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Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace

(4th Edition)

Linda Beamer   Iris Varner

跨文化沟通

（美）琳达·比默   艾里斯·瓦尔纳   著

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出版者的话

当前，在教育部的大力倡导下，财经和管理类专业的双语教学在我国各大高校已经逐步开展起来。一些双语教学开展较早的院校积累了丰富的经验，同时也发现了教学过程中存在的一些问题，尤其对教材提出了更高的要求；一些尚未进入这一领域的院校，也在不断探索适于自身的教学方式和方法以及适用的教材，以期时机成熟时加入双语教学的行列。总之，对各类院校而言，能否找到"适用"的教材都成为双语教学成功与否的关键因素之一。

然而，国外原版教材为国外教学量身定做的一些特点，如普遍篇幅较大、侧重于描述性讲解、辅助材料（如习题、案例、延伸阅读材料等）繁杂，尤其是许多内容针对性太强，与所在国的法律结构和经济、文化背景结合过于紧密等，却显然不适于国内教学采用，并成为制约国内双语教学开展的重要原因。因此，对国外原版教材进行本土化的精简改编，使之变成更加"适用"的双语教材，已然迫在眉睫。

东北财经大学出版社作为国内较早涉足引进版教材的一家专业出版社，秉承自己一贯服务于财经教学的宗旨，总结自身多年的出版经验，同麦格劳—希尔教育出版公司、培生教育出版集团和圣智出版集团等国外著名出版公司通力合作，在国内再次领先推出了会计、工商管理、经济学等专业的"高等院校双语教学适用教材"。尤其是此次双语教材是与东北财经大学萨里国际学院共同推出。东北财经大学萨里国际学院是教育部批准的、与英国萨里大学共建的中外合作办学机构。学院所有课程采取双语和全英文授课方式，因而，东北财经大学出版社与萨里国际学院携手推出此系列双语教材。这套丛书的出版经过了长时间的酝酿和筛选，编选人员本着"品质优先、首推名作"的选题原则，既考虑了目前我国财经教育的现状，也考虑了我国财经高等教育所具有的学科特点和需求指向，在教材的遴选、改编和出版上突出了以下一些特点：

●优选权威的最新版本。入选改编的教材是在国际上多次再版的经典之作的最新版本，其中有些教材的以前版本已在国内部分高校中进行了试用，获得了一致的好评。

●改编后的教材在保持英文原版教材特色的基础上，力求内容精要，逻辑严密，适合中国的双语教学。选择的改编人员既熟悉原版教材内容，又具有本书或本门课程双语教学的经验。

●改编后的教材配有丰富的辅助教学支持资源，教师可在网上免费获取。

●改编后的教材篇幅合理，符合国内教学的课时要求，价格相对较低。

本套教材是在双语教学教材出版方面的一次新的尝试。我们在选书、改编及出版的过程中得到了国内许多高校的专家、教师的支持和指导，在此深表谢意，也期待广大读者提出宝贵的意见和建议。

尽管我们在改编的过程中已加以注意，但由于各教材的作者所处的政治、经济和文化背景不同，书中的内容仍可能有不妥之处，望读者在阅读中注意比较和甄别。

Preface to the Fourth Edition 第 4 版序

Welcome to the fourth edition of *Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace*. We continue to be grateful for the reception of the earlier editions, particularly the many comments and suggestions users gave us. We have incorporated those comments into the fourth edition and are confident that this book presents a valuable tool in your understanding of the impact of culture on international business communication.

Globalization and the effects of culture on human behavior are constantly in the news today. Once again, world events make culture the important background to headlines, and more than ever businesspeople cite cultural understanding as the single most important factor in international success. Prof. Dr. Marion Debruyne is quoted as saying "Culture is the real power of globalization."[1] Dramatic changes in communication technology—the growth around the planet of satellite and cellular telephony—since our first edition have made international communication commonplace. A survey of new media published in the *Economist* magazine in April 2006 reported that thanks to broadband technology, mass media are being replaced by personal media created by the users of the Internet. To blog (web log, or "we blog") is to participate in the creation of information, using a software program such as Moveable Type. As we write this preface, a new blog is created every second, according to *Technocrati*, and the "blogosphere" doubles in size every five months.[2] In the future, users will put as much information into the Web as they take away. Instant Messaging services have also changed the nature of business communication as companies adopt systems for internal use.

Dramatic global activities by terrorist organizations continue to affect the way businesses interact. Organizations need intercultural communication skills even more today than they did when this book was first written. The fourth edition of *Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace* has updated discussions of globalization and new technology in business communication and the role of intercultural teams in achieving corporate goals.

What else is new? The fourth edition introduces a section on intercultural communication research, with brief discussions of the history and paradigms regarding the study of cultures and communication, the distinction made by *etic* and *emic* study, the focus on whole cultures and on individuals, and the difference between cross-cultural and intercultural communication scholarship. A discussion of the approach called Cultural Intelligence (CQ) has been added in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, the cultural dimension of individualism-collectivism receives added discussion, and a new sidebar explains *Confucianism*.

Chapter 10 ties together the concepts discussed in all the other chapters. It applies updated intercultural knowledge to the case of DaimlerChrysler and examines the cultural issues the new company faced. This chapter also introduces the role diverse teams play in the success of international business. Two in-depth cases in the Appendix to Chapter 10 provide an opportunity to apply intercultural knowledge to specific problems.

Throughout the book we have added more short cases, and kept the introductory vignettes to each chapter to illustrate the issues covered in that chapter. New illustrations and examples have been added, often drawn from cultures not mentioned in the earlier editions.

Users of earlier editions will notice that the appearance of the fourth edition is more user-friendly, as we continue to improve the book's layout and add new exhibits.

These changes reflect our continued commitment to provide a source for readers that addresses culture and cultural variations, communication for business purposes, and the way culture affects organizations.

Many new books have arrived in the marketplace since we finished our third edition, but we are convinced this one is unique: it addresses the issues of culture and communication within the context of international business.

The fourth edition of *Intercultural Communication in the Global Workplace*, like the first three editions, provides examples of how cultural values and practices impact business communication. We explore the relationships among the cultural environments of the firm and the structure of the firm. We look at how companies and individuals communicate. Throughout the discussions about specific communication tasks, we concentrate on the underlying cultural reasons for behavior. This approach, as we asserted from the very first edition, we confidently believe will help the reader develop an ability to work successfully within an environment of cultural diversity both at home and abroad.

We have continued to strive to avoid specific cultural viewpoints in this book but have come to realize since the first edition that total cultural neutrality is not possible. Nor is it desirable in a sense; every human has some cultural filters through which she or he views the world. Nevertheless, the framework we develop here applies to all readers regardless of their native cultures. This book is for anyone from anywhere around the globe who wants to develop and improve intercultural business communication skills. Intercultural business communication is an exciting field, and we are proud to be able to contribute to a broader understanding of it.

Notes

1. *Economist*, April 2006, p.
2. "It's the Links, Stupid," *Economist*, April 22, 2006. In *A Survey of New Media*, p. 5.

About the Authors 作者简介

Linda Beamer is a professor emeritus of the Department of Marketing at California State University, Los Angeles, where she taught business communication, intercultural communication, diversity in the workplace, and courses in high-performance management and international business in the MBA core from 1991 to 2005. She received the honors students' Professor of the Year award in 2001, and in 2002 she received the Outstanding Professor award from her campus, followed by a Distinguished Woman award in 2005. She currently teaches intercultural communication to undergraduate and postgraduate students at Unitec New Zealand, where she and her husband make their home, and consults in intercultural communication.

She has taught and consulted in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, the Middle East, China, Argentina, Mexico, Hong Kong, Japan, and New Zealand. Her BA is from the College of Wooster in Ohio (with one year in Scotland at Edinburgh University), and her MA and PhD are from the University of Toronto. The latter led to dual U.S.–Canadian citizenship.

Her research, resulting in about two dozen publications and 50 presentations, has focused primarily on the effects of culture on business communication, with a special interest in Chinese communication issues. She serves on the Editorial Board of the *Business Communication Quarterly* and was Associate Editor of the *Journal of Business Communication* from 1997 to 2001; she frequently reviews for other publications as well. She served as President of the Association for Business Communication in 2004, as Chair of the Intercultural Committee of the Association for Business Communication for three years, and as a member of the Board of Directors for five years. In 2005, she was honored with the Fellow award. She was also voted a Fellow of the International Academy of Intercultural Research at its inception in 1997.

Beamer is the recipient of two 2-year grants from the Department of Education's program for Business and International Education, as well as a research grant from the C. R. Anderson Foundation. She was honored to receive the outstanding publication award (1995) from the Association for Business Communication. She held a six-year Visiting Professor appointment at Unitec New Zealand before moving to Auckland.

Iris I. Varner is the Director for the International Business program and a professor in the Department of Management and Quantitative Methods, College of Business, at Illinois State University, where she teaches the cultural environment of international business and international management. Her PhD, MBA, and MA are

from the University of Oklahoma. She has the Staatsexamen and Assessorenexamen from the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg, Germany.

Varner has extensive international experience. She grew up in the former East Germany and studied in Germany, France, Great Britain, the United States, and Taiwan. She has given seminars and lectures around the globe, including New Zealand, Russia, France, Belgium, Japan, Germany, and China and has spent time in many other countries. She is an ad hoc professor at the University of Lugano, Switzerland, where she teaches in the Executive Masters Program for Corporate Communication Management and at Shanghai University, China.

Varner is the author of over 80 articles in the area of intercultural managerial communication. Her research, which she has presented at regional, national, and international conventions, has focused on the connections between culture, communication, and business practices. She has been honored with the Outstanding Membership Award and the Meada Gibbs Outstanding Teaching Award of the Association for Business Communication. She was named a Fellow of the Association for Business Communication and a Caterpillar Scholar and State Farm Fellow by Illinois State University.

As a president of the Association for Business Communication in 2000 to 2001, she contributed greatly to the internationalization of the organization. She was chair of the Ethics Committee and is an active member of the International Committee. Varner is a member of the Academy of Management and the Academy for Human Resource Development. She also serves as a reviewer for a number of scholarly publications and consults for a variety of national and international firms.

Introduction   前言

The Need for Intercultural Business Communication Competence
培养跨文化商务沟通能力的必要性

What does culture have to do with business? In the past, many business majors and practitioners immersed in questions of financial forecasting, market studies, and management models did not examine culture and the way it affects business. Unlike the hard data from measurable issues, culture is soft and, at times, slippery. Although it is often elusive, culture is still undeniably important. It's often easiest to spot culture at work when something goes wrong, when a key element of culture is overlooked. Here is an example:

Mickey Mouse has taken up residence in Hong Kong, but Mainland Chinese visitors to the new theme park seem unsure about the meaning of the Happiest Place on Earth. Disney film characters like Cinderella, Snow White and the seven dwarfs, and Tinkerbell are based on fairy tales and stories from Europe that are unfamiliar to children in China. Disney television shows with cartoon characters for children haven't yet been aired in China, although negotiations are underway in Shanghai. Meanwhile, visitors who are puzzled by the theme park wander aimlessly up Main Street and have their picture taken with Marie the Cat—a character from the 1970s movie *Aristocats,* whose appeal is in her appearance: it is remarkably similar to the hugely popular Japanese figure, Hello Kitty. Disney declined to give attendance figures for the first five months of Hong Kong Disneyland's operation, but observers reported that numbers were thin.

However, in early 2006 sparse crowds were replaced by hordes, and visitors' mild bafflement turned to outrage. Hong Kong Disneyland was deluged by crowds. Three times during the "Golden Week" of the Chinese New Year the gates to the park were closed after the first 30,000 visitors came through, and thousands more visitors with paid tickets in their hands were turned away. Many parents who had spent large sums of money on travel to the promised holiday treat were photographed attempting to climb the fence or toss their child over it. Disappointed patrons threatened to sue Disney.

Disney made a public apology. The problem of too many visitors had come about because Hong Kong Disneyland, worried about lack of sales, had sold tickets that were good for up to six months. Many bought their tickets and then held on to them until the New Year holidays, something the Disneyland managers hadn't anticipated. But Allen Zeman, chairman of the rival Ocean Park, was quoted as saying it was a mess: "Many of the problems 'were things that somebody who did their homework should have realized and understood.'"[1]

Nor was the Golden Week debacle the first cultural bump in the road for Hong Kong Disneyland. Initially, a park restaurant planned to serve shark fin's soup, a Chinese delicacy that was later withdrawn from the menu because of animal rights protests in June 2005. Local celebrities were invited for public relations appearances, but they subsequently complained they weren't treated well by Disney executives from the United States. Disney also had learned that Chinese visitors to parks preferred

places for taking photographs over roller coaster rides, so they put fewer rides into this park, which is the smallest of the six worldwide. As a result, shortly after it opened the park was criticized for being too small.

Other culture-related issues that plagued the opening of Hong Kong Disneyland were the danger to children's health from people smoking in nonsmoking areas, and the threat to sanitation from some Mainland visitors' practice of urinating on the flowerbeds near food areas.

Complaints also came from employees who said that their pay was too small and not consistent with others doing the same job, and also from Hong Kong residents who thought the Hong Kong government's investment of $23 billion HK for 57-percent ownership did not return a revenue stream proportional to that investment since Disney invested only one-tenth as much ($2.3 billion HK) for 43 percent of the joint venture and its revenue. Environmental issues also made headlines.

Because of these problems, Disney has started to pay attention to cultural issues. Advance tickets are now restricted during high-peak holidays. In order to generate a greater flow of visitors outside the holiday seasons, they have looked into the way Chinese tourists travel and found that 50 percent of Mainland Chinese visitors are on package tours. The agents who handle them put them into hotels, restaurants, shopping destinations, and entertainments where they get a commission. Thus, agents can control whether or not visitors ever get to Disneyland. So Disney is giving agents half-price admission as an incentive to visit Hong Kong Disneyland themselves, and raising to $2.50 per person the commission agents get on sales of tickets to the park. They have also offered price-cut incentives on hotel rooms at the two hotels in the resort park.

Disney is also offering incentives to consumers to come during off-peak times. Overseas and Mainland Chinese visitors will receive "a free souvenir, a free photo from the Space Mountain or Pooh attractions, and a two-for-one coupon for an in-park meal. For local Hong Kong residents, the park is now offering to 'Double the Magic'. . . by offering an extra ticket for the same guest to visit the park again for free on another day."[2] Another incentive is the novelty of artificial snow.

Hong Kong Disneyland isn't an isolated instance of cultural misunderstandings. The history of the Disney theme park in France is notorious. Euro Disney had similar problems with unplanned crowds when it first opened. Locals who had postponed their visits during the summer tourist season surged to visit in September 1992. French critics called Euro Disney an example of U.S. cultural imperialism, and hundreds of employees left their jobs after a few days. The Disney prohibition on the sale of alcohol in its theme parks did not fit with the French custom of drinking wine with meals. But by 2006 it had become France's number-one tourist destination with 50 million visitors a year.[3]

However, the future of tourism in Hong Kong looks bright, and Disney plans to take advantage of it. The people of Hong Kong may have more patience with the U.S. company than the French did. Chief Executive Donald Tsang said when the theme park opened: "We have to remember that Disneyland is a new organization [in Hong Kong] . . . It may need time to understand the situation of Hong Kong and especially the culture of Hong Kongers and figure out how to make all its employees happy."[4]

More and more organizations with strong success records at home, like Disney, are finding themselves involved in communication across cultures, between cultures, and among cultures—either because they are doing business in unfamiliar foreign countries, or because they are sourcing from another country and seeking financing from another country.

Companies also have increasingly multicultural workforces. In the United States, for example, Latinos (from Mexico and Central and South America) have become the biggest minority group. Percentages of Asians from Southeast Asia, China, India, and Pakistan are growing. In Europe, the composition of the population is changing as more and more people emigrate from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. In the Middle East, many workers come from India, the Philippines, and Southeast Asia. In Holland, the government is considering an examination system to see if immigrant applicants are culturally suited to living in the Netherlands. As a result of these migrations, people with diverse backgrounds and different languages are working side by side in many countries, creating a workplace that is intercultural.

Business communication is intercultural communication. To communicate with people from another culture, one needs to understand the culture. To do that, one needs a method. This book offers an approach to unfamiliar cultures that makes understanding easier and consequently makes business communication with those cultures more effective. We believe intercultural business communication skills can be learned.

At its lowest level, business communication with unfamiliar cultures means simply finding a translator for conducting discussions in a foreign language. However, as more and more corporations are finding out, communication is about unarticulated meanings and the thinking behind the words—not just the words alone.

To understand the significance of a message from someone, you need to understand the way that person looks at the world and the values that weigh heavily in that person's view of the world. That view includes meanings that are assumed to be universal (even when they are not), the importance of the words that are used, and the way the message is organized and transmitted. You also need to know what to expect when someone engages in a particular communication behavior such as making a decision known, negotiating a sales agreement, or writing a legal contract. And you'd be wise to know something about the organization that person works in and the way its structure—a result of culture—affects communication.

In applying intercultural communication skills to practical business concerns, this book makes an important contribution. Most books about doing business with people from other cultures come from one of two areas, either intercultural and cross-cultural communication scholarship and its near relative, intercultural training, or international business. Intercultural and cross-cultural communication scholarship is grounded in a body of theory but has little direct application to business communication. Intercultural training draws from psychology and related fields and specializes in preparing people for sojourns in foreign countries for development work, such as for the Peace Corps, for studying abroad, or for working for an employer in an expatriate posting, but this training typically has little application to business communication.

Books on international business, in contrast, concentrate on business functions such as finance, management, marketing, shipping and insurance, and accounting. They tend to ignore the importance of the all-encompassing communication tasks and the skills necessary to complete them successfully. They also tend to ignore the different priorities in other cultures that affect the act of communication and its outcomes.

This book connects business communication and understanding of cultural priorities with actual business practices. Of course, business practices themselves, as the book points out, are culturally based.

By combining intercultural communication skills with business, this book helps you become a successful communicator in culturally diverse workplace environments both at home and abroad. As more and more firms are finding out, effective intercultural communication is crucial for success domestically and internationally.

Intercultural Business Communication Competence and Growing Domestic Diversity 跨文化商务沟通能力与国内多样性的发展

All over the world, nations are trying to come to terms with the growing diversity of their populations. Reactions range from a warm welcome, to acceptance, to mere tolerance, to rejection. As migrations of workers and refugees have increased globally, some countries are trying to control diversity by establishing strict guidelines for emigration from other countries. Other countries are attempting to develop government policies concerning the rights of immigrants to preserve their own cultures in their adopted homelands. Canada is an example of a bicultural (English and French) country where federal and provincial governments have ministers of multiculturalism to protect the cultural "mosaic" pattern that immigrants bring to Canada. New Zealand is an example of a country that has issues of biculturalism to work through, with little energy and few resources left over to attend to the increasing cultural diversity of immigrants.

The United States historically afforded a home to people of diverse cultures. But even in the United States, with its ideals of equality and tolerance, the advantages and disadvantages of acknowledging diversity are debated hotly. Social critics in the United States have voiced opposition to measures that preserve immigrants' cultural differences. They say the insistence on diversity *separates* Americans from one another by forcing them to focus on what differentiates them. This view holds that the "melting pot" that describes American culture depends on the fusing of all cultural identities into one, in keeping with the American ideal of offering equal American-ness to everybody. Furthermore, they warn that multiculturalism may threaten the very characteristic that is so American: the union of one from many.

Today in the United States, a long-standing tradition of tolerance coexists side by side with an aversion to difference. Uniformity (for people of all cultures) is easier to deal with than is diversity. Diversity is difficult, although it also can be very rewarding. Often the impulse to deny cultural differences comes from embarrassment at focusing on difference, since frequently to be different is to be excluded. It isn't polite to point out that someone looks different, talks differently, wears different clothes, or eats different food. Thus, many times, out of a concern to avoid making someone feel uncomfortable, difference is played down.

This attitude may be motivated in the United States by a sincere desire for equal behavior toward people regardless of their ethnic or cultural background under the

all-encompassing umbrella of the ideal of equality. After all, most people who call themselves "American" have ancestors who were immigrants. Today, many still have a strong desire to include newcomers in a friendly and tolerant national embrace and to affirm the high priority of equality in American culture. This is also true of some people in other countries with recent immigrant populations, such as New Zealand, Canada, Argentina, and Australia, as communities struggle to reconcile national identity with newer cultures.

People from different cultures really are different (as well as similar) in how they see the world. That's a great strength of the human race and a potential source of delight and wonderment as much as a source of fear and suspicion—the choice is ours. As people of different cultures we begin with different databases, use different operating environments, and run different software and process information differently—we may even have different goals. To pretend we're all alike underneath is wrong and can lead to ineffectual communication or worse. *The way to deal with diversity is not to deny it or ignore it but to learn about differences so that they don't impair communication and successful business transactions.*

We also need new models to describe diverse populations. The description of the United States, for example, as a "melting pot" is neither an accurate description of the reality nor an ideal that many of the more recent immigrants embrace. Even the immigrants from Europe of a previous century did not totally "melt"; they created a new culture with distinct differences based on cultural heritage. As the new immigrants arrive, the United States culture becomes a "spicy stew." The potatoes stay potatoes, the carrots stay carrots, the onions stay onions, but all take on certain characteristics of each other's flavors. This blending creates a unique combination that gains from each ingredient. The United States' value of tolerance gives immigrants the freedom to keep their own identities while becoming part of a new culture. It is an ideal, but it is also achievable; in fact, it already exists in some communities in the United States.

Cultural differences don't prevent us from working with each other or communicating with each other or having productive business transactions. Indeed, we *must* learn to work with each other. The future of any organization depends on it. The reality is that businesspeople increasingly will bring their cultures to organizational spicy stews. This fact is one reason to acknowledge diversity and accept it. Another reason is that immigrants can add enormously to a society's—or organization's—culture.

When connections are formed with people from other cultures, similarities appear. We weave fabrics of cooperation in which we see recurring common threads. It's a source of delight to realize someone from a culture very different from one's own has the same attitude or value or behavior.

The biggest gain from accepting cultural differences is that cultural diversity enriches each one of us. People around the world and throughout history have developed a stunning variety of social systems and hierarchies of values. As a member of the human race, you can claim your rightful ownership of this richness, and you can celebrate the fertility of the human imagination along with its diverse products.

The essential ingredient for a successful cultural mix is skill in putting into operation the knowledge you acquire about another culture; this is intercultural

communication competence. Many companies around the globe, such as Hewlett-Packard in the United States, have discovered the value of intercultural communication skills and the increased productivity they bring. These organizations have instituted diversity programs to train employees.

Changes in Communication Technology and Political Structures   沟通技术与政治结构的变革

The 20th century nurtured unprecedented change in communication technology. The first decade of the 21st century is bringing even faster change. International communication that only a few decades ago took days, if not weeks, now takes nanoseconds. With e-mail, faxes, the Internet, satellites, and telephones, we contact our international partners at a moment's notice. If we want a more personal exchange, audio and video desktop technology and video teleconferencing bring the other person right into our office.

Today's techno-developments are in the realm of participatory communication. Since the middle of the decade, words like "blog" and "wiki" and "podcasting" have appeared in our dictionaries. Blogs are discussed in Chapter 4, and wikis in Chapter 8. Podcasting ("pod" coming from the Apple product the iPod, for downloading music from the Internet, and "casting" from broadcasting) allows podcasters to record anything and then upload it to the Internet where it can be downloaded by other users. Every garage band can play to unknown listeners. Every orator can declaim to the globe. At sites like Second Life, people create virtual identities for themselves, called avatars, and engage in creative ventures such as making films. How this kind of participative communication will impact the entertainment industry, such as Disney with whom we began this introduction, remains to be seen.

The variety of channels of business communication has increased. Instant Messaging, wikis in the workplace, blogs and texting by mobile phone, Blackberry, or other hand-held PDA devices, including visual images, carry written messages. Voicemail, podcaster feeds, and Skype systems carry audio messages. The choice of which channel to use in a particular situation is influenced by cultural priorities and values, and those choices are multiplying.

The changes in technology have facilitated the exchange of ideas, but they also have magnified the possibilities for cultural blunders. It is so easy to assume that the person on the other end of the connection communicates just as we do. After all, he or she uses the same technology and maybe even the same business terminology.

In addition to changes in technology, political and economic changes affect business communication internationally. China, the world's largest market for mobile telephony, is adopting more and more Western practices and a market economy; India is a technological powerhouse. Small industrialized countries jostle with big ones. Non-Western countries are becoming more assertive and protective of their cultural values and behaviors and do not accept Western dominance in business practices any longer. In recent years, the activity of international terrorists has generated increased vigilance around the world; Internet virus attacks also have presented threats to communication channels.

These new voices are increasingly powerful. Not long ago an elite group of industrialized countries could more or less dictate economic practices. This is changing. Today, the first-world "overconsumers" are being forced to take into consideration the cultural values and practices of "sustainable consumers."

As a result, understanding other cultures is more important than ever. If we consider that people with the same economic, political, and cultural background have problems communicating effectively, we can appreciate the difficulties and challenges that people from diverse cultures face when trying to communicate. Misunderstandings will always be a part of intercultural communication. One of the goals of this book is to minimize misunderstandings through an awareness of the priorities and expectations of business partners.

International Business and Corporate Responses
跨国业务与公司对策

Managers in the past talked about the need for faster and more efficient communication, as if speed guaranteed effective communication. They paid lip service to the need for good cross-cultural communication, but staffing decisions typically were based on technical knowledge rather than good intercultural communication skills.

Now with growing competition and increasing globalization, that attitude is beginning to change. International experience is becoming more important for making it to the top of the corporate ladder in more countries.

Consider the "world car" Ford produces in Europe and sells in over 50 countries worldwide. The engines come to Kansas City from Cleveland, Ohio; Chihuahua, Mexico; and Cologne, Germany. The seats are made in the United States, and the moon roof is made in Canada. The air-conditioning is made in Charleville, France, and the catalytic converter comes from Brussels, Belgium. An international team designed the car, the "Mondeo." Throughout the Ford Motor Company, intercultural business communication takes place constantly to get the job done. Engines and other components come to the Genk, Belgium plant, from Britain, Germany, France, Holland, Sweden, Spain, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. Ford uses a global sourcing procedure for choosing the suppliers of the thousands of smaller parts through an intense international competition.

Ford produced the global "Mondeo" to meet global competition. For the same reason, Volvo, the national pride of Sweden, and Renault, a French firm owned largely by the government of France, combined forces to form the sixth largest automobile company in the world. Since 1999, Volvo has been partly owned by Ford, as are Mazda from Japan and Jaguar, Aston Martin, and Land Rover from Great Britain. Daimler-Benz, a German firm that produced top-quality cars for decades, was bought by Chrysler from the United States and then added an alliance with Mitsubishi from Japan to the ownership mix. Renault's global alliance in 1999 with the Japanese auto manufacturer Nissan brought financial health to both companies.

The trend toward a global business environment is not restricted to car manufacturers or big industrialized countries such as the United States, Germany, Japan, France, Canada, and Great Britain. Nor is it restricted to large cities or trade centers on the coasts. Global business involves geographic locations that

just a few years ago were considered to be wholly engaged in domestic business. Many small towns in the landlocked states of Mexico, for example, are involved in international business today.

Local firms may export or import; they may be owned by foreign firms, or foreign firms may establish subsidiaries. People who never dreamed of going into international business may work side by side with recent immigrants from different cultures. The salesperson in a small business in a small town in any one of a hundred countries may have to answer inquiries from around the world. The salesperson doesn't have time to think about how to deal with a foreigner. She or he must be ready to communicate on the spot.

The Foundation for Intercultural Business Communication 跨文化商务沟通的基础

The first step in effective intercultural communication involves self-analysis, self-awareness, and understanding. You can't understand the other party unless you understand yourself. The next step is the understanding and acceptance of differences. That does not mean we have to agree with another culture's viewpoint or adopt another culture's values. It does mean we—and they—must examine our—and their—priorities and determine how we all can best work together, being different.

In the process, we will realize that a person entering another culture will always have to adapt to a number of cultural conditions. That doesn't mean turning one's back on one's own culture or denying its priorities. Rather, it means learning what motivates others and how other cultural priorities inform the behavior, attitudes, and values of business colleagues. This approach means adding to one's own culture, not subtracting from it.

For example, a businessperson from New Zealand going to Japan must adapt to many Japanese practices, just as a Japanese businessperson going to New Zealand must adapt to a variety of New Zealand practices.

The third step in developing intercultural communication competence is to use categories—that is, tools for understanding how cultures compare. In attempting to understand another culture's perspective, we will gain greater ground if we take off our cultural blinders and develop sensitivity in the way we speak and behave. That is not always easy. We are all culturally based and culturally biased.

For example, people in the United States refer to themselves as "Americans." They often say that they live in "America." Most Europeans use the same terminology. Germans, for example, refer to the country of the United States as *die Staaten* (the States) or as *USA*, but they always refer to the people as *Amerikaner* (Americans). The French call the people of the United States *les americains* (Americans); they refer to the country as *les Etats Unis* (the United States) or *l'Amerique* (America). The Japanese refer to people from the United States as *america-jin*. But these are not precisely accurate terms; they constitute an example of cultural bias. People from Central America and South America call themselves "American," too, and call people from the United States *Yanquis* (Yankees). "North Americans" are people from Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

As residents of the United States, accustomed to using the word *American* to refer to people of the United States, we have struggled with the terminology in the writing of this book. We have attempted to distinguish between other Americans and those in the United States. But no exclusive term exists for the people of the United States—such as *State-sians or USians*—comparable to *Mexicans* or *Canadians*. We use *the United States* when referring to the country and often use the phrase *people of the United States* and *United States businesspeople* to refer to the people. But occasionally, when we feel the context is clearly the United States, we also use the term *Americans* to denote the people.

The fourth step in intercultural competence is to challenge the categories we have used and to see them as flexible and incomplete. In any intercultural encounter, variations will occur. What we expect won't be exactly what we get. Openness and willingness to learn characterize the skilled person in intercultural communication.

The fifth step is analysis of communication behavior to reach conclusions about what has been successful and what has not. This book offers many examples of both success and failure. Specific communication tasks presented in the following chapters help with learning beyond stereotypes. Business correspondence, greeting behavior, conflict management, face-to-face and technology-mediated communications, and negotiations appear in the book, and they offer us an opportunity to model the analyses a good intercultural communicator must make.

The final step in intercultural communication competence is enacting what one has learned. You know as a newcomer to a culture when you have done something that is culturally correct; you can act in accord with the other culture without being aware of making an effort. Positive results come with ease. At that point, you are walking in the shoes of the other culture. That is the ultimate goal of learning about a culture and learning the skills to communicate with that culture: to behave as if you are of that culture.

Organization of This Book   本书结构

This book has three major parts:

1. An understanding of culture and how to know unfamiliar cultures for business, along with culture's impact on communication.
2. The application of intercultural communication skills to specific business communication tasks.
3. The implications of intercultural business communication for the domestic multicultural/international/global firm.

Part One

This section begins with an introduction to culture followed by the first steps in developing intercultural communication skills and a look at the way culture affects communication. A discussion about cultural and communication research, including a definition of intercultural communication, follows. Then Chapter 2 examines the issue of language in communication with an unfamiliar culture and discusses the important role of the interpreter. Chapter 3 present a structure for understanding the