Cultural Intelligence

MSOD 615 - Assignment #1

Conducting ourselves with cultural awareness, grace and a mind toward learning is critical to a successful experience in France. In order to help one another through the experience, we have identified our group and individual strengths and weaknesses and created an action plan to address these areas. This action plan incorporates the works of Hofstede and other cultural experts and is therefore designed to maximize our collective cultural intelligence and set the stage for an enriching cultural experience.

CQ Drive

CQ KNOWLEDGE

CQ STRATEGY

CQ ACTION

| CQ Scores | General Themes |
| --- | --- |
| BC  - 90  MJ  - 90  DK - 92  HM - 78  PM - 88  SR  - 95  RW – 84  Mean: 88 | • ***Enthusiasm for new cultural experiences***  • Motivation to embrace other cultures  • Exposure to other countries and cultures (work/personal)   * Adaptable and confident |
| BC - 70  MJ - 59  DK - 58  HM - 8  PM - 37  SR  - 59  RW – 65  Mean: 51 | • ***Knowledge limited to a specific area of the world/not global***  • Limited experience leading in other countries   * Little knowledge in economic/legal systems outside US * A deep respect for differences between cultures |
| BC - 67  MJ - 81  DK - 78  HM - 45  PM - 78  SR  - 78  RW – 75  Mean: 72 | • ***Rely on intuition and awareness***  • In tune with assumptions  • Limited planning, at times resistant to planning   * Learn through experience * Lack of knowledge of specific cultural differences |
| BC - 48  MJ - 64  DK - 70  HM - 84  PM - 89  SR  - 84  RW – 67  Mean: 72 | **Shared Themes**  • In tune to the reactions and emotions of others  **Divergent Themes**  • Awareness of and ability to modify behavior & non-verbal communication  • Ability to express and mediate appropriately  • Variation in language skills outside of English |

**Key Themes and Action Plan:**

1. **An enthusiasm for new cultural experiences.**

*CQ Knowledge & Action:* *Hofstede’s Power Distance*

The French have a larger power distance than the US (Adler, 2008). Because the levels of authority are more prominent in French culture, our enthusiasm could be perceived as over stepping boundaries in a business setting. We will have to support each other in being aware of French norms. French management style is characterized as autocratic (with strong management control) and hierarchical with decision-making authority residing at top management levels. There is a high adhesion to protocol and vertical line of command – upper management always has the final say.

We will also leverage some of the speech skills of our group in order to increase our collective confidence with French as a language. Some team members have existing knowledge of the language and others are learning basics before the trip. We will have a discussion right before the trip to share some of our most important learnings in this regard and continue to support one another in adapting to and learning the French language while abroad.

1. **Peaks in cultural knowledge based on personal experiences and/or specific regions in which we have worked.**

*CQ Knowledge & Drive:* *Hofstede’s Uncertainty Avoidance*

As North Americans, we tend to have very low uncertainty avoidance (Cultural Intelligence Center, 2013). Thus, while we may not have in-depth knowledge of specific French cultural disciplines such as political and legal systems, we may nonetheless be comfortable in getting by with a level of uncertainty in this regard when working in France. However, the French have very high uncertainty avoidance and may be threatened by ambiguity and uncertainty when it comes to interactions, particularly with regards to business (Cultural Intelligence Center, 2013). We would benefit from being aware of this difference and increase our CQ knowledge of specifics when it comes to interactions with our clients. We can leverage both our collective CQ Strategy of awareness and our high CQ Drive to gain greater appreciation and understanding of this difference and adapt our overall approach to be more sensitive to the French cultural need for certainty and predictability.

In order to take specific action on these points, we will review Laurent’s chart (Adler, 2008) and discuss how our behaviors align with the differences between French and American culture. We will then check-in with each other periodically throughout the trip to review these points and our experiences in working with such cultural differences.

1. **A reliance on intuition and awareness when faced with new cultural experiences.**

*CQ Strategy & Action: Hofstede’s Individualism vs. Collectivism*

In North America, individualism is valued slightly more than in France (Cultural Intelligence Center, 2013). As Adler explains, “people from individualistic cultures often believe that certain universal values should be shared by all” (2008). Our group has a tendency to rely heavily on intuition and awareness to guide strategy and action. While this is a collective strength, there may be times when our awareness is influenced by our cultural affinity towards individualism when trying to understand the expressed beliefs and values of others. We will benefit from being aware of this culture difference when checking our assumptions in our work with French clients. In general, our group tends to be informal so we will have to be mindful that the French tend to be more formal and conservative.

During the week in Lyon, we will continue to discuss the cultural differences that we notice and experience. Specifically, instances where we participate in or recognize cultural dominance (maintaining one’s own country practices), cultural compromise (both sides concede something in order to work successfully), cultural avoidance (act as if no differences exist), cultural accommodation (imitate the practices of international colleagues) and cultural synergy (develops new solutions to problems that leverage the cultural differences) (Adler, 2008). We will also use periodic check-ins to address how our non-verbal communications could be interpreted in French culture. This will be important in managing cultural differences such as body language, personal space or the degree of eye contact that is expected in French versus American culture.

**References**

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