



# Feedback from Fresh Eyes

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## **FRESH EYES FEEDBACK**

### ***Sara (Part-time student)***

This summer, I was lucky to be accepted to a 3-month part-time position in the Turkish department of a global company where I did my internship in Italy for the whole term. I had come to Turkey once with the Erasmus program and I loved it. I was excited to come back after two years.

I was assigned to handle the internal communication of a highly regarded project by the senior management of the company. I was working with the project team of six colleagues. In this context, I would plan the communication that would enable the announcement of the project's developments, goals, and achievements to all employees within the company and carry it out using communication tools such as posters, wallpapers, events, etc. They told me that I could design wallpapers, posters, etc., by looking at the samples prepared in previous projects. When I looked at the earlier designs, I found that they were pretty ordinary and unimaginative. I was excited to be able to prepare more creative things. I was going to suggest using social media for the internal communication of the project.

Some evenings, I worked on the designs until the morning. Within a week, I prepared compositions containing attractive slogans, images, and colors shared in closed groups within the company on social media. My Turkish friends, whom I knew from my previous Erasmus experience, supported my range of designs. I was looking forward to presenting my creations at the weekly project meeting. But I didn't get the applause I expected. First of all, I was criticised for using so many colors. The company had corporate colors that I should have adhered to. Secondly, my designs were found to be too abstract and artistic. Thirdly, this was communication and dissemination aimed within the company, therefore there wasn't the need for social media. I was surprised with their comments and disagreed with their opinions. I questioned myself and considered giving up.

### ***Alper (Project Manager)***

As a company policy, we have been trying to create teams as culturally diverse as possible, so we hired an Italian part-time student named Sara for three months this summer. We thought this would increase our creativity as well.



When Sara came to the department, she seemed very enthusiastic about her role in the project. We gave her the task of handling the internal communication of the project. It was not a difficult task, some examples had been done before. By looking at these, she could easily prepare an internal communication plan. But Sara wanted to remake the world. We told her about our corporate colors, but she used almost all colors except the corporate colors. We had not used social media for internal communication before, but she insisted on this as well. At the meeting, the entire project team tried to persuade Sara to adopt a more conventional communication style. Still, by the end of the meeting, we were all convinced that we needed something a little more colorful and exciting. Sara was friendly, extroverted, and willing to take responsibility. Thus I thought she deserved a chance. However, I had to attend several meetings with the corporate communications department to get approval so that Sara could implement the out-of-standard communications plan. But I must admit that the communication pillar of the project received incredible praise and appreciation within the company. Effective communication of the project played a significant role in selecting the project as “best practice.”

### *Sara (Part-time student)*

I started the project a little nervously but over time I was amazed by the overall experience and the progress that we made. As I guessed, a little bit of art and creativity changed the whole spirit of the project communication, and we got very positive feedback from other departments. The corporate communications department tried to block our way, but luckily my manager overcame the difficulties. With his advice, the HR department wanted to renew my part-time contract, which expired at the end of three months, and I was included in the reverse mentoring program the company had just put into practice.

### **Questions**

- ✓ *What is the main point in the case?*
- ✓ *What kind of people are Sara and Alper?*
- ✓ *How does Sara take social initiative in the case?*
- ✓ *What are the advantages of being an extrovert in social life?*
- ✓ *Have you ever taken a social initiative in a cross-cultural context? What has happened?*
- ✓ *Do you think that taking social initiative in work is an essential cross-cultural skill? How could one improve this skill?*



## Recommended Reading

Huang, T.-J., Chi, S.-C., & Lawler, J. J. (2005). The relationship between expatriates' personality traits and their adjustment to international assignments. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 16(9), 1656–1670.

Korol, L. (2017). Is the Association Between Multicultural Personality and Ethnic Tolerance Explained by Cross-Group Friendship?, *Journal of General Psychology*, 144(4), 264-282.

Peltokorpi, V., & Froese, F. (2014). Expatriate personality and cultural fit: The moderating role of host country context on job satisfaction. *International Business Review*, 23(1), 293-302.



## FEEDBACK FROM FRESH EYES – TEACHING GUIDE

### 1. Synopsis

An Italian part-time student was hired for one of the company projects during summertime. She was giving support for the project communication tools: posters, wallpapers, and social media. However, she had found the communication style too old fashioned and suggested a more creative way.

The case is explained from both sides. "*How the part-time student sees the project and the things done*" and "*How the Project team sees the part-time student and her fresh eyes feedback.*"

### 2. Teaching Strategy and Teaching Objectives

Students /learners will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the importance of taking social initiative in a cross-cultural context.
- ✓ Think about different ways of taking social initiative.
- ✓

### 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 issue in the case?*

- ✓ **Advance the discussion**

*What kind of people are Sarah and Alper?*

*How does Sara take social initiative in the case?*

*What are the advantages of being an extrovert in social life?*

- ✓ **Close the discussion**

*Have you ever taken the social initiative in a cross-cultural context? What has happened?*

*Do you think that taking social initiative in work is an essential cross-cultural skill?*

*How could one improve this skill?*

### 5. Recommended Reading



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## FEEDBACK FROM FRESH EYES – TEACHING NOTES

### 1. Summary of case study

An Italian part-time student was hired for one of the company projects during summertime. She was giving support for the project communication tools: posters, wallpapers, and social media. However, she had found the communication style too old fashioned and suggested a more creative way.

The case is explained from both sides. "How the part-time student sees the project and the things done" and "How the Project team sees the part-time student and her fresh eyes feedback."

### 2. Suggested methodology for 'solving' case study

#### ✓ Open the discussion

The discussion can be started with asking,

*What is the main point in the case?*

#### ✓ Advance the discussion

The discussion can be deepened by following questions.

*What kind of people are Sara and Alper?*

*How does Sara take social initiative in the case?*

*What are the advantages of being an extrovert in social life?*

*Do you think that taking social initiative in work is an essential cross-cultural skill?*

*How could one improve this skill?*

By the help of these questions, participants can be encouraged to define "taking social initiative" and think about the positive consequences of this ability.

Different ways can be discussed to develop this ability. (Brain storming)

Students may be asked to give examples from people whom they find good in this ability.

#### ✓ Close the discussion

At the end of the discussion, participants can be asked to think about their ability by the help of following question.



*Have you ever taken a social initiative in a cross-cultural context? What has happened?*

### **3. Possible answers**

The case mentioned the success of Sara who took social initiative as a part time student in a multinational company. She changed the way of the project's internal communication in the company.

Sara is a student who stands out for her assertiveness, high level of extroversion and self-confidence. She has a great tendency to initiate and maintain social activities She is an unconventional thinker who wants to bring innovation where she is. She is also courageous in giving fresh eye feedbacks to her executives.

*.....But Sara wanted to remake the world. We told her about our corporate colours, but she used almost all colours except the corporate colours. We had not used social media for internal communication before, but she insisted on this as well. At the meeting, the entire project team tried to persuade Sara to adopt a more conventional communication style. Still, by the end of the meeting, we were all convinced that we needed something a little more colourful and exciting.*

When she started her part-time role, she realized that important projects were introduced to the company in a very conventional way. She decided to change this process with a more creative, exciting and colourful way although she was working in a different culture. This is a good example for taking social initiative which is defined as the tendency to stand out, establish contact, and to be active in different cultures (Van der Zee & Van Oudenhoven, 2000). At the beginning, this new way was criticised by other employees in the department, however she managed to persuade everyone by her self-confidence, faith and determination. Sara was lucky to work with Alper, a manager who was committed to the company culture but also supportive and solution-oriented. Alper stood by Sara with what she wanted to do and prepared the conditions for her.

