGen, have grown up in a post 9/11 world. War has been a standard for the USA. Everything happens in real time on TV or on the internet. The political landscape is fiercely partisan. They met economics during the greatest recession since the Depression and it has been stressful for them. They are therefore generally thrifty.

Diversity. This is a very diverse cohort - 45%+ are non-Caucasian (Hispanic, African-American, Asian, mixed-race etc.).

Values: Gen Z is the least-likely generation, ever, to believe in the American dream. Gen Z is much less team-oriented than Gen Y, more self-directed and individualistic.

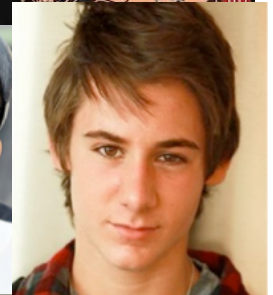
Individualism: They spend more time in the home (work-from-home family members). Many activities are done 'alone-but-connected', e.g on-line learning, games, social networking etc. They live in a world of opinions, you don't need to listen to anyone who disagrees with you. (Sometimes called Fox vs. MSNBC syndrome.) They may struggle with building consensus. Technology lets them have their say, or do things their way.

The Digital Generation's world has always been digital and wireless: DVD, Blu- Ray, MP3 players, high-speed internet, X-Boxes and Web 2.0. The 'Net Generation' cannot remember a world that was not connected. Gen Z don't remember VHS, cassette or CD players, dial-up internet or analogue technology. They have no memory of a world without social networking. (Younger Gen Ys may be like this too.)

Gen Z's technology is portable, mobile, often pocket-sized, wireless, and touchscreen. Data can't be lost, as it is on the cloud, somewhere. Technology tends to keep Gen Z in-doors and sedentary, even though this generation has a strong awareness of climate change.

Communications for Generation Quiet or the 'iGeneration': Gen Zs may communicate by text when they are together, physically. Their face-to-face interpersonal communication skills seem weakened, and their public speaking skills may be affected. However, they can create influential groups on-line, and influence people that way. They can develop effective relationships with people they have never met and never will meet, including those from different cultures.

Information processing: Gen Z are smart and quick. Their brains have adapted to large information streams, and assessment of information sources. They have been accused of "acquired ADHD," or liking TMI (too much information), or they may simply be smarter. It's an opinion.



What Generation Zs do you know, or work with?

What have you learned, from personal experience, about what Gen-Zs need from you in relationships and communication?

Tell your expert group what you know from your experience.

Your personal tips:

Pictures of Gen Z (previous page)

Kiernan Shipka (Mad Men)

Dominic Scott-Kay (Pirates of the Caribbean, Saving Angelo)

Jayden Smith (The Pursuit of Happyness)

Malala Yousafzai

Malia Obama

Tips for communicating with Generation Z:

1. Think differently. This generation won't watch advertisements on television or see them in newspapers. Communicating with them is a whole new world. Downloadable mobile-phone apps communicate your brand better.
2. Think "technology dependent." Gen Z can master nearly any new technology, but often look at a new task and say 'I don't get it' instead of trying to figure out how to do it. They are used to a high level of user- friendly structure. You may need to walk them through a process once, or several times.
3. Once they have a mental framework for a problem, they are usually very good at getting information and solving problems. Use this skill when giving them tasks.
4. Be patient with their questions, and don't become defensive when they know more than you do. They can usually access information much quicker than you can, but may accept any source.
5. Be aware that there are many Gen Zs whose economic circumstances left them out of technology. Don't assume that this generation is homogenous. Help to re-enfranchise them into the economy.
6. Help them to experience success as quickly as possible. They are even more "instant" as a generation than GenY.
7. Help them out if they are overwhelmed by TMI (too much information). They may need help to process complex information, or to make complex decisions. Remember that their communication skills are not good enough in many situations: ask, probe, listen, structure and coach.



5.2 National Heritage/National Culture

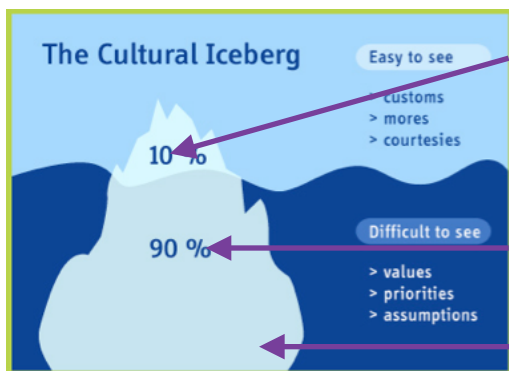
This section contains extra notes for those who are, or work with people of African, African-American, Hispanic, Asian, European, Caribbean etc heritage.

We're all unique, infinitely different in a myriad of tiny ways.

A hundred times a day, we forget (or sometimes remember) that other people don't see the world the way we do. This is a particular issue when people grow up in communities in different parts of the world, speaking different languages, with different food, histories, traditions etc.

Culture can refer to any group difference, but we often use the word to mean a heritage of world views that come from a national, linguistic, geographical, organizational or professional past.

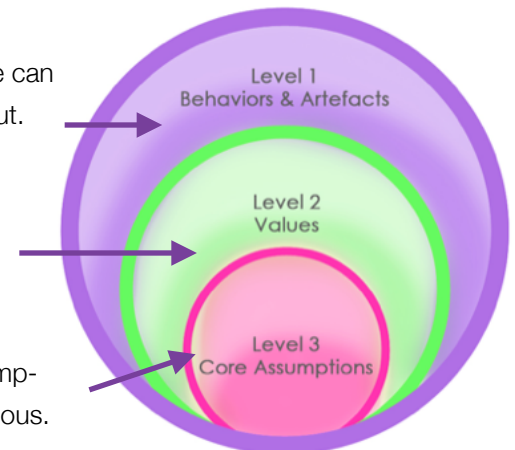
Layers of culture



The parts of differentness that we can see, notice consciously, talk about.

Hard to see or express or put into words. Values, assumptions about life. Usually sub-conscious.

Very deep-seated values, assumptions about life. Usually unconscious.



5.2.1 How Cultures can be Different

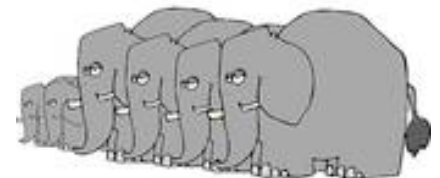
Individualism vs. Collectivism

Everyone has an "I" consciousness, and a "we" consciousness. The emphasis that cultures place on the "I" or the "we" varies between cultures and sub-cultures, including companies, and national/ethnic groups.



Some people see themselves primarily as individuals. They think it is more important to focus on individuals so that they can contribute to the community.

Some people regard themselves mainly as community members. They think that is important to consider the community first, because it is shared by so many individuals.



Culture is not right or wrong, only different, but this viewpoint influences many things in business. It affects how we plan or make decisions, how we give rewards, how we manage people, how we share information etc.

Do you come from a more collectivist or a more individualist culture?

My culture is more collectivist (C)	C	M	I	My culture is more individualist (I)
We value the well-being of the community we belong to. We spend much time, energy and resources caring for it.				We place a high value on the individual. We emphasize individual rights, individual fulfillment, and autonomy.
If everyone takes care of the group or community, then individuals will have quality of life.				Individuals should achieve and develop freely. This will lead to the well-being of the group or community.
Overall, it's important to take care of the interests of the group. This serves the best interests of all group members.				It is right to take care of your own self-interest and self-development. This is good for everyone in the long term.
Our community cares about its members, but the individual has responsibilities to the community. It's important to show real commitment to your group.				People should take care of themselves, and take responsibility for themselves, and their immediate families (husband, wife or children, not necessarily aunts, cousins).
It is important to fit into the group. It is important to work for the group goals, even at the cost of individual freedom.				In my culture, people think that one's own well-being is most important. That is one's main responsibility.
In my culture, people do not make all their decisions alone. There is discussion, consensus, and people work towards building agreement and harmony. We respect the majority opinion, and we honor traditions or norms.				We usually expect people to decide matters independently. The opinions of others need not influence your decisions.

How this factor affects your work situation:

- How much people talk about personal and 'out-of-work' issues.
- Decision making - whether people say what they think, or find out what others think first.
- Incentives - whether people value individual rewards, or prefer team acknowledgement or group rewards.
- Things like the way food is shared in the workspace.



Culture is a series of ways of solving problems. It answers questions such as:

1. How does time work?
2. Who is above or below us in status, why are they there, and how must they be treated.
3. How do rules work, and how tightly do we apply them?
4. How much emotion should we show, or hide?

Some of these questions are complex.

5.2.2 High and Low Context Cultures, (closely related to Diffuse and Specific Cultures)

. This aspect of culture deals with a problem such as “how do people fit into my life and how do I communicate with them?”

This section includes notes for you to read after your seminar, to see how to understand culture.

Specific cultures (low context cultures) solve this problem by an answer that says, roughly:

- My life is made up of a number of different, specific parts, boxes or roles.
- My life component parts are quite well-defined, compartmentalized - family, friends, work, sport, neighbors etc.
- You fit into one or more of these specific pigeon-holes or boxes.
- It's quite easy to get into my life: you get into one of the boxes. Once you are in, there you stay, in your box. Very few people get into my whole life. And I manage the boxes.
- Communication is clear and direct.
- I supply context. I explain things. If I mention someone, I explain which box(es) that person is in. She is my mother, sister-in-law, boss etc. If I did this in a high-context situation, people would be offended. That is an interwoven system, so they know who my mother is - they would be a bit insulted by my explaining this to them.



Diffuse/ high-context cultures have a different solution:

- My life is an interwoven whole. Only trusted friends and associates come into my life. The people in my life are a kind of in-group, and they can come into my whole life.
- My life compartments are often intertwined and my life is more holistic than a specific culture life. Roles and relationships flow between areas. Clients can come to family occasions. My boss is my boss beyond the end of work. My neighbor is my neighbor 24 hours a day.
- Communication is “high context” because those in my life know the context. We don’t spell things out directly like specific people. There is much more nuanced, hinted, oblique or non-verbal communication. It’s an “in-group” situation.
- If you have to ask for explanations, or if you need explanations about the context, or what to say or do, you’re not part of the group anyway.
- If I explain things too directly, I’m really saying that you’re not part of the group. It’s rather insulting and we both lose face.
- Our nuanced communications exist in our whole culture, where face and respect are important. We communicate easily, but with careful insider-knowledge of ways to avoid giving offense.



	My culture is more specific (S)	S	?	D	My culture is more diffuse/ high context (D)
1	My (specific) culture's communication is direct. We do not circle around issues. Communication is a tool to share information.				My (diffuse) culture likes indirect communication. It is more polite to hint than be blunt. Communication builds relationships, rather than simply conveying information.
2	In my culture, roles belong to situations. As a manager, I'd be uncomfortable if an employee asks for guidance on his/her private life.				In my culture, your role extends into your whole life. For example, a manager can guide an employee in personal issues as well as working ones.
3	My (specific) culture is offended by at-home or late-night calls from managers about work. This is an invasion of privacy, or a sign that a manager has boundary problems.				It is okay for a manager to call me at home, or over the weekend, about work. Work life can be part of life at any time, and the boss is still the boss outside of work hours.
4	As a "specific" person, I am uncomfortable when co-workers ask about my social or family life.				I feel hurt when people seem uninterested in me as a person with a life outside of work. I am a whole person.
5	I'm "specific" so I expect roles to be clearly defined. I like job titles and job descriptions.				In diffuse businesses, anyone might jump in to help with anything. Sometimes it's chaotic.
6	"Specific" business people often like to get to the point. They feel that people from a diffuse culture spend too much time on relationship things, and are "circling around issues."				People from diffuse cultures often approach business matters indirectly. There may be lots of talk and it may feel as if business is secondary to the weather, family, sport, and politics.
7	In a meeting, specific business people want to "get on with the agenda." They want to keep to the point.				Diffuse people often want more time to exchange views on subjects in meetings. They may think that people who want to "get to the point" lack knowledge, context and depth."
8	Specific cultures are okay with rejecting an idea. They do not see this as rejecting the person who raised it. They are not usually offended by receiving a blunt "no."				People from diffuse cultures may hear a blunt rejection as a personal affront. A rejection of a proposal or initiative is often seen as loss of face, or a personal rejection.
9	A specific-culture company may request a proposal, or RFP, and then accept or decline it. When a specific culture is a global bidder, a first negative may cause a specific (e.g. US) company to walk away, leaving options, and money, behind on the table.				For a diffuse culture, making a bid is often viewed as a process. The bid may be the opening part of negotiations and discussions. In global business, a bidder may be confused and affronted by a "one shot and you're out" process. A blunt "no" may be the end of the relationship.

Both specific and diffuse cultures solve the problem of “how do people fit into my life and how do I communicate with them?”

Benefits of specific culture. In specific cultures, people are more accessible. This is because there is little need to protect your own private space. That is in a well-protected compartment.

People in specific cultures can safely have a large “public” life area. They can welcome many people, easily, into their lives, because they are only welcoming them into one of the public pigeon-hole compartments, on very specific terms.

When you’re “in” with a specific person, you’ve only gained entrance to a small sector of their life. You’re not truly “in” to their whole life, in the way you would be in a diffuse culture.

This is confusing to “diffuse” people, who feel they are “in” with you if they are “in” to any part of your life. When they find that they are only in a pigeon-hole, they often feel hurt, and feel that they have been given mixed messages. Diffuse culture people often say that specific-culture people are “shallow” and not to be trusted.

You can see how this is merely a misunderstanding!

‘Specific’ behavior solves the problem as follows:

“Specific” people understand that they are only in the pigeon-hole area of a specific issue. This area of your life is clearly defined, and ‘everyone’ knows the parameters from the start.

For example, if you are in a ‘business segment’ with another person, you can get to the point of the business very quickly. **This is efficient.** If you are looking for a business relationship, and there is no “fit” between you, you can move on to another relationship. If there is a match, you can move the process along.



Diffuse/high context cultures solve the problem as follows:

People are less accessible, and they guard access to their lives more carefully. Gradually, someone builds a relationship and is assessed. This is efficient as the work of creating trust and understanding is done up-front.

Both people invest time and effort up-front, to understand whether each is a fit. If their world-views and ethics fit, this prevents incorrect assumptions later on. It also builds strong communication channels, so that misunderstandings can be avoided or fixed quickly with little harm. **This is efficient.**

When someone is welcomed into a diffuse-person's life, s/he is usually welcomed in many parts of the whole life space. Therefore, it is good to take a lot of time to check that person out.

Of course, if you become friends with a diffuse-culture person, you encounter the whole “high-context communication” thing. If you are from a specific culture, it takes time and effort to learn how this system works.



Cost to the USA: One place in American business where this issue is noticeable is minority/white business. African-American, African, Hispanic and Asian American cultures use a lot of high-context communication, non-verbal communication, and in-group speech.

We search for inclusion between mainstream American business and Asian, African, Hispanic (etc.) business. A lack of cultural understanding blocks many great opportunities for the US economy in the global marketplace.

Think about it this way: In a diffuse culture, the relationship is not immediately defined. You circle around issues and relationships, getting to know the other person, building trust and connection. This takes time, but is also essential for business, because people do business with those they trust. People like working with others if there is a solid relationship, so don't jump into business too quickly. Prove trustworthiness and good relationships first.

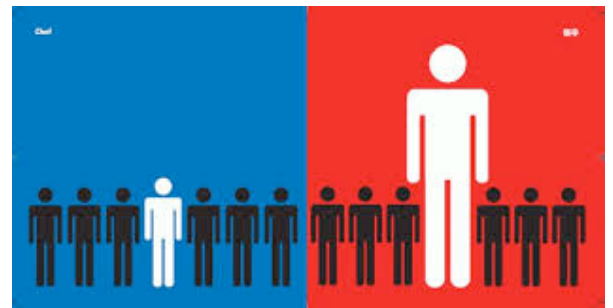
Specific cultures include the USA, the United Kingdom, Australia, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark.	Russia, Mexico, Poland, Japan are essentially diffuse cultures aspiring to be more specific and therefore <u>rather mixed</u> . Austria has received different ratings in different studies.	China, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia Singapore, and Nigeria test as <u>diffuse cultures</u> . France, Spain and Venezuela are more diffuse, but not all studies give the same ratings.
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5.2.3 Power Distance

Culture tells us whether the society we live in has steep hierarchies and defined ranks, or whether “all (wo)men are equal.” It also tells us how and why people get ranked, and how to treat higher-ranking and lower-ranking people.

Power distance is the extent to which everyone in a culture (society, organization, or other sub-culture) accepts the power structure. Power distance is not only about high-power people asserting their position. It includes the way everyone in a culture supports and accepts inequalities in the cultural system.

- In high power distance cultures, everyone accepts that rank is distributed unequally. A large amount of inequality is expected and accepted.
- In low power distance cultures, everyone accepts that all people are roughly equal. These are egalitarian societies.
- Most cultures have hierarchies. Only true hunter-gatherer societies have very little hierarchy.



Cultures also tell you how you can earn status (money, education, honor etc.), or whether you have to be born into the right family, etc. This is called **status ascription**.

Signs that a culture is Low Power Distance	Y	?	N	Signs that a culture is High Power Distance
Relationships are often consultative or democratic. People generally treat one another as equals.				Relationships are hierarchical. Those in powerful positions may behave in autocratic or paternalistic ways. Those who are 'below them' accept this. It is the system.
Subordinates are comfortable contributing to decisions, and critiquing decision-making. It's okay to question the boss.				The culture does not encourage people to question or disobey. Organizations tend towards a “command and control” style.

Signs that a culture is Low Power Distance	Y	?	N	Signs that a culture is High Power Distance
Power often comes from knowledge, expertise, personality, and information. The power of a formal position is not always the most important issue.				The power of formal positions is strong. Positional power is more important than of expertise or knowledge or information.
It is okay for subordinates or operational staff to do important work and to use their judgement. The boss always tells his/her boss who really did the work.				People follow orders. Subordinates expect and accept a lot of direction from above. They may not be trusted with important work.
People take responsibility for outcomes (good or bad). If there is blame, the blame is shared, or the senior manager takes responsibility.				Subordinates may be blamed if things go wrong. The boss often gets the credit if things go right.
Managers sometimes socialize with those who report to them. People usually call the boss by his/her first name. All staff - executives and employees - eat together, share the same lunchroom and the same restrooms.				The “top people” do not mix socially with the “bottom people.” The CEO doesn’t eat with other members of staff, or share the same restroom. (Think about what <u>actually</u> happens, not what people say should happen.)
Equality is in the air. People talk about how anyone has the potential to achieve any position. The organizations offers money for further studies. There are stories about top executives who started as truck drivers, or call center operators.				A steep power structure can be felt. For example, the language has rules for different relationships, which reflect the power structure. Social customs (who walks in front, who eats first etc.) may also exist.
It is not necessary to demonstrate position. The quiet guy in the scruffy jeans, in the open-plan desk in the corner, may own the company.				Those with power, or in authority, openly demonstrate their rank. They are expected to “look powerful” or “act powerfully” too.
Customers are generally treated equally. It is company policy to treat small and big customers the same way.				There is a strong awareness of which customers have the most status, wealth and importance.

A good consultant can help a high-power distance company become more egalitarian. This is usually done to retain talented people and increase innovation.

When you move into a high power distance culture, expect the following:

- Subordinates seldom take the initiative. Expect them to wait for you to tell them what to do.
- Management style is expected to be directive (authoritarian).
- Give clear and detailed directions, and be very clear about deadlines.

- A rather distant relationship is expected with staff. Do not try to socialize with people of different rank.
- Be more formal, respectful and deferential to those higher up the ladder than you, in both your language and behavior. Research all protocol and follow it.
- Expect more bureaucracy, and try to be patient with it.

If you move to a lower PD culture, or work with one, adjust in the reverse way:

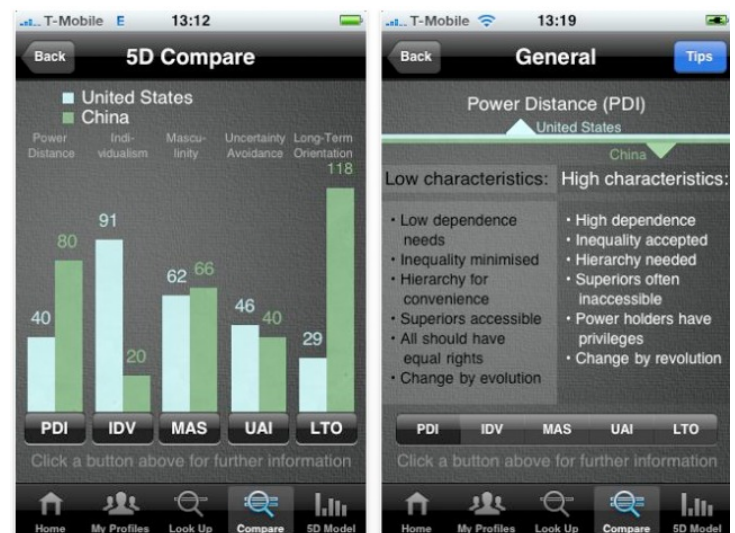
- Don't expect to be treated with deference, formality or protocol.
- Don't take casual behavior personally or see it as disrespect (within reason).
- Expect more initiative, input and reciprocal thinking from others.
- Be more inclusive in your management style, and involve others in your decision-making. If people have useful knowledge, let them give you input, and try to involve them.
- When you first come into a new situation with a low power distance culture, be careful about judging decision-making power by appearance, privileges or status symbols. You may be wrong.

Some occupational cultures are likely to have higher or lower PDIs (Power Distance Indices). For instance:

- Industries where unskilled labor is managed by highly-qualified people have higher PDIs, (e.g. engineers or project managers, managing blue-collar workers in (e.g.) mining, construction, mass production etc.).
- Knowledge worker industries (like education or IT) have lower PDIs.
- Older, or heavily licensed fields (military, medicine, law) have higher PDIs.
- Newer, fast-evolving fields (like IT or entrepreneurial startups) usually have low PDIs.

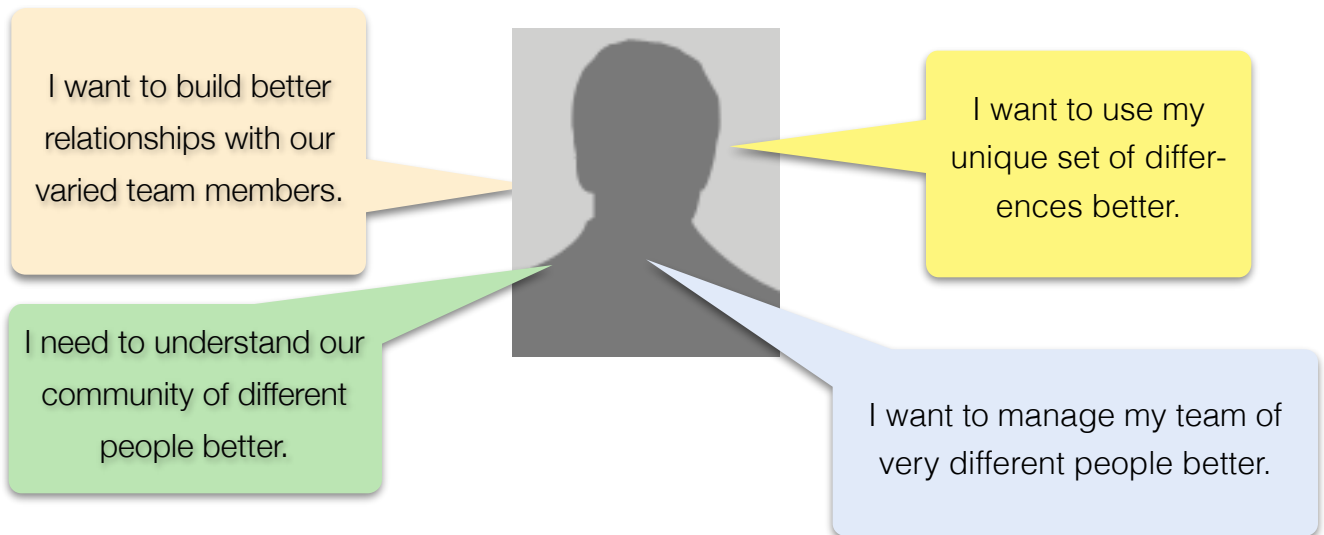
Studies and mobile culture apps: There are international studies that state that “X national cultures have a higher or lower PDI.” These are helpful, but not completely accurate. If you are visiting another city or organization, watch and see for yourself.

Many factors influence culture. Urbanization, region, average age, gender and education of employees, type of business, the personalities of the management team, the amount of training being done etc.



6 Action Plan

1. Think about why you came to this seminar.



2. Thinking about your objective(s), review Pages 6 and 7

Where are you in your journey to exploring and using your own many, valuable differences?

Where are you in the journey to exploring and enjoying the differentness of people around you?

Can you find a challenge or goal here? _____

3. Choose a useful learning point from this program. How can you apply it in your work?

4. What can you do to consolidate this learning point, so that it becomes part of long-term growth?

5. Is there someone here who can be an accountability buddy, helping you with this process? Who?

S.M.A.R.T. goals are
specific
measurable
achievable
relevant to you
time-referenced