

Bachelor's thesis

Business

e-Business and Marketing

2012

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INFORMATION FLOW IN MULTICULTURAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

– Case: Amarillo Restaurant in Turku



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BACHELOR'S THESIS | ABSTRACT
TURKU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Business | e-Business and Marketing

February 2012| Total number of pages 39+ appendix

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INFORMATION FLOW IN MULTICULTURAL WORK ENVIRONMENT: CASE AMARILLO RESTAURANT IN TURKU

The bachelor's thesis is an assignment by the restaurant company Amarillo. The objective of this thesis is to determine how a tex-mex restaurant is prepared to maintain a good flow of information in a multicultural environment. The research aims to highlight the importance of challenges and advantages of diversity at workplace and how to deal better in the information flow in which the manager and employees have to work together in order to strengthen the cooperation.

The theory part identifies how the internal flow of information works in a multicultural environment. It also discusses diversity in the workplace, managing diversity, Finnish work culture and how to improve the communication in the workplace. Other questions deal with what kind of barriers exist in the communication, challenges of diversity in the workplace and foreign and Finnish employees' information perception differences. The main topics are also Finnish communication culture and intercultural communication. Qualitative research was selected because the work was to look into how the information works at the moment and how to improve it by taking account the multicultural work environment. The data were collected from the diversity, management and communication sector literature. Data were also sought on related web pages as well as S-group company's intranet.

The empirical part consists of five different interviews. The interviews sought to identify the restaurant's information flow procedure, as well as what is the difference of foreign and Finnish employee in the communication style, and what methods the restaurant could use to improve the information by taking account the multicultural environment workplace.

Results show that the channels of information that already exist in the restaurant have to be strengthened. First the updated information should reach all employees. Also, the employee has to be active and responsible to read the new information and attend meetings. The way information flow works in the restaurant has to be changed to more multicultural and has to take more attention non-Finnish speakers that they receive and fully understand the information given. By taking this step that all employees know-how their tasks, the restaurant saves a lot of money.

KEYWORDS:

diversity, communication barriers, intercultural communication, managing diversity.

Carolina Helenius

TIEDONKULKU KANSAINVÄLISESSÄ TYÖYMPÄRISTÖSSÄ

Tämän opinnäytetyön toimeksiantaja on Turun-Amarillo ravintola. Tutkimuksen tavoite on selvittää, miten tex-mex ravintola on valmis ylläpitämään hyvää tiedonkulkua monikulttuurisessa ympäristössä. Tutkimuksessa pyritään tuomaan esille miten tärkeä asia on tunnistaa moniarvoisuuden haasteet ja edut työpaikalla ja miten käsitellä paremmin tiedonkulku, jossa johtaja ja työntekijät joutuvat työskentelemään yhdessä vahvistaakseen yhteistyötä.

Teoriaosa selvittää, miten sisäinen tiedonkulku toimii monikulttuurisessa ympäristössä ja siinä käydään läpi mm. moniarvoisuus työpaikalla, monimuotoisuuden hallinta, suomalainen työkuultuuri, johdatus viestintään ja tiedonkulun paraantaminen työpaikalla. Lisäksi pohditaan millaisia esteitä on olemassa viestinnässä, moniarvoisuuden haasteissa sekä ulkomaalaisten ja suomalaisten työntekijöiden tiedonkäsittelyn eroissa.

Tutkimusmenetelmäksi valittiin kvalitatiivinen eli laadullinen tutkimus, koska työssä pyrittiin selvittämään miten tiedonkulku toimii tällä hetkellä ja miten parantaa sitä. Tiedot tutkimukseen kerättiin monimuotoisuuden, johtamisen ja kommunikation liittyvästä kirjallisuudesta. Tietoja haettiin myös aiheeseen liittyviltä Internet-sivuilta sekä S-ryhmän intranetistä.

Tutkimuksen empiirinen osa koostuu Amarillo ravintolan viiden työntekijän sekä ravintolapäällikön teemahaastatteluista. Haastatteluilla pyrittiin selvittämään ravintolan tiedonkulun menetelytavat kuin myös ulkomaalaisten ja suomalaisten työntekijöiden kommunikaatiossa olevat tyylierot. Lisäksi pyrittiin selvittämään miten voidaan parantaa tiedonkulun tapoja ottaen huomion monikulttuurinen työympäristö.

Tutkimuksessa havaittiin, että tiedon kanavia jotka ovat olemassa ravintolassa olisi hyvä parantaa. Ensiksi päivitysten pitäisi ulottua kaikille työntekijöille. Myös työntekijän olisi oltava itsenäisesti aktiivinen ja vastuullinen lukemalla uutta tietoa ja osallistua kokouksiin. Tiedonkulku on otettava huomioon miten tieto välittyy erityisesti monikulttuurisessa ravintolassa.. On otettava enemmän huomioon ne työntekijät, jotka eivät puhu suomea äidinkielenään, jotta he ymmärtävät annetut tehtävät. Tämän askeleen ottamalla ja varmistamalla ravintola, että kaikki työntekijät ymmärtävät tehtävänsä, ravintola säästäisi paljon rahaa.

ASIASANAT:

Monimuotoisuus, Viestinnän esteet, kulttuurienvälistä viestintää, monimuotoisuuden hallinta

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the today's world people everywhere work more and more in a multicultural environment where we have colleagues from all over the world. This brings new challenges to understand different types of work behavior, communication styles and values. It is important to act in the right way to manage the culture differences. Being open-minded, comprehensive and collaborative is the way to develop relationships in the work place and in addition utilize the communication as a conscious skill.

In Finland, the international companies as much the national ones have had a relatively good economic growth as well as multicultural business in the past ten years. The economic part of a company will always be the fundamental for its growth and stability in the market but the major key for Finnish companies being successful in a world so globalized is to have a multicultural corporate culture. One of the most difficult challenges in a multicultural Finnish company is the flow of fast, clear and efficient multicultural business communication with its internal customer i.e employees and external interest groups like banks, clients, foreigner suppliers, etc.

This subject is personally interesting because I work in a multicultural workplace in which the communication is the most important part of the day to day business. Since 2006 I have worked for S-group in the restaurant section in which I was one of the first foreigners. During the first year I learnt that the communication and the cultural differences with my Finnish fellow workers were to me complicated. In 2011 I am working for S-group in another restaurant of the company and here high percent of the staff is foreign. This has brought good things like more positivism in the workplace, friendly customer service, diverse collection of skills but the fluent communication and the mutual understanding is still the remarkable challenge.

The study is based in internal flow of information in a multicultural work environment. The aim is to find out in how the internal flow of information works

at the moment at Amarillo restaurant and if there are deficiencies in the information flow and sharing. If there are, then how it is possible to find ways to improve the current practices. At the same time it is also studied how diversity in the workplace influences strongly in the flow of information. This research is conducted according to qualitative methodology where the interviewees are Finnish and foreign employees who are in charge of the restaurant's hall and kitchen and the restaurant's manager, all with long work experience in a multicultural work environment. Interviews are not specified separately in the research but these data from the interviews has been combined.

Turku's Amarillo restaurant is a nationwide chain restaurant, which belongs to Finland's cooperative (S-group), which operates under the auspices of Turku cooperative (TOK). All of Amarillo restaurants are the same logo, product range and menus. Amarillo is a well-known Tex-Mex restaurant for its tasty food and relaxed, rocking sunny atmosphere.

TOK is a customer-owned regional cooperative owners, whose mission is to provide customer services and benefits to their owners. Client owners TOK has already more than 119 000. TOK takes care of the whole domain the continuous development of services.

Amarillo is a multicultural work environment because there work Finnish and foreign employees. The work language is Finnish, as most foreign employees speak it well but also English is the other language that is used every day. The majority of employees speak Finnish as native language and the rest of staff do not have neither English or Finnish as native language which sometimes brings its own difficulties in language communication and understanding. The meetings, the bulleting board, the personnel folder and facebook group page are in Finnish language. English language is using when the information is given orally face to face. Some of the staff who do not at all are placed in the kitchen because they do not need to dealing with the customer face to face and for them it is not necessary to understand Finnish so well.

In order to conduct a valid research, I started searching appropriate literature. The main findings of this thesis is summarized in two categories. First category it is present the main challenges and benefits of diversity in the workplace, and then what kind of tools will use to manage diversity, in order to see whether this intercultural interaction may also serve as learning experiences and developing new style of groupwork. Second category is based communication barriers and intercultural communication that deal with organizational communication challenges.

2 DIVERSITY

Pollar, Gonzales, Keppler and Kay (2004, 5-25) refers to the ways people differ from each other. These ways are significant and there are plenty of them.

- Culturally; gender, age, ethnicity, race sexual orientation, educational background, religion, physical/ mental ability, military/veteran status, lifestyle, immigrant status, language facility.
- Functionally; think, learn, process information, respond to authority, show respect, reach agreements.
- Historically; family make up, perspective, political outlook, intergroup relationship.

2.1 Diversity in the workgroup

Workforce diversity refers to that organization are heterogeneous in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity. European Union cooperative trade arrangement have opened up most of western Europe and it has increased workforce diversity in all organization in European countries. (Robbins 2001, 13).

Although the human beings are basically the same all over the world, our habits, expectations behaviours are shape by cultural conditioning. Every culture thinks its way of doing things makes more sense. That is what is commonly referred to as ethnocentrism and it is perfectly normal. However, it often leads to misunderstanding when two or diverse workgroup are involved. When the employees are from many backgrounds, cultures and lifestyles, they bring many benefits and challenge in promoting teamwork and interactions. Finding new ways to work together requires to create a workplace environment where organization make themselves more accommodating to diverse workgroup by

recognizing and valuing differences. In addition, this practice captures the advantage of learning new ideas and opinions of diverse perspectives.

2.2 Benefits of workplace diversity

Many specialists have studied the problems of diversity and all of them have come to the same conclusion. Diversity training is important based because this gives awareness of perceptions and assumptions for understanding others as well as one's own different values. Schmidt (2004, 5-25).

A correctly initiated policy of diversity will yield profits. People from different groups, who are able to interact harmoniously, will affect company's performance in a positive manner.

Lasear (1998, 117-142) points out that cultural diversity is "best practices" to use for the company. Success comes when the company looks inside of the own firm or industry for new and useful ideas. That so-called "secret place" is often found in our own diverse employee group.

Diversity is beneficial for the organization and its members because it brings different collection of talents and experiences (e.g. languages, cultural understanding), innovation, the ability to compete in international markets, better customer service, new perspective to problem-solving, better decisions, new areas of opportunities, increased customer satisfaction, variety of viewpoints and new ideas.

Diversity benefits the business in the way of competitive advantage in the market place. Today it is difficult to survive in global business if the company does not have variety in ideas and innovation. Both are the keys to competitiveness, diversity is important for any organization's success.

2.3 Challenges of workplace diversity

Diversity does also bring challenge. If and when the work is not managed well, cultural diversity can cause friction among employees, exclusion feelings, lack of teamwork, low moral, negative aptitude and low productivity.

There are many challenges to managing a diverse work force; e.g. perceptual, cultural and language barriers. Any, however minor, misunderstanding is damaging for the company because the ineffective communication results in confusion and only increases the misunderstanding. Therefore a multicultural company has to give more special attention and help for the non native speaker in the information giving. (businessperform.com, 2009).

The challenges of diversity in the workplace are tied to the politics and culture of the workplace. Management has to support and encourage an atmosphere where employees feel comfortable in sharing ideas and giving their talents to the company. Management's conduct will impact positively or negatively to the company's politics and culture. If negative this will block the open dialogue within a company.

One of the reasons that diversity does not work is because many companies are unwilling to change their culture and politics because this costs time and money. However, this kind of business model will lose the advantage of diversity and cannot compete in a global market.

When the company identifies the barriers of culture and politics in the diverse workplace, it can create a positive culture and support a good training. By this way the workforce and the management will develop healthier relationships internally. Therefore, diversity can work to the benefit of a company. (helium.com, 2009).

2.4 Required tools for managing diversity

When both benefits and challenges are acknowledged the managers should look at the tools how to make it work. Managers will need to adjust their philosophy from treating everyone alike to recognizing differences and value differences. It is important that managers respond to those differences in ways that ensure employee retention.

Consequently, when managers do recognize and value diversity of the workgroup, they improve quality and productivity of their employees and also empower and stimulate innovation of their people. Robbins (2001, 14).

A effective manager is aware that certain skills are necessary for creating a successful, diverse workforce. First, managers must understand discrimination and its consequences. Second, managers must recognize their own cultural biases and prejudices (findarticles.com, 2001). Diversity is not about differences among groups, but rather about differences among individuals. Each individual is unique and does not represent or speak for a particular group. Finally, managers must be willing to change the organization if necessary. Organizations need to learn how to manage diversity in the workplace to be successful in the future (<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/HR/HR02200.pdf>, 2002).

Managers not only need to be competent in basic management skills, they also need to learn how to apply those skills competently and comfortably even when the employees in their charge do not like them. The goal is that managers have to know how to apply organization's policies and practices equitably to all employees. Cross (2000, 147).

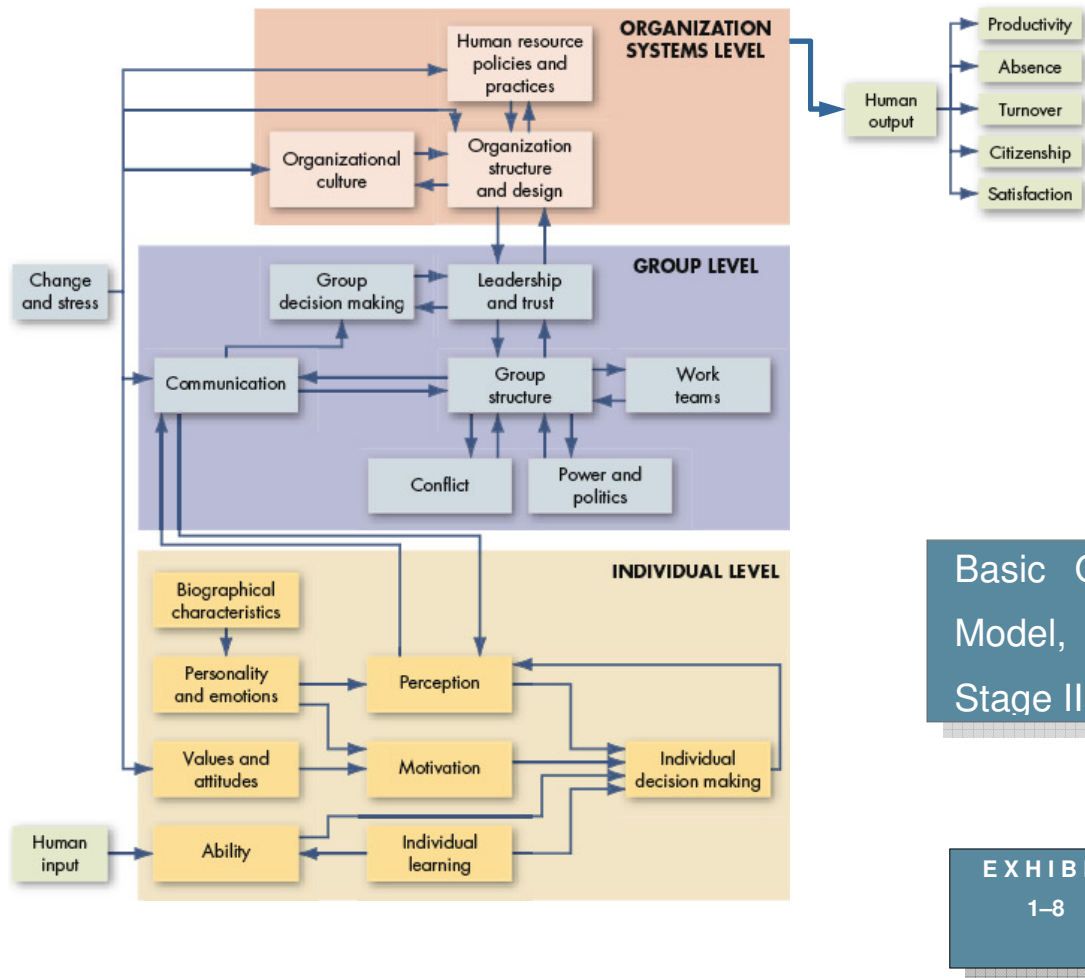


Figure 1 Robbins OB Model Stage II; (2001, 24)

This figure shows the behavior of involved individuals, groups, and structure within an organization.

According to Lieberman, Simons, and Berardo (2001, 60) are ten hints for managing multicultural employees.

- Lay clear lines of communication, organizational structure, and tasks.
- Set milestones for performance to avoid confusion and false assumptions, managers of cultural diverse employees must set clear and quantifiable expectations for all employees.

- Avoid assigning roles to people based on stereotypes. assuming that people are "good with numbers" or "creatives types" because of national or ethnic origin can underuse individual talents.
- Be careful about how you promote people from performance alone. Seniority structures and family ties may be strong and promotions "out of line" may offend other employees.
- Avoid overanalyzing problems and concentrate on what is working.
- Keep in constant touch to reinforce progress and identify problems. Managers have to recognize when an employee is dissatisfied or troubled.
- Invest in training. studies have shown that diverse teams that learn together perform better.
- Form a network of cultural mentors that can help to distinguish between personal, organizational and cultural issues.
- Set a realistic pace to meet goals. Tasks and projects across national boundaries and with people of different languages or cultural orientations always take longer.
- Build similarities by recognizing differences. Try to find out about issues and concerns before creating policies and procedures.

Despite a long and covering list, there is not single recipe for succes in managing diversity in the workplace. It mainly depends on the manager's ability to understand what is the best way for organization based on teamwork and dynamics of the workplace. Organization made up of diverse cultures need to learn how to adapt to be successful.

An effective manager and leader should furthermost focus on personal awareness and need to be aware of the personal biases to create a successful diverse workforce. According to (ilr.cornell.edu, 2001) managing diversity is a comprehensive process for creating a work environment that includes everyone.

3 BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The international environment and customers require active communication and interaction. Global teams and centers are becoming increasingly important. They form today the most important part of both customer service as the business development.

The importance of communication in restoring a balance between the needs of the company and of those employees, and helping to restore and maintain credibility, is becoming apparent to more people. Strategic communication focused on accomplishing concrete business objectives in the order of the day as companies go back to the drawing board to reengineer their business. Corrado (1994, 5-33).

Effective communication is an essential component of organization success, whether it is at interpersonal, intergroup, intragroup, organizational or external levels. There are two aspects of communications in an organization. at the outset the development and maintenance of a communication pattern to ensure harmonious relationship among the employees and in second the use of technology to secure more effective flow of information. Satyanarayan (2008, 6-25).

3.1 Finnish work culture and communication

The Finnish way of working is charastically very efficient and more individualist than collectivistic. Management places great emphasis on the development of orderly procedures and processes, which enables everybody to perform their tasks efficiently.

The equality style of the work community members roles are flexible. The employee has the freedom to question the opinions of managers and executives. Finnish culture includes a small power distance, which emphasizes

equality in areas of work as well the rest of society. When inequality is found, this is dealt with negative attitude, and it seeks to overcome or block out the view. In small power distance cultures, the status of work is achieved by experience and training as well as the personal properties base. Position requires professional expertise and training. Even in a decision-making positions a person can be a descent relatively young, female and poor. Achieved position is not eternal power and inherited formally. On the first day the employee can be a project management and the next day, he can be back-line worker or unemployed. Vartiainen-Ora (2007, 31).

Typical for the Finns and their communication style is that they are more comfortable in silence than most other nationalities. In negotiation and/or conversation they are shorter and direct to the point, whereas in many other cultures like Asia, Central America, south America this would be interpreted very impolite as in these cultures it is very important first to know the business partner very well. The Finnish silent and quietness can be easily misunderstood by a non-Finn as indifference, unfriendly or desire to self- isolation.

In many other countries, people are showing interest in talking to another people and the desire for friendly interaction. Content of speech is not so important, but the voice-smalltalk-communicates with the transmission. This is the case in the UK, Central and Southern Europe, the USA, the Middle East and African countries. (Vartiainen-Ora 2007,15).

3.2 Cross-cultural encounters in Finnis work-places

The cultural diversity in the work place is rapidly and clearly increasing in Finland because of globalization in the areas of economics, politics and culture. Also the membership in the European Union has brought to Finland mobility of work force and students also. <http://www.uta.fi> (2011).

The numbers of immigrants has increased in Finland but are still low in comparison internationally. Most of the inmigrants come to work from Europe

and Asia. People of foreign background are mainly concentrated in southern of Finland.

Finnish working life so far has dealt with multiculturalism in a passive way, and it has not taken advantage of full-scale practices developed elsewhere. On the other hand Finnish companies are increasingly seeking qualified people from abroad because they give more innovation and also replace the ageing employees. Despite the emergence of cultural diversity, very little is known about how people of different national and cultural backgrounds can learn to live and work together. (<http://www.uta.fi>, 2011).

The Finnish society and working life is constantly changing because of increase in cultural diversity. This complex phenomenon opens new possibilities but creates new challenges, too. The field of culture also needs to be taken into consideration when thinking about the challenges of a culturally diversifying society. Taking cultural diversity into account serves towards a more innovative and better quality Finnish culture. In a multicultural society diversity and difference are at the core of innovations. (<http://www.uta.fi>, 2011).

People of Finnish and foreign backgrounds need to learn how to act and cooperate ethnically, culturally and linguistically in heterogeneous environments. More bias-free interaction in everyday of worklife between Finnish and people from foreign background can and does decrease uncertainty and creates preconditions for solving conflicting situations. This intercultural interaction may also serve as learning experiences and developing new style of groupwork. (<http://www.uta.fi>, 2011).

This socio-cultural adaptation process concerns the whole population, not just newcomers and not just working life. Therefore, the work and study communities as a whole should be helped to deal with increasing cultural diversity. (<http://www.uta.fi>, 2011).

3.3 Introduction of communication

Communication is between people of the signals in the transmission and reception, to influence knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. The working community communicates with the target groups through its activities, but also by telling themselves and their activities (oral and written communication). A third equally important dimension of community media is the visual line (graphic styles, colors, etc.), which enables the Community to strengthen personal identity and differentiates itself from others. (www.hallinto oulu.fi, 2004).

3.4 Communication Barriers

Barrier to communication is factor in the communication process that impede open communication between source and destination. Dimpleby and Burton (1998, 77-82).

The communication barrier are faced either at the sender level which the barrier are observed in formulating thoughts, ideas, messages and at the receivers level understanding and interpreting the message as a major barrier. Satyanarayan (2008 15-30).

There are many reasons why employees and managers face communicating barriers such as:

Different cultural background. Use of wrong communication channels

disinterest. Lack of background information; jumping to conclusion without waiting the whole message.

Emotional barrier is comprised mainly due to fear, mistrust and suspicion; failure to communicate.

Language differences at different places creates misunderstanding in accepting the messages.

Semantic barrier has to do with the meanings of words. If words aren't used appropriately they can not produce meaning which are likely to be understood. Communication is blocked when we cannot attach meanings to words used because the conventions of the code are broken or because we do not know the code and its conventions in the first place.

Perceptual barriers occurs due to faulty perceiving, seeing and noticing of messages. The basis of this filtering is the assumptions that we make about other people.

Gender barriers refer to difference in female and male speech pattern and man interpersonal barrier. Those barriers are based upon the relationship, values held and attitudes of the participants in the process of communication.

According to Dimbleby and Burton (1998, 77-82) there are barriers which make poor the filters of communication:

- Perceptions and filters. The process of perception is the most common kind of filtering happens because we make inaccurate assumptions.
- Mechanical barriers are to do with physical obstructions to communications.
- Semantic barriers are to do with problems in conveying, receiving and agreeing about meanings.
- Psychological barriers. Communications may be filtered or blocked by attitudes, beliefs and values. These are the most common cause of difficulties with interpersonal communication. These filters shape what we say before we say it and affect how we interpret what others say to us. One example of this barrier is the racial prejudices, it matters a great deal to an applicant for a job if that person is from other culture and the interviewer has a subconscious prejudice that the applicant who came from other culture is unreliable or bad timekeepers. In the end the values it is the values and beliefs in the mind of the people involved that set up barriers when for example, culture is a factor in a give situation.

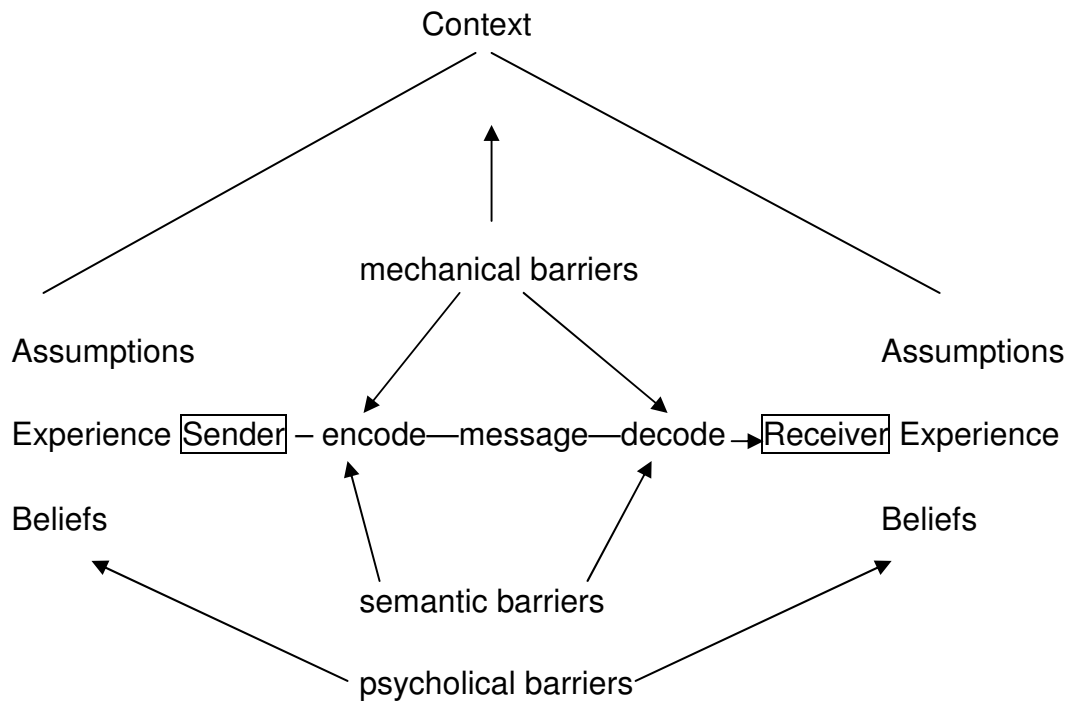


Figure 2. Barriers to communications. Dimbleby and Burton

3.5 Intercultural Communication

The last decade has seen the rise of international contact, bringing together individuals of varied nationalities and backgrounds. These contacts create unique challenges in communication. Individuals in communication may not recognise the impact that their differing behaviour, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs may have on others, both personally and professionally, and this can affect our ability to work and live together. (www.llas.ac.uk, 2006).

People from different countries often communicate in ways that lead to misunderstandings. Intercultural is focused on the interaction among these cultures. (www.llas.ac.uk, 2006).

Concepts like high and low context culture are related to different communication styles in cultures. People from different cultures find themselves increasingly working together and communicating. As long as people get in touch with each other, 'communication' takes place, and sometimes when different cultures crash out sparks, probably 'cultural shock' and even 'cultural conflicts' emerge. Hall (2000, 34-46). That it is why very important to make changes in our communication style. In other words, once we understand our own map of reality, we can begin to understand the "maps" used by other people. Understanding other people's maps of the world can increase the depth and effectiveness of our personal and professional relationships. (www.llas.ac.uk, 2006).

Dimbleby and Burton (1998, 32-40) claim that how we communicate and what is said through our communication helps define what is our culture. Being aware of this and acquiring cultural competence is a lifelong process and leads to understand that people from different countries tend to communicate in slightly different ways. This usually leads in better comprehension, fewer misunderstanding and mutual respect.

3.6 Finnish communication

The Finnish communication culture belong to high context culture which the Finnish speaker can thus rely on the context and shared information in order to produce a referring element while a Finnish listener has to do more work in order to reach the correct interpretation among the various discourse referents available. On the contrary in the low context culture the speaker's responsibility to contribute meaningful utterances so that the hearer can easily and without much contextual reasoning understand the intended meaning. Jokinen & Wilcock (2006, 295).

Lewis (2005, 71) claims that Finns are the only European that are so clearly reactive, although other cultures share some reactive traits. Reactive people are

listeners, and their communication style consists of monologue, pause reflection and thinks in silence.

3.7 Improve the communication in the workplace

It is difficult to find a correct advice to improve communication or corrects ideas to give guaranteed results. But is possible to find some procedures that can help improve communication. (www.businessperform.com, 2011)

- Make sure it is two-way. One-way communication fails because those delivering the message do not always know whether it has been received or understood.
- Establish the need for each communication. The reasons for the communication, what you are going to communicate and what you expect to gain from it must be clearly understood.
- Develop the skills and awareness. Invest time and effort to improve your skills – even if you consider that they are already good.
- Make it understandable. Make sure the information being communicated is clear to everyone. Communication efforts often fail because those presenting information do not make it relevant to the people for whom the information is intended.
- Communicate often. It may be a truism that management can never communicate enough, but communication efforts are often ineffective because managers give a message only once and assume it is understood.
- Try different methods and styles. Different people absorb information in different ways, so it is necessary to present information in different ways.

The approaches may include: spoken, written, in small groups, individually or using pictures and diagrams.

- Monitor the effectiveness. Make sure that the messages you are communicating are getting through by including in your strategy an assessment of effectiveness.
- Maintain the effort. A communication strategy that starts with a blaze of glory but soon lapses because of a lack of follow-up can do enormous damage to the credibility of future efforts.

If properly planned and delivered, communication will ensure that everyone understands what the goals are, what their part in achieving them is and what an individual can do to ensure that the goals are achieved. The time lost through lack of direction and misunderstandings will be dramatically reduced.

4 LOOK INTO COMMUNICATION FLOW AT AMARILLO RESTAURANT

This chapter presents the research method of the study. The study has been carried out using a qualitative method. Qualitative research data collection is generally used to allow researchers access close to the target. (Kiviniemi 2001, 68). It is used to gain insight into people's attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, and culture or lifestyles.

Data collection method has been used in the study and theme interviews worked well because it was possible to have an adequate research data and allow the interviewer to control, direct, and shape the verbal interchange between the two protagonists. At the same time open-ended questions give the interviewee an opportunity to say directly what s/he thinks about the subject of the questionnaire. This survey method is considered as an effective method of

data collection, but in some cases, the questionnaire mismatch could rise very large. (Hirsjärvi etc. 2009, 195-201)

In this study, the author wanted to look into the company's flow information in a multicultural work environment in which workforce diversity influences the performance of communication and the sharing of work information substantially. Five people were elected for interviews. Three correspond to the kitchen and restaurant hall, one is the shift manager and one the restaurant manager. The population is quite small, but professional and have experience in working in a multicultural environment. Thus, the use of open questions of the questionnaire form is justified, because they allow the respondent to express their opinions in their own words and there weren't given multiple-choice question to answer. (Hirsjärvi etc. 2009, 201).

Interviews were conducted in the same workplace and lasted for an hour. Every interview was personal and the theme of the interview was explained in advance so that the interviewees would better know answer questions and would be more motivated to answer the questions. In spite of prior explaining the theme of the interview, at some point it was difficult for interviewees to answer some questions as they needed to analyze in depth the question. Despite the few problems to answer the question, the interviews were done in friendly and relaxed way.

This thesis studies how internal flow of information works in Turku Amarillo restaurant where the multicultural work environment influences in the interaction of work-communication between employees and manager, work coordination and perform. The aim is to find solutions and developments to improve the internal flow of information. The challenge is to overcome of the confusion of the language barrier, perceptual, cultural and the fast changes of information in the business strategies of the restaurant. The variety of team members perspectives directly influences that they absorb information in different ways. The manager has to make sure the information being communicated is clear to everyone by trying different methods and styles flow of information.

The way that the flow of information in Turku Amarillo restaurant should to be multicultural which avoid the dominant culture.

The success of a multicultural restaurant comprises of good food, good human resources and a good management. The management procedure has to be efficient and act in a multicultural way. As much the manager and employees should have training in work better in a multicultural environment.

The base of a restaurant business is working with a clear vision of the objectives where the fluent and understandable communication between employees and managers play the crucial role.

4.1 The empirical results of Turku Amarillo Restaurant

This section covers the result of the research findings from Turku's Amarillo Restaurant which explains how the flow of information in the restaurant works at the moment and how to improve them.

4.1.1 Current Flow of information in Amarillo

Interview findings confirm that the internal flow of information of Turku Amarillo restaurant is based on different information channels and an good interaction between employees and manager. The active flow of information from the amarillo restaurant to employees is very important because there are changes all the time in the marketing strategies of the business. For example; fresh summer menus, menus and beverage offerings for the S-card owners which change a lot of time in a year, Christmas menus, various different campaign offers, etc.

A good internal information flow from manager for employees is essential because it leads to better sales and provides superior customer service. Also the communication conflicts and discrepancies between employees could lessen if everyone knew better their job performance and engaged better the

business goals. The high level of communication and information sharing ensures employees know exactly what the business is trying to achieve.

The communications ways and channels that Amarillo provides to the employees include:

- Meetings; the manager deals with the business strategies like new campaigns, S-card owner's benefits and offers, the business sales results, costumers' feedback, new job's roles, resolution of some labor disputes and the improving the work efficiency. Also in the meetings the manager asks the employees' oppinions and ideas to the business and gives feedback of the job performance.
- Development discussions; the manager invites the employees twice or three times a year to a personal development discussion which deal with the challenges and benefits of working in Amarillo and how the employee will improve the job performance.
- The bulletin board is a place for the information of the campaigns, new offers, dayly sales results, business reports, some customers' feedback, events. This channel of information is very neccesary at Amarillo because the employees do not work with computers. The bulletin board is the only place where the employee can freely look at the lastest news.
- Written instructions; It is a good guide to the new trainee where tell about Amarillo business's idea and how the work has to be done.
- The staff newsletter; given to all employees of the S-group. It informs about the organization, presents the organization's goals, encourages employees to perform job better, provides feedback from the work and gives readers some stories of the job experiences from employees who work for S-group.
- Facebook group page; Amarillo Turku restaurant has created a group page in facebook where employees are informed about the events of Amarillo like Halloween party, beach party, different campaign, etc. The

page only is informed about the new events but is not confidential and important marketing strategy because it could be the possibility to leak confidential information.

- Personnel folder, the computer at the Amarillo's dining room has personnel folder where it is updated all the new news of the restaurant. There the employee could check the wanted information before starting work.
- Oral information; The way of work in Turku Amarillo restaurant is many times very stressful and very demanding because many details play a role to make the customer will satisfied. One of the big major roles is the fluent of information between employees and managers or between employees. The flow of information has to be fast and clear so that the message is correctly received as development of food and the customer service depend on it.

Effective communication in Amarillo means that it needs to be multi-communicational, or communication flexible. It is needed to be able to communicate with all team members, regardless of how they interpret what is being said. The communication in the restaurant is normally very rapid because the one has to be in contact with the kitchen staff, manager, waitress and customer in order to ensure that all the services are being provided properly. It is necessary to have a good speaking skills to convey the information effectively and similar oral comprehension skills are required to understand oral communication from staff and manager.

Although there are different ways, the most effective and most natural to convey information at Amarillo is the communication the one to one. The working practice is to inform orally the daily news like for example the news table reservation, the chef recommended the day dish, some beverages that are finished and something else has to be recommended in its place, etc.

- Selling program; which includes code information of the dishes, beverages and prices of them. This program is used by the waitress to write down the customer order which then goes to the kitchen and bar. This program is effective and fast in the information flow. Of course in some orders there are exceptions and it is difficult to make the order by this program. This it is necessary to explain the order face to face to the kitchen staff or the bar staff.

The effectively flow of information in the organization is done by combining different methods and styles. Different people absorb information in different ways, so it is necessary to present information in different ways. That is why Turku Amarillo restaurant manager has done everything possible to ensure that information flows efficiently by using these different ways of communication which I have mentioned above. The job comes easier to the employees if everyone knows well the company's new strategic goals.

Workplace communication plays a vital role in every aspect of an organization because it enables the effective flow of information and its importance cannot be underestimated. A productive information flow involves both the sender (manager) and receiver (employee) to take their own responsibilities in creating a good interaction communication climate. A good flow of information will minimize employee uncertainty and resistance and will gain the employees' cooperation.

Every workplace communication must have a clear objective and message, must be clear and concise and well structured. However, communicating about the business to employees presents a range of challenges. A large number of managers spend their time resolving people problems relating to poor communication and trust issues. Focusing on clear communication can eliminate management time spent on handling employee conflict.

4.2 The improvement of information flow in Turku Amarillo restaurant

The objective in improving and developing the information flow at amarillo is to guide the employees to get a clear picture of business goal and better interaction between employees in the work making.

It is not necessary to require major changes and invest of money in order to improve the information flow at Amarillo. It is only necessary to strengthen the information flow channels that people already use in the organization to reduce the communication gaps. Also it is necessary to develop a good communication skill in multicultural teams to understand better the differences in behaviour, working styles, beliefs and values of the colleagues. Both; information channels and a good cross-cultural interpersonal communication skills are essential to effective flow of information in the organization.

According on the interviews, all agree that there must be a person who responsible to ensuring that the information is available to all employees. On other hand, the employee has to be responsible and active in reading the new information and attend the meeting. The restaurant manager is the person who is in charge of this task because s/he is the first person who receives all new information of the business strategies and feedbacks. The information channels mentioned above are well structured for the manager but they only need to be more strengthened in the way of better organizing, regular updating and taking into account the multicultural work environment.

The increase of the restaurant business in the past ten years has resulted in the fact that Finnish restaurants have increased demand to recruite professional kitchen staff from others countries. The demand of foreign professionals in the service sector in the future is increasing. For this reason is very important that the information flow in the organization now and in the future is distributed to all employees equally and taking into account the multicultural work environment. Newly hired foreign employee brings new challenges like communication barriers, different life or work values, difference styles of work making but in turn brings innovation, variety of viewpoints and professional expertise.

Nowadays the importance of a clear information flow in the organization is essential for success in the business goals and at the same time the organization gains time and saves money when all employees are well informed about the business strategies and changes.

The meeting; in Turku Amarillo restaurant are held in Finnish and according to the interviews could be made in benefits to all employees (Finnish and foreign employees) in English also. The point is how to make the meeting more approachable also for foreigners that every foreign employee understands correctly the point of the meeting. It is only necessary to make the slides or the titles in English. Also the person in charge could rephrase the main subject to the employees who do not understand Finnish well at the end of the meeting. This is a little change and not it is demanding invest of money and a lot time. By this way the sharing of information could flow efficiently to all employees and the misunderstanding could decrease. The foreign employee could interact more in the meeting and give fresh ideas when s/he feel that s/he is taken into account in the meeting.

The bulleting board will be better organised when the published information is placed in better order and more clarity so that employees pay more attention to new publications. There could be titles for any information such as feedback, the restaurant record of sales, budget, strategies of marketing, etc. The new and old new should be separate so that it is not confusing to the reader. For the person who do not understand Finnish well there could be one page which explains the main subject of the week. The main problem to the reader in the restaurant is however the time. Usually the employee comes to work five minutes before the shift and these few minutes are not enough if the bulletin board looks confusing.

Training newly hired employee ; to facilitate a better integration into the work the newly hired employee could be given two weeks of intensive training by the same person who would be his/her guide. If the new employee feels confused in something s/he could contact his/her trainer. With this procedure both the trainer and the new employee grow better dynamics in their communication,

more trust between them and the newly hired employee could feel better integrate with his/her work fellows.

The restaurant business is very rapid and the work schedules change a lot. So it is almost impossible to have the same trainer for two weeks because the person who could be the trainer, would have to change his/ her work's schedule a lot in the turn of the day, afternoon or night. To take an additional employee to be the trainer for the newly hired employee cost money. Otherwise the company can save money by having a well trained employee because a good training gives the new employee the best possibility of integrating successfully in the company. Failure to provide adequate training results in job which leads to high rates of confusion, mistakes, frustration and rejection of the job place.

Unfortunately, the training is often assigned to those within the closest proximity to the newly hired and to those with the most available time. It is possible that the person who gives the training do not have the necessary skills to be effective. Thus it is imperative that the individual providing the training has the necessary skills not only teaching job tasks but also let newly hired employee knows the importance of being open minded in working in a multicultural work environment and teach the importance of having a good interaction with the team working group. The guidance has to be more accurate and wider. Educating the trainer is an important first step in successfully training newcomers.

According to interviews, all respondents agree that good training is essential for new employees because it brings a better integration in the work place.

Cultural difference; the findings of the interviews show that the Finnish employees seem to think that the main importance that the new employee has to learn is to be very organized, cooperative with the team and good in the communication skills.

They also highlight the difficulties that when they have to work with newly hired foreign employees it imposes cultural differences. An example of this is when the new foreign employee does many things at once and this brings confusion to

the Finns. A Finn is accustomed to doing one thing at a time. They make their work in the way they have been taught and are unwilling to work in different styles or ways.

The main problem in the communication seems to be that the Finns are accustomed to explaining things briefly and at the same time they like to give a reference of the task. This kind of communication could bring difficulties to the foreigner in understanding the message because the majority of them are accustomed to receiving more extensive explanations. One example of the communication difference is that the Asian employees like to receive orders from the manager all the time. Compared with Finns, they could feel uncomfortable and take as an offense if someone imposes all the time.

Most employees appreciate the use of English in the workplace, enabling them to improve and learn professional words. For some, the use of English is also a challenge because they are not used to using it much. These communication problems arise when the work becomes very stressful especially on weekends when there is more customer assistance in the restaurant.

The Finns tend to assume that the new foreign employee will work in the same way they do. This assumption makes the Finns conclude that the new foreign employee works with deficiency. The misinterpretation of the form of behavior in the workplace means that there are misunderstandings when working together. At the end they have to accept (Finnish and Foreigners) that the working style may be different but the result is the same. The difference in work culture background sometimes causes feelings of confusion apparent in the team, but also brings extensive knowledge in the performance of work.

Foreign employees having worked at the restaurant a long time say the best way to integrate work with the Finns, is being organized, efficient and work in the same way they do. This avoids confusion or misunderstandings with your colleagues. But at the same time one must not forget to be genuine and do not forget own culture. The combination of efficiency, the passion to do the job well, the character that from everyone's own culture and cheerful customer service can

make the integration more pleasant in the restaurant business. The Finns admire the fact that the foreign employee has respect and enthusiasm for the work they do in the restaurant.

Employee of both Finnish and foreign backgrounds need to learn how to act and cooperate as a team and in this way make it more pleasant to work together. This intercultural interaction may also serve as learning experiences and developing new style of work making.

Reinforcing good teamwork is necessary that the restaurant builds good flow of information where information reaches all employees. It is also essential that every employee is responsible and active in the daily work.

The problem with some foreign employees is that they prefer that the new information is giving orally and they do not feel comfortable by reading from the bulleting board. This is the big difference with the Finnish culture because Finns prefer the written information.

Internal manuals, personnel folder, instructions; these channels of information that exist and are used at the restaurant must be constantly updated to ensure the employee is up to date with changes and has better know-how of work performance, the business goal and image of the restaurant.

For effective information flow in an international work environment it is important to take into account that people perceive information in different ways. For this reason the company should be concerned that there are different channels of information and that information reaches all employees. Internal manuals, the personal folder and the instructions could be also in English to benefit the foreign employees who do not understand Finnish well. This facilities and saves time for better training the new foreign employee. Not everything needs to be explained verbally.

Also the result of the interviews reveal that the new information should also be sent via email to employees because the employees feels that the restaurant changes beverages and plates promotions all the time. Naturally the employee

is responsible for reading the emails. This should be added in weekly work task for each employee. Moreover, the respondents agreed in creating a folder of professional vocabulary for the kitchen staff and restaurant's hall staff in English and Finnish which could be helpful in improving the knowledge of words that are used in the work. It would also save having not to make redundant explanations in the rush hour work.

The goal of these information channels is to inform correctly to all employees about the restaurant's activities and objectives; create and promote openness and dialogue within the multicultural work environment. The flow of information has to be arranged so that the employee could receive the information they need at the right time. These various information channels of clear communication is a common operating models, and communication effectively supports restaurant's strategic objectives. The information provided must be accurate, adequate, concise and presented in general sense.

5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to look into how the flow of information in a multicultural work environment in Turku Amarillo restaurant works at the moment and to find out which factors have an impact on the developing information flow, and whether there may be some procedures of information for improvement. The study took place through the theoretical part of the diversity in the work place and introduction to communication, and takes in account the Finnish work culture. In the case I focused in the actual flow of information that the restaurant uses and the conclusion of the result of the interviews.

The results from interviews revealed that the company has enabled many channels of information flow but it is still necessary to strengthen them and

these channels have to take into account the multicultural work environment that the restaurant is involved.

The study itself was a multi-step process and wide in theory. The flow of information in a multicultural work environment was more difficult to work with than what I thought when I initiated the work. Perspective of diversity in the work place and Finnish work culture was a surprisingly difficult to take into account when making this work. As I read the written information on diversity in the work place, Finnish work culture, communication barriers, multicultural communication and also the interviews that I made to the employees of the restaurant, this investigation became easier. I made this work, taking into account diversity of people in the workplace because the information flow in the restaurant is structured in a Finnish way in which seems to set aside the importance of making the information more multicultural.

In the future Finnish companies are increasingly seeking qualified people from abroad especially for the service sector and it is necessary to make changes in attitude in being more open-minded and accept cultural wealth positively. Also the work culture in which the flow of information plays a major role in a multicultural work environment, has to be dynamic where the manager and employees have to participate and collaborate together to maintain good communication channels by taking account the multicultural influence in the workplace. The foreign employee should receive good introduction and more detailed familiarization of the workplace culture than the Finnish employees. Training managers multicultural workplace management would surely be a key in workplace well-being and cooperation in a flow of information.

Today and in the future the multiculturalism will become a part of weekday in most of the job places. Conflicts can not be avoided, but the multicultural learning experiences, help the whole working community to develop the ability to solve problems in multiple ways, help overcome functional fixedness and increase the awareness of manage better the communication channels.

This study of flow information in a multicultural work environment is running through the workplace multiculturalism which came up very significantly. Finnish and foreign employee perception of flow of information differs significantly from each other. The fact is that foreign employees prefer that the information is oral, because all written information given from the manager is in Finnish language. Also they like to work in team and like to be in constant interaction with their work partners. The Finnish on the other hand, like to work independently and prefer reading the information and are not comfortable to receiving orders all the time. In comparison with the foreign employees who do not feel uncomfortable.

There are behavioral, cultural and work style differences that come up every day and these affect the perception of information in the restaurant. For these reasons it is important to make some steps to improve the integration in the workgroup.

1. Overcome and accept the differences.
2. The foreign employee has to show that s/he wants to adapt to Finnish work culture.
3. The Finn has to be willing in cooperating openly with their foreign work partner.
4. The manager has to be in charge that the information goes through to all employees by taking into account the multicultural work environment.

According with the interviews Finnish and foreigners agree that the restaurant will create in the future an intranet for employees where all information is updated all the time. This could include future visions of the business, work culture of the restaurant, e-mail for the employees, the news of marketing campaigns, etc. Also they say that the restaurant has to strengthen the channels of information that already exist in the workplace.

My goal in this thesis process was to make me to understand better the benefit of cultural difference in the workplace. Diversity and communication literature was useful and it enabled me to understand many issues in the workplace, and

I learned to work and function better in a multicultural workplace. I found some great tips on orientation and management dealing with the work and got some great tips on Finnish work culture such as the communication barriers of new employees. As a researcher, I had not experience with information flow mangemment in the workplace and management in a multicultural work environment.

One benefit was the fact that the case restaurant was familiar from several years of work experience. The study was very nice to do, because the diversity, and communication barriers are of great interest. The study gave new information and the reasons for the aspects which affect a large area, and added interest to the researcher to know more about how we have to work the information in a multicultural work environment. I hope this thesis gives a definite advantage for people who have to deal in working in a multicultural environment.

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Questionare

What advantages do you see working in a multicultural workplace?

What kind of strategies do you use to deal with possible cultural difference in the workplace?

Are there any difference with respect to perception of work levels among Finn and foreign employees?

What is the process to follow by foreign employee to engage better in a Finnish work environment?

What kind of similarities or differences exists between foreign and Finn employee in the communication style?

How improve the internal work cooperation between Finns and foreign employee?

What kind of process or measures do you think that will improve the fluent of information in the workplace?

How does working across cultures relate to your own job role?