THE CULTURE MAP:
Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business

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<th>Communicating</th>
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COMMUNICATING

LOW CONTEXT

DIRECT

EVALUATING

TRUSTING

TASK BASED

LEADING

RELATIONSHIP BASED

DECIDING

LEADING

TOP DOWN

CONSENSUAL

DISAGREEING

AVOIDS CONFRONTATION

LINEAR TIME

FLEXIBLE TIME

SCHEDULING

PERSUADING

PRINCIPLES FIRST

GM

Australia

GM

Germany

CA
DIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

Danish Range

US Range

Thai Range

INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK
UK  France  India

LINEAR TIME  SCHEDULING  FLEXIBLE TIME
Germany  UK  France  India

Linear Time  Scheduling  Flexible Time
LOW CONTEXT
Explicit
Simple
Clear

COMMUNICATING

HIGH CONTEXT
Implicit
Layered
Nuanced

US
Netherlands
Denmark
UK
Poland
Italy
France
India
Saudi
Korea
Australia
Germany
Swiss
Belgium
Brazil
Spain
Russia
Zimbabwe
Thai
Japan
Canada
Ireland
Sweden
Mexico
Romania
Kenya
China
Finland
Norway
Peru
Turkey
Indonesia
LOW CONTEXT  COMMUNICATING  HIGH CONTEXT

Explicit  Simple  Clear

Implicit  Layered  Nuanced

US  Netherlands  Denmark  UK  Poland  Italy  France  India  Saudi  Korea
Australia  Germany  Swiss  Belgium  Brazil  Spain  Russia  Zimbabwe  Thai  Japan
Canada  Ireland  Sweden  Mexico  Romania  Kenya  China
Finland  Norway  Peru  Turkey  Indonesia
LOW CONTEXT
Explicit
Simple
Clear

COMMUNICATING

HIGH CONTEXT
Implicit
Layered
Nuanced

US  Netherlands  Denmark  UK  Poland  Italy  France  India  Saudi  Korea
Australia  Germany  Swiss  Belgium  Brazil  Spain  Russia  Zimbabwe  Thai  Japan
Canada  Ireland  Sweden  Mexico  Romania  Kenya  China  Indonesia
Finland  Norway  Peru  Turkey
Historically what would have led the US to be the lowest context culture in the world and Japan the highest?
Poll: Is miscommunication most likely between:

A) A Low Context Culture and another Low Context Culture
B) A Low Context Culture and a High Context Culture
C) A High Context Culture and another High Context Culture
Communicating conclusions

Multi-cultural teams need **low context processes**.

When working with low context cultures be **as explicit as possible**. Put it in writing. Repeat key points.

When working with high context cultures repeat yourself less, ask clarifying questions often and work on **increasing your ability to “read the air”**.
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<tr>
<th><strong>Up-graders:</strong></th>
<th><strong>Down-graders:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td>Sort of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very</td>
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<td>Certainly</td>
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<td>Clearly</td>
<td>Pretty Much</td>
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<td>In Fact</td>
<td>I Guess</td>
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It looks like we’re going to have to keep the production line running on Saturday.

I see.

Can you come on Saturday?

Yes, I think so.

That’ll be a great help.

Yes, Saturday is a special day.

How do you mean?

It’s my son’s birthday.

How nice I hope you all enjoy it.

Thank you. I appreciate your understanding.
DIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

INDIRECT NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

LOW CONTEXT

HIGH CONTEXT

USA
We had 2 weeks of meetings in China to explore a JV. We had difficulty getting the information we needed. We felt our Chinese counterparts were not willing to cooperate.

After the first week we discussed our frustrations with our Chinese consultant. The consultant told us our approach was wrong. We were going too fast. We argued back that we had been very detailed, open, and patient.

The consultant said “It is not a problem of how you are approaching them from a business perspective but of the relationship perspective. You are not going to get what you want unless you develop “Guanxi” with them.”

**Discussion question:**
What does the Chinese consultant mean?
What steps do you suggest the German team take to improve their chances of success?
We then took the consultants advice and decided to invite the Chinese counterparts for a dinner over the weekend with the presence of various hierarchical levels from their organization. It was an excellent dinner during which we had time to socialize.

We toasted several times in sign of our respect for them. In addition we emphasized how glad we were to be there with them and to begin a long term relationship.

We re-started the meetings the following Monday and the Chinese willingness to cooperate had changed completely. They were now very enthusiastic and we began to work well as a team. We were then able to satisfactorily accomplish our work week two.
TASK-BASED

RELATIONSHIP-BASED

TRUSTING

US  Netherlands  UK  Switzerland  Belgium  France  Japan  Egypt  Kenya
Germany  Australia  Poland  Spain  Russia  Peru  China  Thailand
Canada  Denmark  Sweden  Ireland  Italy  Mexico  Brazil  Korea  Zimbabwe
Norway  Finland

Singapore  Turkey  India  Saudi
T rusting conclusions

When working with relationship-based cultures:

• Invest significantly more time building relationships when working globally.
• Practice exposing yourself more than you are used to and working on blending your personal self with your professional self.
• Use more non-work talk to pad your emails and telephone calls.

When working with task-based cultures:

• Get down to business. Try shorter lunches, less non-work related talk.
• Or explain why you want to invest the time – (“in order for me to work with someone well I need to spend time to know them. In Brazil we do this by. . .”).
HIGH COMFORT WITH SILENCE

LOW COMFORT WITH SILENCE
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