



GlobalExchange

Bimonthly Journal of International Business

From the Desk of the President: Planning Intercultural Events
Trend Watch: Expats Leaving China Early
Tip: Embrace Reverse Translation!
News from Global Dynamics Inc.
Cross-Cultural Proverb Quiz

November/December 2009

From the Desk of the President: Planning Intercultural Events By Neal Goodman, PhD



The hidden dimensions of cross-cultural differences can undermine even the most successful and well-intended manager planning international meetings.

Over the past twenty years, we have seen each of these cultural blunders:

- A multinational corporation having a major customer meeting with visitors from Asia that had nametags printed for each attendee in both English and their national calligraphy in a beautiful, red script. However, it is considered bad luck to have your name written in red in some Asian cultures that write people's names in red upon their death.
- An international meeting hosting visitors from India and Indonesia featuring only these entrees: steak, pork-fried rice and Lamb Korma. This did not go over well, as many Indonesians are Muslim and will not eat the pork-fried rice prepared especially prepared for them and many Indians are vegetarian and would not eat the lamb korma prepared for their benefit.
- Centerpieces on tables at an event hosting Asian guests had a floral arrangement accented by colorful chopsticks placed vertically in the flower arrangement. Many of the chopsticks were removed, as vertical chopsticks symbolize death in many Asian cultures

In reality, there are a few key factors which are most critical and these can be learned. Given the increased importance of global meetings, it is critical that meeting planning be very sensitive to cultural differences. The very success or failure of your next meeting could depend on it.

If you have additional thoughts or questions about this topic or cross-cultural initiatives in general, please feel free to reach me at ngoodman@global-dynamics.com.

Neal Goodman, PhD is the president of Global Dynamics Inc.

Trend Watch: Expats Leaving China Early

As [reported](#) in *China Daily*, the China Transition Institute (CTI) estimates that nearly 50 percent of expatriates in China leave before the conclusion of the assignments.

Global Dynamics Inc has found that a multinational company typically invests two million U.S dollars per expatriate. We have also found a direct link between sufficient cross-cultural training prior to expatriate assignments and long-term overseas success.

Organizations sending employees overseas for expatriate assignments cannot afford to not take the time to fully prepare their assignees.

Tip: Embrace Reverse Translation!

Written content that has undergone one-way translation can be quite amusing – that is, is you are not the conveyer of the intended information. For your enjoyment (and as a warning) here are some genuine examples of messages that may have benefitted from reverse translation:

In the window of a Swedish furrier: Fur coats made for ladies from their own skin

Detour sign in Kyushu, Japan: Stop - Drive Sideways

In a Norwegian cocktail lounge: Ladies are requested not to have children in the bar.

On the menu of a Polish hotel: Salad a firm's own make; limpid red beet soup with cheesy dumplings in the form of a finger; roasted duck let loose; beef rashers beaten up in the country people's fashion.

In an East African newspaper: A new swimming pool is rapidly taking shape since the contractors have thrown in the bulk of their workers.

News from Global Dynamics Inc.

Neal Goodman to Speak at Training 2010 Conference & Expo

Neal Goodman will deliver a 60 minute headliner session called "The Impact of Values on Training Success: Cross-Cultural and Generational Challenges" at *Training Magazine's* [Training 2010 Conference & Expo](#) Feb. 1-3 in San Diego, CA. This session will explore the skills necessary to adapt one's design and delivery styles to be most responsive to the trainees' culture(s). Participants will learn how to adapt existing materials and methods to their audiences and will explore responsive strategies and an action plan for improved performance while working across value differences.

Neal Goodman to Lead Full Day Workshop at ASTD 2010 International Conference & Expo

Neal Goodman will deliver a full day workshop called "Going Global: Developing Cross-Cultural Competence" at the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) [2010 International Conference and Exposition](#) on May 15, 2010 in Chicago, IL.

Global Dynamics Trains 70 PhDs in India on Effective Leadership

Global Dynamics delivered a major training workshop in October for a leading pharmaceutical company to train 70 PhDs in India to become more effective leaders. The session was a tremendous success with most of the trainees rating the program 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale. A follow-up letter from the client states "This was much more than I expected and the program truly exceeded my expectations."

Cross-Cultural Proverb Quiz

Test your knowledge of the proverbs from around the world.

Match each proverb from the left column to the country in which it is said (from the right column)...

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Don't make an elephant out of a mosquito. | A. Japan |
| 2. The slowest barker is the surest biter. | B. United States |
| 3. Unlike the oak, the mature bamboo that bends does not get blown down. | C. China |
| 4. Without diligence there is no reward. | D. Sweden |
| 5. Take care of today and tomorrow will take care of itself. | E. Estonia |
| 6. A moment's endurance brings about long-lasting peace, and a step back presents a grander sight. | F. Ireland |
| 7. What's nearest to the heart is nearest to the mouth | G. Germany |
| 8. Better take what is certain than aim for the uncertain. | H. France |



1=E; 2=H; 3=A; 4=G; 5=B; 6=C; 7=F; 8=D

What do these proverbs tell us about the cultural values and implications for working relationships in each of these countries?

Newsletter from Global Dynamics Inc.
35 Olde York Rd.
Randolph, NJ 07869
contactus@global-dynamics.com

Interested in sharing your experiences and lessons learned? We are looking for articles from cross-cultural experts that describe best practices, discuss significant cultural trends, or offer new solutions to management challenges. [Learn more about how you can contribute to GlobalExchange™.](#)

If you do not wish to receive future issues of *GlobalExchange™*, please send an email to contactus@global-dynamics.com with the subject line "opt out."