



CUTTINGS...

Number 136 August 2018

Compiled and edited by Geof Cox

A couple of references to work by professors at INSEAD in this edition. First, quoting from an article by Erin Meyer in Harvard Business Review, there are some comments about the difficulties of negotiating across cultures - especially in those where 'yes' may mean 'no', and 'I strongly disagree' may be the invitation to enter into a stimulating debate. The second article is by Manfred Kets De Vries on how to develop wisdom...

Finally, this time, some observations on teamwork from Katie Byrne writing in the Irish Independent.

Enjoy

Geof Cox

Getting to Yes (or Oui, or Da, or Ja, or Hai...)

As Professor Erin Meyer of INSEAD points out in an HBR article, the many theories about negotiation may work perfectly when you're doing a deal with a company in your own country - but they may not work as well when you find yourself working with very different norms of communication in different global business cultures. What gets you to "yes" in one culture gets you to "no" in another. In an international negotiation you need contextual understanding to interpret your counterpart's communication—especially unspoken signals—accurately. Otherwise you will interpret these signals (if you see them at all) in your own cultural context and misread them, reach erroneous conclusions, and act in ways that get in the way of reaching your ultimate goals.

Professor Meyer identifies five rules of thumb for negotiating with someone whose cultural style of communication differs from yours:

1. Adapt the Way You Express Disagreement

In some cultures it's appropriate to say "I totally disagree" or to tell the other party she's wrong - this is seen as part of a normal, healthy discussion, an invitation for a big debate, not a sign that things are starting poorly. In other cultures the same behaviour would provoke anger and possibly an irreconcilable breakdown of the relationship. The key is to listen for verbal cues, what linguistics experts call "upgraders" and "downgraders." Upgraders are words that strengthen your disagreement, such as "totally," "completely," "absolutely." Downgraders—such as "partially," "a little bit," "maybe"—soften the disagreement. Russians, French, Germans, Israelis, and Dutch use a lot of upgraders with disagreement. Mexicans, Thai, Japanese, Peruvians, and Ghanaians use a lot of downgraders. So, if a Peruvian you're negotiating with says he "disagrees a little," a serious problem may well be brewing. But if your German counterpart says she "completely disagrees," you may be on the verge

In this edition

Getting to Yes (or Si, or Oui, or Da, or Ja, or Hai...) cross cultural negotiation tips from Erin Meyer

Wisdom can't be taught Manfred Kets De Vries on how wisdom can be developed.

Teamwork is more than a buzzword some observations from an article in the Irish Independent

Plus details of **2018 Public Courses, Book Sales, and Snippets** to further provoke your thinking and reflection

Snippets

A collection of thought provokers and quotations...

"I cannot teach anyone anything, I can only make them think."

Socrates

"Being defeated is often a temporary condition. Giving up is what makes it permanent."

Marilyn vos Savant

"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why."

Mark Twain

"Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony."

Mahatma Gandhi

"The most successful people reach the top not because they are free of limitations, but because they act in spite of their limitations."

Michael K. Williams

"Success is empty if you arrive at the finish line alone. The best reward is to

of a highly enjoyable debate.

2. Know When to Bottle It Up or Let It All Pour Out

In some cultures it's common—and entirely appropriate—to express emotion openly, in other cultures it would feel intrusive or surprising but may even demonstrate a lack of professionalism. What makes international negotiations interesting (and complicated) is that people from some very emotionally expressive cultures—such as Brazil, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia—may also avoid open disagreement. Whilst other cultures—such as Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands—open disagreement is seen as positive as long as it is expressed calmly and factually, and emotional expressiveness is seen as a lack of maturity or professionalism. So the second rule of international negotiations is to recognise what an emotional outpouring (whether yours or theirs) signifies in the culture you are negotiating with, and to adapt your reaction accordingly.

3. Learn How the Other Culture Builds Trust

During a negotiation, both parties are trying to assess whether they can trust each other. Here cultural differences hit us hard. How we come to trust someone varies dramatically from one part of the world to another, as does the relative importance of the two categories of trust: cognitive and affective. Cognitive trust is based on the confidence you feel in someone's accomplishments, skills, and reliability. They know their stuff. They are reliable, pleasant, and consistent. They demonstrate that their product or service is of high quality. *I trust you.* Affective trust arises from feelings of emotional closeness, empathy, or friendship. It comes from the heart. We laugh together, relax together, and see each other on a personal level, so I feel affection or empathy for you, I am able to be open and vulnerable. *I trust you.* The dominant type of trust varies dramatically from one part of the world to another.

For instance, American culture has a long tradition of separating the emotional from the practical. Mixing the two risks conflict of interest and is viewed as unprofessional. Chinese managers, however, connect the two, and the interplay between cognitive and affective trust is much stronger. They are quite likely to develop personal bonds where they have financial or business ties. In most emerging markets and most Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cultures, negotiators are unlikely to trust their counterparts until an affective connection has been made. That makes negotiations challenging for more task-oriented Americans, Australians, British, or Germans. So in some cultures you need to build an affective bond or emotional connection as early as possible. Invest time in meals and drinks, and resist talking about the deal. Let your guard down and show your human side, including your weaknesses. Demonstrate genuine interest in the other party and make a friend. Be patient: this type of bond may take a long time to build. Eventually, you won't have just a friend; you'll have a deal. And without it, you have neither.

4. Avoid Yes-or-No Questions

One of the most confounding aspects of international negotiations is that in some cultures the word "yes" may be used when the real meaning is "no". In other cultures "no" often means "Let's discuss further." In either case, misunderstanding the message can lead to a waste of time or a setback. In a lot of Eastern cultures where face is critically important, it is rude to look someone you respect and like in the eye and say no to a request. Instead they try to signal in some verbal or non-verbal way that they would like to do what you want, but it is not possible. This can be difficult to read for someone who does not understand the culture. Especially true if you are trying to negotiate in a common language - like English - which is not native to both, or either, parties. Then the language itself becomes a barrier to reading deeper cultural clues.

5. Be Careful About Putting It in Writing

In America and Northern Europe, repeating key messages frequently and

get there surrounded by winners."

Howard Schultz

"I honestly think it is better to be a failure at something you love than to be a success at something you hate."

George Burns

"Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind"

Dr Seuss

"A little knowledge that acts is worth infinitely more than much knowledge that is idle."

Khalil Gibran

"I knew that if I failed I wouldn't regret that, but I knew the one thing I might regret is not trying."

Jeff Bezos

"Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction."

John F Kennedy

"Communication is a sister to leadership"

John Adair

"Neither a wise man nor a brave man lies down on the tracks of history to wait for the train of the future to run over him"

Dwight D Eisenhower

"People are not disturbed by things, but by the view they take of them"

Epictetus

"Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so."

Douglas Adams

"Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people."

Eleanor Roosevelt

"If you end a meal with a clean shirt, you're not eating properly"

Jay Rayner

"Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than the one where they sprang up"

summarising a meeting in writing are common practices to ensure clarity. But this can go sour in negotiations in Africa or Asia where a verbal agreement followed by a written recap of would be a clear signal of lack of trust. And to compound matters, some business cultures, especially the American and Western European rely heavily on written legal contracts, whereas in countries where relationships carry more weight (and often the legal system is less reliable) these are less common. A commitment to do business does not rely on a legal framework, so successful businesspeople need to be much more flexible than in the West. In these cultures, an agreement marks the beginning of a relationship, but as the situation changes, the details of the agreement will also change.

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to read the complete article in the Harvard Business Review

New Directions offer workshops on negotiation and cross cultural communication - including doing business in different cultures. For more information [Click here](#)

Wisdom Can't Be Taught

While wisdom requires education, education does not necessarily make people wise. So points out Manfred Kets de Vries of INSEAD: the mere act of listening to wise statements and sound advice doesn't necessarily ensure the transfer of wisdom. But educators, coaches and mentors can play a significant role, by both assisting with the dissemination of knowledge and by helping those searching for wisdom work through challenging experiences, encouraging them to work on emotional awareness, relational skills and mindfulness.

Being intelligent and being wise are quite different things. Wisdom implies more than merely being able to process information in a logical way. Knowledge becomes wisdom when we have the ability to assimilate and apply this knowledge to make the right decisions. Cognitively, wise people have the ability to see the big picture and put things in perspective; to rise above their personal viewpoint and observe a situation from many different angles, thus avoiding simplistic black-and-white thinking. From an emotional perspective, people acknowledged for their wisdom are reflective, introspective and tolerant of ambiguity. They know how to manage negative emotions, and possess both empathy and compassion; qualities that differentiate them in an interpersonal context.

Which is where some facilitation helps. Kets De Vries proposes a learning community in which participants have the opportunity to tell their stories - life case studies narrated by participants themselves rather than written case studies. Telling and listening to personal stories is a starting point for a deeper understanding of oneself and others, and helps participants learn to hear what's not being said. A learning community is also a great place to practice open-mindedness, encouraging participants to step out of their comfort zone and to deal with people who are very different from themselves.

In their pursuit of wisdom, group members are encouraged to learn from their mistakes, to think before acting and, by taking off their masks, to become more authentic in living their values.

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to read the full article from INSEAD Knowledge

Oliver Wendell Holmes

"Sometimes your only available transportation is a leap of faith"

Margaret Shepard

"The moment you realise how important it is to love yourself, you will stop making others suffer."

Thich Nhat Hanh

"Peace is not the absence of war, but the presence of love."

Joep de Jong

"It is the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) that those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed."

Charles Darwin

Teamwork is more than a buzzword

We all have experience of working on teams, but do we really know what it is to coordinate, collaborate and work collectively? It's not teamwork just because you work alongside a group of people. It's not teamwork if you aren't willing to have your ideas cross-examined and critiqued. It's not teamwork if you only delegate the easy stuff. Having a team-building event is not teamwork.

The truth is that most of us haven't got to grips with the collective mindset. We tend to have a strong bias in favour of individual achievement and recognition. This bias undermines true teamwork. We recognise that we should be cooperative and collegiate, but, crucially, we believe that the buck stops with us. We also tend to confuse cooperation with collaboration - we need to let our guard down and allow ourselves to be vulnerable to collaborate. Collaboration also means generosity, not keeping a tally of each other's contributions and workloads. Then you get the magic of true teamwork. When it clicks, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

USEFUL LINKS

[Click here](#) to see the article from The Irish Independent

New Directions offers coaching for leaders and workshops in leadership. For more information [Click here](#).

New Directions offers consultancy on teams. For more information [Click here](#).

Public Courses 2018

New Directions runs a small number of public training programmes in association with partners. 2018 dates are below.

Human Competency and Capability Development

A 4 day course in human resource development strategy for the oil and gas sector. Run in partnership with petroEDGE.

Kuala Lumpur 29 October - 1 November

International Oil & Gas Executive Programme

An intensive 5 day workshop in strategic business management, designed specifically for managers in the oil and gas sector. Run in partnership with petroEDGE.

Kuala Lumpur 22-26 October

USEFUL LINKS

[New Directions consultancy and training services](#)

Book sales

Getting Results Without Authority is available at the special price of **£10.00**

Ready-Aim-Fire Problem Solving is priced at **£7.00**

Bundle both titles for **£15.00**

Price includes p&p in the UK, for deliveries outside the UK add £1.00.

[Click here to go to the secure Online Shop.](#)

Cuttings

Cuttings is a bi-monthly collection of ideas and comments published elsewhere which have attracted my attention over the past couple of months. It is designed for readers who are interested in individual, organisation and management development and is free. It has been published continuously for more than 20 years by *New Directions*, an international network of consultants and trainers who work together to learn, research, design and provide consulting and training in individual, management, and organisation development.

USEFUL LINKS

[Past issues of Cuttings](#)

[New Directions website](#)

[Getting Results Without Authority](#)

Contact details

T: +44 (0)117 968 1451

M: +44 (0)7753 626284

Skype: GeofCox.NewDirections

E: geofcox@newdirections.uk.com

P: 26a Downleaze, Bristol BS9 1LZ

© Copyright 2018 by New Directions Ltd. The contents are the property of the publisher but may be used if the publisher is identified and if copies of such use are sent to the publisher. This message was sent to [email address] as you have either requested a copy or attended one of our courses.

Note for data protection legislation purposes: your details are stored on a database which is used solely for the mailing of this newsletter. By subscribing you are agreeing to your data being stored and used in this way. The database is not used for any other communication or marketing purpose, and third party access is not allowed. You have a right of access and of rectification of your data, and a right for your data to be removed at any time. If you do not wish to receive future communications, or to remove your data from the database, reply with an "UNSUBSCRIBE" message and you will be permanently removed from this database.