

ARGENTINE-USA 1

The Buenos Aires office of a multinational advertising agency was working on a campaign for a U.S. American automobile company for the Argentine market. The Creative Director in charge traveled to the Latin American headquarters in Brazil to meet with the U.S. team to discuss the Latin America-wide campaign. During the meeting, the U.S. team stated that they would like to use a slogan conveying the idea that hard work results in great rewards. The Argentine director, however, was very opposed. He interrupted to say, "That's a terrible idea," and he went on to explain why the slogan wouldn't work in the current economic crisis that Argentina faced in which banks had confiscated depositors' savings accounts. He continued to explain the situation in length and offer alternative ideas while the others remained quiet. By the end of the meeting, they hadn't reached a conclusion. When the Argentine director returned to his office the next day, he received an e-mail from the U.S. members expressing their anger at his behavior.

ARGENTINA – USA 2

You are a U.S. American manager of quality control for a pharmaceutical company based in New Jersey. Your company will begin manufacturing a new product in Latin America so you need to discuss the plan with Carlos, the head of Latin American operations. Carlos is from Argentina and was transferred to Miami to take up his new position just ten days ago. You suggest meeting with him in Miami and look forward to knowing him better since you'll be working closely together.

When Carlos picks you up from the airport he makes a good impression on you as being very polite, well dressed and professional. However, in the car you notice that Carlos drives only a few feet away from the vehicles in front of him, passes others in the lane designated for emergency stopping only, cuts into traffic with very little space and accelerates rather than braking at stop signs when he sees another car approaching. You say nothing but begin to question his competence as a quality control manager wondering if he will show the same disregard of the law at work.

CAMEROONS – USA

A young U.S. African-American from Georgia is the new Director of Marketing for an international firm based in Douala, Cameroon. Soon after his arrival, he receives a shipment of marketing materials from the company's headquarters in the USA. These materials are very attractive and include caps, T-shirts and umbrellas, pens and pencils, mugs and totes. His Cameroonian assistant has been Assistant Director of Marketing for five years. He asks his boss for about 100 of each of the above items so that he can distribute them to relatives at an upcoming family reunion. He also wants 500 pens and pencils for his village school. The U.S. American Director tells him that the materials are the company's property and that they should be given to clients only, but that he will nevertheless be happy to give him a couple items for his family. The Assistant states the following reasons why his request should be honored: 1) He is older than the Marketing Director; 2) He is the son of the chief of the village; 3) His village is poor; 4) Both of them are black brothers. When the Marketing Director refuses to deliver the amount of goods that he wants, the Assistant becomes very upset and uncooperative in various aspects of the job.

CHINA – USA

You are a freelance consultant from the United States who has been working in Shanghai for several years. Recently a number of major foreign consulting companies have hired you as an external consultant to manage projects for their local clients. One of these consulting companies has offered you a project that will involve conducting a survey on one of their client's Chinese staff.

Your limited Chinese language skills do not enable to conduct the survey, analyze the results and present conclusions. You subcontract a Chinese consultant to lead the survey project and introduce him to the client's Human Resources Manager. You have a written agreement with your foreign contractor and an oral agreement with the Chinese consultant. Trying to align ethical views and perceptions on involving middle persons, you explain to the Human Resource Manager that the project belongs to the foreign consulting company and that you have been hired by it and that you have subcontracted the Chinese consultant to assist you with the survey.

During his involvement in the survey the Chinese consultant is solicited by the client's Human Resources Manager, who offers to hire him directly for upcoming consulting projects. The Chinese consultant tells you that he is interested in accepting the invitation to develop such projects. You find yourself in a difficult position considering that in the contract that you have signed with the foreign consulting company you have committed yourself to redirect "soliciting" clients to the contractor company.

EGYPT – USA 1

Magdy Shenouda, an Egyptian, has a long-term friendship and business relationship with Robert Jones, the economics department chair at a US University. Magdy's daughter, Amira, is accepted into the MBA program at this university, and comes to the U.S. Occasionally, she is invited to Robert's family home and likes getting off-campus to visit his family. At the end of the semester, one of Amira's professors invites her to apply for the 'International MBA of Excellence' scholarship, saying that her academic record and campus involvement make her a great candidate for the award. Amira is flattered, excitedly shares the news with her family, and confidently submits her application

When she gets a letter saying that she is not a scholarship finalist, she calls home and breaks the news to her father. Magdy is very upset and thinks his daughter was misled into believing she would at least be chosen as a finalist. He asks if she knows why she might not have been chosen. The only thing Amira can think of is that one of her professors does not seem to like international students, particularly women. She tells her father that this professor has made some side comments about the competitiveness and cut-throat nature of the business world in which a 'masculine' communication style is often more valued. In class, Amira politely spoke up and corrected another male student who presented misleading information about the role of women in Arab societies. The professor said nothing and simply allowed the presenter to continue.

Amira's father was convinced that Amira had been discriminated against as this professor was on the honors committee. He then asked Robert to speak to the person in charge of the scholarships, to make sure Amira was considered as a finalist before the scholarship selection was made. Magdy told Robert he was confident that, as Economics Department Chair, Robert could use his influence to make the situation right. Robert praised Amira's accomplishments but informed Magdy that he did not think there was anything he could do. He explained that he worked in a different department and that the selection procedures are clearly followed within each department.

Magdy then mentioned that he thought one of Amira's professors did not like her personally and maybe that was why she was not considered. Robert told Magdy that there was a grievance procedure that Amira was free to use if she felt she had experienced discrimination. Magdy asked Robert if he could just call a colleague in the MBA Department and check on the scholarship decisions. Robert said he could not, because it would be a misuse of his leadership power in the Faculty Senate. Magdy politely concludes the discussion and is frustrated by what seems to have turned out as a more shallow friendship with Robert than he had expected.

EGYPT - USA 2

There is a plan to develop a training program for Egyptian nurses to educate them on the importance of immunizations, proper procedures, and standard immunization schedules. These nurses will then be responsible for going into rural communities and educating others. Several preliminary conversations have taken place between the U.S. American [DHS comment: standard wording we've decided to use for the CDs when we talk about "Americans"] Project Coordinators from the World Health Organization (WHO), which is considering funding this project, and Egyptian government representatives from the Ministry of Health, including field experts (physicians, researchers) and senior government officials. They have defined the scope of the project, the potential benefits, the roles of the people involved (funding recipients and program implementers), and the costs.

A meeting takes place with all project planners and government officials present, in which the goal is to finalize the plan and sign off on the deal. The plan has already been extensively discussed and the funding agency [Is the funder WHO or a US agency; need to be consistent or clear] has clearly laid out the qualifications for their funding the project. Just before the signing the agreement, Tarek, the Assistant to the Health Minister, read over the key points of the implementation plan. After he did so, several project participants from the U.S. team noticed that Tarik had made changes to some of the key funding requirements.

During a meeting Susan from the U.S. contingent immediately points out that these changes are not acceptable, particularly since all elements of the project have already been extensively discussed and agreed upon. The Health Minister stands up at this point and states that unless it is approved as written, it will be impossible to implement the project. He continues to explain the reasons why his team of experts made the last-minute changes to the final proposal and that he hopes the U.S. team can bend a little on their requirements in order to make the program more successful. Richard, the lead Project Coordinator from the WHO, responds that funding for the project has been approved based on the proposal as written within the guideline framework, and that changes at this time would not be considered. The Health Minister is disappointed and ends the meeting.

FRANCE-USA

SofTeq is a California-based software development and marketing company which has gained a large North American market share for one of its products thanks to a rapid time-to-market strategy that allowed it to roll out its product before the competition. The company has recently acquired Logique, a French firm based in the Paris suburbs, which has a similar software product that has done well in European and Asian markets but cannot be marketed in North America because of licensing issues. One of the goals of the merged company is to develop a single product for worldwide distribution.

The US approach to product development is market-driven, based above all on listening to customers, studying their needs and developing specs based on the needs analysis. It's a very pragmatic approach, and companies would rather launch a product as quickly as possible, even if it means there are some bugs that need to be corrected later. Modifications can always be made based on customer feedback.

The French product development approach is based much more on the engineers' competence and know-how. They prefer to develop a very sophisticated state-of-the-art product that can later be adapted to specific customer needs. The time element is much less important and French companies are trying above all to launch a perfect product that will appeal to customers.

The French and US teams have had several meetings to discuss the project and everyone has pretty much come to the conclusion that the two approaches are very different. The Americans are also getting impatient because the only thing they see coming out of the French team is endless analyses.

INDIA – USA 1

A team of Indian engineers is sent to the US by their plant manager for training on hi-tech machines and technology, owned and supplied by their new US joint-venture partner. For three months, each is assigned to work with one US counterpart, who is their instructor and guide.

In the first introductory meeting, the Indians find their US counterparts very warm and friendly. After a few days, however, Indian engineers start complaining that their counterparts are not being helpful, and don't seem willing to share their expertise. The US colleagues simply demonstrate the operations of the machines, hand them the manual detailing the steps to follow, and ask them to practice those steps. When the Indians want to know why certain steps have to be performed only in a particular way, the counterparts brush aside their questions and insist that they just follow the manual.

When the Indians go to a US counterpart's office to ask questions and review problems, they find their counterpart too busy, and are asked to come back later. On the other hand, whenever Indians happen to meet their counterparts outside the office – in the canteen, elevators, or hallways – they interact in a very friendly and informal manner.

Feeling perplexed by this behavior and frustrated by the lack of support and guidance, Indians resort to helping each other out, and learning as much as possible about the machines and technology during the remainder of their time in the US.

Two weeks after returning to India, their plant manager receives a visit report from the US corporate headquarters. The American manager who was coordinating the visit had written: "The Indian engineers showed little or no interest in their training. They remained confined to their own group, and took no initiative to interact with their counterparts. I feel they have not derived the maximum benefit from this learning opportunity."

INDIA USA 2

You are an American, appointed as the Plant Manager of a 50-year old Indian manufacturing unit, which was recently acquired by a US-based engineering company. Your brief is to turn it around within a year, rationalize its processes and make it an efficient member of the company's global operations.

In your initial interactions with your all-Indian management team and the employees, you find them very receptive to the change in ownership and even enthusiastic about the factory becoming part of the global operations. Your initial suggestions for improving systems have been accepted and implemented without much resistance.

Today you have just noticed an upcoming weekday holiday for "Vishvakarma Pooja" in the factory calendar. On enquiring, your Personnel Manager explains that this is a local holiday for worshipping *Vishvakarma*, the god of tools and machines. Though it is not a national holiday and therefore mandatory for companies, it has been customary to close the operations and allow the workers and their families to visit the factory to perform worship to the machines with traditional rituals.

You tell the Personnel Manager that this is out of the question. It would interfere with the existing production plan and delivery schedules. Moreover, performing worship with families inside the factory cannot be permitted. You instruct him to announce to the employees that from this year onward, the company will not give this holiday. Against the Personnel Manager's advice, you insist that abolishing the holiday will be beneficial for the company in the long run.

The next day, two trade union representatives come to your office and request that you reconsider your decision. They say that the company's recognition of *Vishvakarma Pooja* is a long-standing custom, and should not be stopped without consultation with workers. You argue that the personal religious beliefs of employees should not interfere with work. After a lot discussion - though without any resolution - the trade union representatives leave your office.

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INDIA USA 3

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MALAYSIA – USA

Apex Electronics is an US American electronics company with production facilities around the world. During the past few years, profit margins in the Malaysian subsidiary declined, partly due to competition from other Asian countries. Apex decided business processes in Malaysia needed re-engineering to get back in the black.

You are an US manager from the Chicago headquarters, sent to Malaysia to turn things around. In your first week at the Malaysian site, you held a meeting of managers and supervisors, then with all employees of all levels down to the front line staff. You informed them that they all needed to get their act together and that they had 6 months, according to HQ, to show profits.

You put into place a Management by Objective (MBO) approach that worked successfully at US operations, and changed Malaysian remunerations to a pay-for-performance system. This change was presented to the employees in the meeting attended by all. You reassuringly stated that each individual would be held responsible for his or her actions and that individual rewards and reprimands would reflect the new method. Feeling very upbeat about this new motivating method you are bringing, you told them that productivity would be greatly enhanced when they adopt this new method.

Six months have now passed and the only result at the Malaysian site is increased turnover. You are surprised as very few employees expressed displeasure or complained about anything to supervisors or managers. You had no clue that there were problems!

You wonder why people are leaving if nothing appears to be wrong. There are no technical or operational flaws; standards are adhered to.

MEXICO – USA 1

You are a US American who has recently arrived in Mexico and have settled into your new neighborhood. You have a beautiful house surrounded by other equally exquisite homes. Unlike the neighborhood back home, high brick walls, giving the impression of enclaves, surround all these houses. You would like to meet your new neighbors and decide to bake the traditional apple pie and drop it off next door. With the pie, you enclose a nice note saying that you would like to get together for coffee and leave your name and phone number. You are met at the door by an armed guard who receives the pie with a large smile. In your broken Spanish, you try to explain to him that the pie is for the “Señora.” After a week, you have not heard anything from your neighbor about the pie. You were expecting a phone call or something that would have acknowledged your gesture.

MEXICO – USA 2

Jerry in Mexico

Jerry recently came to Mexico to head up a large, soft drink company bought by a U.S. corporation. The Mexican company had been privately owned and operated and he had been sent to “fix up” the operation and make it profitable. Jerry was considered a competent, hard-driving, and dynamic manager and was expected to have great success in Mexico. He was under enormous pressure from his bosses, and felt an urgency to prove himself in this new job.

On his visits to the various plants he found neglected equipment, production at half the plants' potential, and people who seemed to be working without any sense of urgency or initiative.

During one of his staff meetings, Jerry asked for explanations as to what had happened to create such a situation. His six direct reports, all Mexican and working in the company for several years, fell silent and looked awkwardly at one another. The CFO told Jerry that it was a "cultural problem" and that Jerry needed to be patient.

However, the Mexican marketing director, a direct and self-confident individual, explained that the previous owner had practically abandoned the company; there were no specific sales quotas, budgetary allowances for improvements and no interest in training and development. Workers did "just enough" to keep their supervisors off their backs. Since no one actually came to visit the plants, there was little incentive to take things into their own hands. The Marketing director told Jerry that he was the best man for the job, and that everyone was going to support him

After visiting the third plant, Jerry exploded and started yelling at his people about being incompetent" and "backward." He threatened to fire "the whole rotten bunch of you", if things didn't get better. Jerry demanded the implementation of severe discipline measures, the firing of specific plant managers, and the creation of an incentive program for reaching sales quotas and plant modernization.

RUSSIA – USA

Trina, a 32-year old African American woman travels with her US American group to Moscow to work on an engineering project. Her four US colleagues are white men, ages 26-30. Trina is used to being “different,” as an African American woman in the engineering field.

After arriving in Moscow, Trina’s colleagues noticeably exclude her from the group. She is left behind several times on informal group outings and ignored in casual conversations. Being resilient and wanting to make the best of the situation, Trina turns her attention from her team members to her foreign colleagues, who include not only Russians, but Spanish and French professionals as well. She makes an extended effort to get to know them and to learn and experience as much as she can. Her efforts are more than rewarded when the Russians organize an impromptu special tour of excavation sites in the Kremlin as well as lunch in a VIP dining room. She feels welcomed and celebrated by the Russians, Spanish, and French and quickly develops several friendships.

The other US Americans in her group notice Trina’s success at becoming an insider and the exciting invitations she is receiving.. They are rarely approached by the Russians except for work conversations about. They resent Trina and call her "Chechen Rebel" in front of others. Using an ethnic stereotype to express their resentment is bad enough, but with ethnic tensions running high in Moscow, this could even become a security issue for Trina.

SWITZERLAND – USA

Darrel, a US American director, has been in Fribourg for three weeks, to manage a Swiss team at the European center of Operations for his company. One late afternoon, an urgent request arrives from the headquarters in the USA, asking for a new type of report on the activities of his department. Darrel rushes to his team and asks who could produce this document straight away. "We'll need time," "Don't have an adequate program," "Has never been done before," are the replies he receives. He finally grabs a chair, sits in front of a computer, and starts to look for the required data by himself. Darrel manages to put together a quick report in time. But the next morning, he is surprised to find an email from a member of his team, sending him the job description of all the team members.