

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA
COMMONWEALTH EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS/PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION PROGRAMME
FINAL EXAMINATION – 2010
INTERNATIONAL MARKETING- MCP 2613
DURATION THREE (03) HOURS



DATE: 08TH MAY 2010

TIME: 9.30 A.M TO 12.30 P.M

Instructions

Answer FOUR (04) questions in all including question No.1 (one)
Write legibly and to the point.

1. Carefully read the case below and answer the question given at the end of the case.

Upon returning to the United States after 10 years of working with Siemens in Germany, Tom Miller was asked to recap his impressions for a training program for international hundreds of small differences and several major differences between German and American attitudes. The following few paragraphs explain some of the differences so identified by Tom Miller.

Attitude toward work and the separation between work and life

One of the first most striking observations of the workforce I managed in Germany was their attitude toward work itself. This is one of great pride but also seriousness. The German word Ernst, which does not directly translate into English, is an attitude that can be found in American employees but is not a dominant trait. In addition, the Germans I knew tended to have a much more distinct separation between their work life and their private life. Americans tend to blend these two together with personal relationships extending into the office environment and beyond. I heard one German express it with the short phrase, "Arbett und Schnaps ist Schnaps," Which I took to mean that the mixture of work and pleasure is something that does not naturally go together.

Many Americans on the other hand, tend to believe that their work is their life. Often times there is a very small distinction between the two and social gatherings may be based upon business contacts and many social events are really nothing more than informal opportunities to discuss business.

The German attitude toward work might make an American believe, at first impression, that the work environment is a sterile, humorless and dry place to be. While this is only true to a certain extent, what is more interesting is that not much more is expected by the average German worker of his workplace (this attitude is definitely changing with the younger generation of German workers). In other words, work is not supposed to be fun- it is only supposed to be work.

The positive aspect of this, however, is that when times are less pleasant and when the tasks are more boring, mundane, tedious or distasteful, the German work force seems to be much more willing to endure without complaint. The separation between work and life means that if work is unpleasant, it is only a temporary and may be even expected unpleasantness. A de motivated German workforce will produce more than a de motivated American workforce.

To an American, since work is life, the unpleasantness is clearly unacceptable as no one wants to have an unpleasant life. As in most of these categories, on the balance there is no net advantage or disadvantage to this cultural difference. It is simply a difference that has to be recognized and worked around.

The role of humor

The Germans are seen by the Americans as a very serious and almost humorless people. While my experience is contrary to this, it is true that Americans place a much higher value on the role of humor in the day_to_day workplace.

Germans will often find Americans cracking jokes and laughing during the most serious and difficult of discussions. The German reaction may be to take this to indicate a lack of commitment or seriousness on the part of the Americans but nothing can be further from the truth. Americans simply play a very high value on having fun in the workplace. An individual who can dissolve tension through the use of humor, creating in the process a desirable trait.

Once again this relaxed attitude is very often misinterpreted by the German and can lead to some serious tensions and difficulties in communication. Much of the joking of Americans is black humor and serves an important role in characterizing the underlying seriousness of the issue. Thus there are instances where some of the joking of Americans during a meeting is actually intended to be taken seriously and may be intended to push forward a difficult discussion. This type of joking will often be misinterpreted by the Germans present at such a meeting. In addition, I have seen Germans become frustrated by the Americans' lack of seriousness toward an issue that they believed should be treated with a tough, unsmiling attitude.

Show of emotions

Although Americans may be seen as more emotional, I found that this trait was unidirectional and counterbalanced by an even greater show of emotion on the German side. Americans are very willing to display what may be termed the positive emotions such as those of enthusiasm, happiness, excitement, surprise, and delight. However, Americans are extremely reluctant to show what might be considered the negative emotions such as anger, fear, resentment, disappointment, or disgust.

Interestingly enough, I found that the Germans are much more willing to openly display emotions on this other side of the scale. This may have a great deal to do with the "directness versus politeness" theme. The Americans may deem it to be less polite to show open disgust at the behaviour of another rather than to mask that emotion. In addition,

emotional control is a prized trait among Americans. The ability to show no emotion at all during a stressful situation and to remain relaxed is considered to be a positive attribute. To “stay cool,” “never let them see you sweat,” “keep your head while all about you are losing theirs,” etc. are all expressions in the language that demonstrate this value. Once again, when a German is expressing his anger over a situation very openly, directly, and confrontationally, the American will often sit silent and passive. This is partially out of the desire on the part of the American to show control and partially because we simply do not know how to react to such direct displays of seemingly negative emotions.

Once again, there is no net advantage or disadvantage to this cultural difference. My belief is that, if everyone would show a bit more emotion throughout the emotional range we would have a more direct and understandable means of communication. Unfortunately, some of the positive emotions may seem silly to the Germans while the negative emotions are simply unacceptable displays of emotions is a cultural problem that must be clearly understood by both parties

[Extracted from Global Marketing Management (Keegan, 2008,pp132-140)

- (i) Explain in detail how these differences may affect the decisions of a marketer dealing with these communities. Your discussion may concentrate on both business dealings as well as dealings with consumer groups. (40 marks)
2. Select a product of your choice and explain how the principal of differentiation could be used to win the customers against your competitors. (20 marks)
3. Explain, using examples where necessary, the steps involved in the preliminary and the in depth screening processes of countries for international transactions. (20 marks)
4. Assume that you are in charge of the international operations of a company manufacturing leather products. Briefly explain items you may need to include in a marketing plan to offer your products internationally. (20 marks)
5. Explain the methods available for an organization to enter a foreign market. You need to base your explanation on ‘ownership’ and ‘control’ aspects of each such method. (20 marks)

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