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DIFFERENT WORK STYLES

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Mr. Deiner got angry when he saw that the "change team 3" project supporter had updated the meeting again. It was the third update in the same week. Mr. Deiner muttered to himself, "what is the problem with this team. Is it so difficult to set a meeting and follow the schedule!"

He had been in this Plant for just four months as a production department manager. He had been promised the plant manager position in Germany, where he has been working for ten years; however, one stipulation was to have international experience in one of the company's foreign subsidiaries. The Turkish Plant had achieved serious success recently in cost reduction projects; that was why he wanted to learn more from this Plant. He guessed that there should be a great discipline and dedication behind this success! After all, discipline was also the main pillar of his success in life.

The surprising thing was that before he came to Turkey, he had been told that "change teams" were one of the most important strengths of the Turkish Plant. These improvement teams were highly qualified, autonomous, and cross-functional, formed by employees from different departments. Mr. Deiner was responsible for "Change team 3" because the team was working on an improvement project on the motivation of blue-collar employees on the shop floor within his control area.

Mr. Deiner is highly experienced in leading teams in the German Plant; however, he couldn't feel that he is driving this team, and this is so weird. He is the top manager of production, and this project is related to his function. However, the team leader is "Eren," one of his subordinates working as a subdivision manager.

Mr. Deiner had heard a lot about Eren from senior management. He was like a shining star in the company, but for some reason, there was something wrong with Eren that didn't fit Mr. Deiner. They were working together on the Production line as well as on the project. He was a very creative person who found practical solutions to problems. Maybe that was the problem. Mr. Deiner didn't like these shortcuts and considered them as solutions that saved the day.

That week, "change team 3" finally gathered with full participation. Eren opened the excel file containing the steps of the project on the projector. He was going through the Project items one by one, checking the deadlines and responsibilities. When the 6th. item arrived, Eren explained that this item made things difficult and unfeasible. He cancelled it by crossing it out in the excel sheet. However, this was the item that Mr. Deiner had especially recommended at the project's



planning stage. Later, the team had talked about this issue at another meeting where Mr. Deiner was not present, and agreed to remove it. Mr. Deiner thought it was inappropriate to change Project steps without his knowledge, or even without his permission! Of course, he immediately opposed this revision, but it seemed that the team had already agreed on their own, and Mr. Deiner's objection meant nothing. Mr. Deiner left the meeting very depressed. He said to himself, "This will have consequences!"

The following week, Mr. Deiner requested a one-to-one meeting with Eren. He expressed all his complaints about revising the project plan without being asked, and even the constantly postponed meeting times. Eren was generally calm during the meeting. He insisted that the team was right on the project revision, and it had happened spontaneously. The team had made a decision when the subject was raised in another meeting. According to Eren, the team did not need permission from him for such a revision. Maybe, it might have been a mistake that they had reported to him late. The change team, due to its nature, consisted of employees from different departments. Everyone had many roles within the company, and this project was just one of their roles.

For this reason, there were many conflicts in the meeting's time, sometimes priorities of other roles, struggles and frequent updates were realized. However, this did not mean that the team did not work or did not achieve the desired results. Sometimes the team completed their deficit with overtime and always met their deadlines.

The working style of this team, Eren's inappropriate autonomy, project revisions, and constantly repeating updates...these were all unacceptable to Mr. Deiner. He felt a resistance to the members of this team and their decisions.

Questions

- ✓ *Define the working style of Change Team3?*
- ✓ *Define the expectation of Mr. Deiner from Change Team3?*
- ✓ *Why is Mr. Deiner so angry with Change Team3?*
- ✓ *Define the differences in behavioral patterns during this project management?*
- ✓ *What could be the other specific behavioral patterns?*
- ✓ *What should Mr. Deiner do with these annoying feelings? How can he overcome them?*
- ✓ *Is there any other way to think differently for Mr. Deiner in this situation?*
- ✓ *Do you think that accepting and adapting to a different work style is an essential cross-cultural skill? How could one improve this skill?*



Recommended Reading

Bernardo, A. B., & Presbitero, A. (2018). Cognitive flexibility and cultural intelligence: Exploring the cognitive aspects of effective functioning in culturally diverse contexts. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 66, 12-21.

Chiu, C-Y., & Hong, Y. (2005). Cultural competence: Dynamic processes. In A. Elliot & C.S. Dweck (eds.), *Handbook of Motivation and Competence* (pp. 489–505). New York: Guilford

Leung, A. K.-Y., & Chiu, C.-Y. (2008). Interactive effects of multicultural experiences and openness to experience on creative potential. *Creativity Research Journal*, 20(4), 376–382.

Moore, Adam; Malinowski, Peter (2009). "Meditation, mindfulness, and cognitive flexibility." *Consciousness and Cognition*. 18 (1): 176–186.



DIFFERENT WORK STYLES – TEACHING GUIDE

1. Synopsis

In the Turkey Bursa plant, change teams (improvement teams working with high autonomy) were assigned to a new German section manager. However, conflicts started between the team and the section manager because he insisted on following procedures whilst the team was always prepared to change the plan and try to do something different when problems arose. The team always felt free to modify the initial plans at every stage of the project, which was very unusual and unsettling for the German manager.

2. Teaching Strategy and Teaching Objectives

Students /learners will be able to:

- ✓ Understand culture-specific behavioral patterns
- ✓ Find a solution mechanism to these different patterns.
- ✓

3. Target Audience

- ✓ Undergraduate students in all business-related disciplines

4. Questions & Answers for Case Analysis and Teaching

- ✓ **Open the discussion**
What is the main problem in the case?

- ✓ **Advance the discussion**
Define the working style of Change Team3?
Define the expectation of Mr. Deiner from Change Team3?
Why is Mr. Deiner so angry with Change Team3?
What should Mr. Deiner do with these annoying feelings? How can he overcome them?
Is there any other way to think differently for Mr. Deiner in this situation?

- ✓ **Close the discussion**
What would you do if you were Mr. Deiner?
Define the differences in behavioral patterns during this project management?
What could be the other specific behavioral patterns?
Do you think that accepting and adapting to a different work style is an essential cross-cultural skill? How could one improve this skill?



5. Recommended Reading

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DIFFERENT WORK STYLES – TEACHING NOTES

1. Summary of the case study

In the Turkey Bursa plant, change teams (improvement teams working with high autonomy) were assigned to a new German section manager. However, conflicts started between the team and the section manager because he insisted on following procedures whilst the team was always prepared to change the plan and try to do something different when problems arose. The team always felt free to modify the initial plans at every stage of the project, which was very unusual and unsettling for the German manager.

2. Suggested methodology for ‘solving’ case study

✓ Open the discussion (15 min)

The discussion can be started by asking,

What is the main problem in the case?

✓ Advance the discussion (45 min)

The discussion can be deepened by following questions.

Define the working style of Change Team3?

Define the expectation of Mr. Deiner?

Why is Mr. Deiner so angry with Change Team3?

What should Mr. Deiner do with these annoying feelings? How can he overcome them?

Is there any other way to think differently for Mr. Deiner in this situation?

By using these questions and their answers, participants can be encouraged to think about different working styles specific to different cultures. What these differences are between Germany and Turkey and their consequences for individuals can then be discussed.

Mr Deiner's reaction to a different way of working can be discussed by emphasizing the negative consequences it will cause. Participants can be made to think about other solutions or ways of thinking that Mr. Deiner could adopt. After this discussion, participants may be asked to define the concept of cognitive flexibility and explain the importance.



✓ **Close the discussion (15 min)**

At the end of the discussion, participants can be encouraged to realize their own behavioural patterns and find their own solutions. It can be mentioned that accepting and adapting to a different work style is an essential cross-cultural skill. Participants can be asked to identify some activities that will help them to develop their cognitive flexibility.

What would you do if you were Mr. Deiner?

Define the differences in behavioural patterns during this project management?

What could be the other specific behavioural patterns?

Do you think that accepting and adapting to a different work style is an essential cross-cultural skill? How could one improve this skill?

3. Possible answers

The main problem addressed in the case is that a senior manager of a multinational company, who had come from a German culture, found himself in an uncomfortable position with the different ways of doing business in the Turkey Plant. He couldn't manage his uncomfortable feelings thus communication problems occurred.

Change team 3 is a cross functional team consisting of employees from different departments with a high degree of autonomy. The team does not have a hierarchy between members and the team leader. The group takes decisions together. The team is highly flexible thus meetings and decisions can be revised frequently, as needed. One of the issues that Mr. Deiner is most uncomfortable with is that plans are constantly being updated. Project planning steps have also been revised without his permission, whereas in the German business culture it is common to spend time in the planning phase and then stick to the plan. So Mr. Deiner expects this same discipline from Change Team 3. Mr. Deiner is angry because he considers this different working style of the team as being careless and lacking discipline.

In this case, Mr Deiner evaluates a situation from the perspective of his perception to give meaning. These meanings create emotions in him, and this affects his behaviour. Different perspectives/meanings are needed to react differently. If Mr. Deiner could see this situation as a different working style coming from culture, his reaction would be to find a solution (adapt or ask the team for different ways) instead of getting angry.

Accepting and adapting to a different work style is an essential cross-cultural skill and this skill is highly related to cognitive flexibility which means that an individual can shift his/her

cultural demands and achieve his or her valued goal in the intercultural environment (Ang & Van Dyne, 2008: 320). It is one of the key intercultural skills that affect employees' success in a multi-cultural context. Individuals with extensive exposure to other cultures tend to have higher levels of cognitive complexity (Benet-Martínez, & Leu, 2006).



Being aware of cultural differences and using different ways to learn different cultures may be a useful way to develop cognitive flexibility. These can include,

- Reading about different cultures
- Watching about different cultures
- Talking with people from different cultures
- Visiting/living in a different culture ****
- Hosting people from different cultures
- Practicing new things....

