

A monthly sharing of ideas designed to inspire reflection upon the strength of the connection between diversity and business success at ...

Did you know that in some cultures it's a compliment to be called a donkey? Read this true story to learn more...

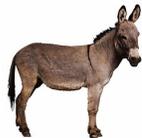
A Store Manager was recognizing her team for a job well done. During a huddle she expressed her appreciation in the following way, "Thank you all so much for all your hard work to prepare for the executive visit! You all worked like dogs and deserve the recognition for such a successful visit!"



How would you feel if you were one of the Associates receiving this recognition?

While some Associates were happy to hear this praise others were not.

Do you know why?



The Manager thought she was giving the team a compliment, however in some cultures, dogs are considered to be very lazy and donkeys considered hardworking! You can imagine how mortified this store Manager was to hear this feedback, as this was not her intention.

Good intentions don't always have a positive impact. When the Manager realized why some individuals were upset she apologized and used this opportunity to talk and learn about cultural differences.

We each learn to communicate according to the language, rules and patterns of behaviour in our culture. It's important to recognize that this differs across cultures.

Did you know ...

Nonverbal communication - facial expressions, gestures and eye contact - is



Consider the Handshake

In North America, a handshake indicates that a negotiation is finished and that everyone is leaving on good terms. In the Middle East, the handshake is a sign that serious negotiations are just beginning.



based mainly on behaviour or visual cues. Believe it or not, we communicate this way more than we do verbally.

Even small differences in how we interpret body language, speech rhythms and punctuality can cause miscommunication across cultures.

For example, some gestures, like giving the 'thumbs up', are highly offensive in some cultures, even though they are common and acceptable in Canada. Being unaware of these differences can cause personal communication challenges and even hurt business and relationships.

Differing cultural communication styles are applied to many activities, including:

- How people view personal space
- How time is valued
- How people say 'yes', 'no' and
- How people build relationships



Improving Communication Across Cultures

Think about how another culture might be different from your own. What more could you learn about that culture?

- ✓ What values are important to this culture?
- ✓ How do people make decisions, conduct relationships and display emotion?
- ✓ How does this culture treat time and deadlines?
- ✓ How does this culture display and respect power and people in authority?
- ✓ How do people in this culture communicate?

Whatever you learn about cultural differences, there will be regional and local variations.

Be open to learning about these cultural differences and check out www.culturecrossing.net to explore how people interact and communicate in different cultures and communities.

Communicating effectively across cultures is a skill. It's worth taking the time to understand how culture may be impacting your interactions at work and in your community.

Please share a cultural communication difference that you have experienced. Have you experienced a challenging situation where there may have been a cultural miscommunication? What will you do to learn about other cultures and communication styles?

Be Inclusive Use the Calendar

April 2014

- April 1:** April Fools' Day
- April 8:** Ram Navami (Hindu)
- April 9:** Jalal (Baha'i)
- April 13:** Mahavira Jayanti (Jain)
- April 13:** Palm Sunday (Christian)
- April 14:** Baisakhi (Sikh)
- April 14:** Songkran/New Year (Buddhist)
- April 15:** Passover (Jewish)
- April 18:** Good Friday (Christian)
- April 20:** Easter (Christian)
- April 21:** Easter Monday (Christian)
- April 21:** Ridvan (Baha'i)
- April 23:** Administrative Professionals Day
- April 28:** Yom HaShoah (Jewish)

*Happy
Easter*



The traditional Christian holiday of Easter is an example of a religious holiday that has included many additional customs to become a widely celebrated cultural holiday as well.

The Easter Bunny, a character who brings eggs and gifts to children, is based on a very old German tradition where a rabbit brings gifts, including eggs, to well-behaved children.

Today, people across Canada decorate hard-boiled eggs and give out baskets of candy and small toys at Easter. During Easter Egg Hunts, children search for candy hidden by the Easter Bunny.

It is common for people to celebrate both the religious and cultural holiday of Easter.