

## INTERCULTURALITY AT STAKE



With the globalisation of the economy the challenge of interculturality in the business world becomes an incontrovertible reality. Organisations are renewing, changing, redistributing and giving rise to new matrix-type structures. Activities are being digitalised and intensified, geographical barriers crumble while increasing diverse and multicultural teams disrupt the traditional work environment.

### ***Interculturality at stake***

The development of the full potential of a company based in several countries is directly linked to the ability of its managers to value cultural differences, whether they are organisational, regional or social within teams.

These differences (relationship with authority, degree of individualism or time management, among the most important ones...) can lead to misunderstanding or conflicts at all levels of the hierarchy, often with significant impact on the company's performance.

Cultural shocks occur in a variety of situations:

- for expatriates who discover a new country and its culture,
- within multicultural or international teams,
- when it comes to mergers and acquisitions,
- in negotiations with strong trade issues,
- in projects involving cross-cultural teams challenged by different professional cultures.

## ***A few figures***

Implementing a strong intercultural communication and a management approach consistent with these dynamics is a clear competitive factor when it comes to dealing with intercultural issues in corporate life. Financial losses related to communication barriers between employees are actually significant.

According to a survey carried out in April 2017 by Webtorials<sup>1</sup> on behalf of Mitel France, French companies lose an average of €9,100 per year per employee due to internal communication failures.

In the United States the estimated losses would be even greater: according to a 2015 study by the American publisher of collaborative platforms Vocoli<sup>2</sup> the cost per worker due to the decrease in productivity directly related to poor communication would be more than €26,000 per year. According to this study a company of 100 people would spend about 884 hours a year clarifying its communication.

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## ***Our approach***

At Exelysio, we support leaders and managers to enable them understand and better cope with cultural shocks that can compromise their organisation's health and hinder their development.

We are convinced that one of the keys to activating good communication and creating intercultural synergies is emotional intelligence. Improving one's skills in this area is essential to be able to identify and easily adapt to different cultural paradigms.

Regarding intercultural communication the issues most often raised by our clients are: how to ensure an easy flow of communications and avoid cultural misunderstandings, how to overcome obstacles related to differences for greater collective efficiency and, again, how to understand what can separate to find out what can bring people together. All these elements are the basis for understanding and managing interculturality.

We propose tailor-made workshops and seminars related to interculturality with the purpose to help participants to highlight the differences behind the misunderstandings and, as a second step, build together new working options so that they can quickly implement these learnings. Role-playing and practical exercises are the backbone of these workshops.

We support participants by using various tools such as feedback, active listening or more specific ones like the "country profiles" or the map of cultural codes in order to analyse their impact in everyday or in corporate life.

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<sup>1</sup> Source : Blog Madmagz Com'in - 2017

<sup>2</sup> Source : Btobmarketers.fr - November 2015