

How to Bridge Cultural Communication Differences: East and West



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“The secret to success is to understand the point of view of others.”

— *Henry Ford*

“Know yourself, know others. One hundred battles, one hundred victories.”

— *Chinese proverb*

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Part I: Understanding Communication

Differences: East and West



Eastern Cultures – Prevalent Usage of High Context Communication

Definition of High Context - Many intricate factors (such as status, social relationships, social environment, formality, non-verbal gestures, silence, and symbolism) are taken into consideration in communication. The true meaning of high context communication is often far more complex than the literal meaning of the words spoken.

In general, people who communicate in high context include, among others, those from the “East”, such as China, Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

In addition to the “Eastern” countries and localities listed above, high context communicators also include (and are not limited to) those from Africa, Central America, South America, as well as Greece, Mexico, Portugal, and Spain.

High Context Communication Characteristics

1. High context communicators tend to "read between the lines". It is a form of spherical communication, which talks around, rather than, to the point.

There's more to this excerpt!

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