

# Inter- cultural Integration Tool



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### 1. What really matters

Companies, international groups or supranational organizations might face one or more of the following problems:

- Your company wants to expand into a new geographic market, but does not know how to do it. This is not so much because of technical issues like legal framework, finance etc., but because the mentality seems to be very different and the management of your company does not have the experience how to handle such a matter.
- Since years you have an oversea supplier who does the manufacturing of some parts for your products. The price is ok, but many other things are not satisfactory: timing, quality and communication. Many attempts have been made to overcome this problem, but without any significant improvement.
- As manager and person in charge for the international sales activities, a number of affiliates abroad report directly to you. In some of these affiliates you face similar hurdles: even though that on the superficial level the communication seems to be open, you have the feeling that there are hidden agendas, unexpressed sentiments that initiatives and requirements from HQ are just a waste of time and that there is no real trust between the affiliates and HQ.
- Having different worldwide development programs running and planned, you question yourself and your organization whether they really correspond to local needs, whether they are implemented in the right way and whether they will have the necessary local support to be successfully run in the future.
- Looking at the actual level of understanding, communication and achievement of goals, your group can be satisfied. But the effort in terms of time, energy and money to achieve and maintain this level, seems quite uneconomic and oversized. Too many internal meetings, travels, conference calls, reports etc. – there must be a more efficient and cheaper way in doing this.
- In these difficult times you have to find new ways in order to assure the future of your organization, focusing on the fundamental issues which really make the difference and by defining the very role of your organization and its relationship with employees, customers, suppliers, investors, etc.

## 2. The approach

Many of these cross – border business issues are related to differences in values, mentalities and culture. For example, in one part of the world, one might address a problem directly, which, in another part of the world, is considered unpolite or even rude.

How do you handle these issues? You might buy handbooks, send your employees to attend special courses etc. The outcome, normally, is modest: most of this know – how does not fit, because it is too standardized, theoretical and rarely applied.

What is different about our approach?

**Instead of transferring know-how and theory, we build up experience, by coaching live, direct and practical business processes between the parties involved to overcome inter – cultural, mentality and value hurdles.**

## 3. The inter – cultural integration tool

Basically, this tool consists of three modules:

### a) Identification

During this phase the existing, expressed or unexpressed problems are identified, by interviewing all parties concerned. It corresponds to a mapping of the problem – fields. With the company or organization also the targets of the mandate are clearly set: increasing efficiency, improving sales and net earnings, overcoming communication hurdles, integrating cultures, building – up a new intra - / inter – company culture etc.

This normally takes between 3 – 5 days.

### b) Integration

The approach is simple and clear: bring the parties together and work out a sustainable and accepted solution for the issue. This is fostered by two factors. First, by a specially designed process which implies coaching them appropriately, showing them the benefits of an open attitude and communication. Second, by the meeting place, which is in a cultural surrounding unfamiliar to all, a strong place in the sense of nature, exposure, history. This creates an exceptional alertness and atmosphere which supports the mutual understanding . For a period of 3 – 5 days the parties meet, working on the specific challenges they face in their relationship and the possible, concrete solution(s).

The techniques used in this phase are specially conceived tools of communication, co – action, experienced learning and development.

This phase, including preparation and follow – up, normally takes 5 – 10 days.

## c) Anchoring

As crucial the integration phase is, as important is the follow – up afterwards. Make sure that the action plans and 'good feelings' after the workshop of the integration phase are not vanishing and that tangible, concrete results are achieved.

This is an ongoing and important process, requiring critical analysis and adjustments according to the development of the project.

This can take 2 – 4 days per quarter, whereby the coaching can be done by external consultants or specially trained people of the company or organization

## 4. The advantages

There are at least two perspectives from which advantages of such a process can be drawn:

### a) Personnel perspective

As manager, employee or just individual person the advantages of such a tool lie in the possibilities of individual growth and development, improved communication skills, better achievements of personnel and professional goals, more balanced, open and tolerant attitude towards the world around oneself.

### b) Company perspective

On the level of hard facts the intra - and inter – organizational efficiency in terms of faster execution rates, shorter production time, improved quality may increase, sales and net earnings can significantly be pushed up, costs will be reduced dramatically.

On the level of the so – called soft issues the atmosphere and culture within the organization and in contact with the outside world may reach a far higher quality and efficiency standard, elements like trust, mutual understanding and tolerance can be distinguished as new corner stones of a given partnership.

## 5. The competence

What entitles us to claim that we competently provide such a consulting service? All of our partners have many years of multicultural and international professional background, knowing the specific requirements of a positive and profitable business environment.

Thus, our partners have been working and are working today in different countries and experience different cultures, mentalities and values.

Being experts in our respective field of competence, we also demonstrate a high degree of understanding, tolerance and openness, which we express in everything we do: we walk the talk!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'O. Rifai', with a date '2014' written at the end of the signature.

O. Rifai  
Managing Partner