

A stylized world map in shades of blue and tan, showing continents and a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The map is centered on the Atlantic Ocean.

INTERCULTURAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Lillian H. Chaney
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Foreword

With the globalization of the world economy, it is imperative that managers, both present and future, be sensitive to differences in intercultural business communication. Professors Lillian H. Chaney and Jeanette S. Martin have done an admirable job in addressing a broad range of issues and skills that are crucial to effective intercultural encounters. In the book, the most significant issues pertaining to cross-cultural interaction are covered: culture, intercultural (both verbal and nonverbal) communication, and cultural shock. In addition, the book contains practical guidelines and information on how to conduct negotiations across countries and write business letters in different societies, as well as other general do's and don'ts in international business. College students and businesspeople new to the international business scene can certainly benefit from such practical advice.

This book can also sensitize readers to the dynamics of international diversity. With the increasing multiethnic composition of the North American labor force and the growing participation of women in the professional and managerial ranks of organizations, it is equally important that students, the managers of the future, be attuned to the issues associated with managing and valuing diversity within a domestic context. The book addresses the issues of gender differences and how these impact on communication styles and patterns.

While recognizing the significant differences that can exist across cultures and subcultures, it is important to acknowledge the existence of individual differences within any given society. Just as it is naive to assume that all cultures are similar, it is equally fallacious to fall into the trap of "cultural stereotyping." To quote Lao Tzu, the famous Chinese philosopher who is usually considered to be the spiritual leader of Taoism, "The one becomes the many." Although people in a given society may share certain common values and characteristics, there can be important differences in how these are applied

and exhibited in specific situations. In addition, these intranational differences can be exacerbated by religious influences, exposure to Western philosophies and ideas through education at universities abroad, overseas travel, and social and business contacts with peoples from other cultures. Furthermore, it is significant to note that cultural values and norms do evolve over time, however slowly. Some of the cultural characteristics alluded to in this book may be changing or have changed. A cursory review of the dramatic upheavals that have taken and are still taking place in virtually all aspects of societal and organizational functionings in many socialist and former socialist countries will attest to the fact that culture is not static; rather, it evolves over time.

Judicious application of the principles and techniques introduced in this book will enable readers to develop a proficiency in managing diversity, both cross-nationally and internationally.

Rosalie L. Tung
The Ming & Stella Wong Professor
of International Business
Simon Fraser University
Canada

Preface

PURPOSE

With the increasing number of multinational corporations and the internationalization of the economy, intercultural business communication continues to become more important. Government leaders, educators, and businesspersons agree that internationalizing the curriculum is important to maintaining the competitive position of the United States in the world economy. Since all international activity involves communication, students need a knowledge of intercultural business communication to prepare them for upward mobility and promotion in tomorrow's culturally diverse domestic and international environments.

CONTENTS

Topics selected for *Intercultural Business Communication* were those considered important or essential by three Delphi panels of experts: international employees of multinational corporations, college professors who teach intercultural communication, and members of the Academy of International Business.* We know of no other book on intercultural communication that has used research involving experts' perceptions of the importance of topics to be covered as a basis of content selection.

The topics include

*Martin, J. S. (1991). Experts' Consensus Concerning the Content for an Intercultural Business Communication Course. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Memphis). Major professor, L. H. Chaney.

- The nature of intercultural communication
- Universal systems
- Contrasting cultural values
- Oral and nonverbal communication patterns
- Written communication patterns
- Language
- Business and social etiquette
- Country-specific information
- Cultural shock
- Intercultural negotiation process
- Intercultural negotiation strategies
- Laws affecting international business and travel

Each chapter contains objectives, terms, questions and cases for discussion, and activities. Also provided are exercises to be used for self-evaluation of material covered and illustrations to depict various aspects of the content.

Both authors have traveled or worked in a number of countries or multinational corporations and, therefore, have firsthand knowledge of many of the topics covered.

PROPOSED USE

Intercultural Business Communication is designed to be used as a text for a college-level course in intercultural business communication or to augment courses in which intercultural communication is a major component.

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About the Authors

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Jeanette S. Martin is an Assistant Professor at the University of Mississippi. She received her B.A. from Michigan State University, M.B.A. from the University of Chicago, and her Ed.D. from the University of Memphis. She has considerable corporate experience in both U.S. multinational corporations and foreign multinational corporations. Dr. Martin has published several articles involving intercultural business communication, education, and management information systems. Her current research and consulting interests include NAFTA and the effects intercultural communication has on such international agreements.

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BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION**

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