



Tips for Managing Intercultural Communication

1. Slow Down

Intercultural interactions assume time for revelations and thorough preparations, which is why let your students think properly. Speak clearly and intelligibly.

2. Separate Questions

Try not to ask double questions such as, "Do you want to carry on or shall we stop here?" In an intercultural context only the first or the second question may have been comprehended. Let your listener answer one question at a time.

3. Avoid Negative Questions

Using negative questions and answers has caused many intercultural communication misunderstandings. In English we use "yes" if the answer is affirmative and "no" if it is negative. In Russia, for example, a "yes" or "no" may indicate a vice versa meaning. For instance, the response to "Are you not coming?" may be "yes", meaning "Yes, I am not coming."

4. Take Turns

Intercultural communication is enhanced through taking turns to talk, making a point and then listening to the response.

5. Write it Down

Recommend your students to write down the points for checking and understanding. This can be useful when using large figures. For example, a billion in the USA is 1, 000, 000, 000, 000 (12 zeros) while in the UK it is 1,000, 000, 000.

6. Be Supportive

Encourage and inspire everybody to speak no matter what command of English a student has. Giving encouragement to those with weak English gives them confidence, support and a trust in you.

7. Check Understanding

When communicating across cultures never assume the other party has understood what you meant. First, be an active listener. Second, summarise what has been said in order to verify it. Third, in case of vague meanings, don't be shy to ask additional questions and check the meanings.

8. Avoid Slang

Even the most well educated foreigner will not have a complete knowledge of slang, idioms and sayings. The trouble is that the words will be understood but the meaning missed.

9. Make the Humour Appropriate

In many countries people will not appreciate the use of humour and jokes in the business context. When using humour, think if it will be understood. In many situations sarcasm has a negative effect.

10. Maintain Etiquette

Many cultures have certain etiquette when communicating. It is always a good idea to be polite, respectful and well mannered in order not to hurt somebody's feelings.



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