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Managing Glocally: Resolving Intercultural Challenges in the Management of Local Multicultural Teams in a Multinational Venture

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1 Possible answers

Although the MBI (Mapping, Bridging, Integrating) model is best used with persons in interaction (for example in a multicultural team), the case provides sufficient information about different people's point of view for us to try the mapping, bridging and integrating steps. It is possible to map the possible differences and similarities between the actors, organizations and countries that are represented.

1.1 Assess the main differences and similarities between the different persons (or groups) involved in the situation (the sales and marketing teams, Pierre, Simone, Marco, Janne, Lena, PaDam, etc.). Assess these differences from what has been said in the case, but also in view of what you believe is likely to be similar or different between them. Consider these differences regarding decision making, reward, value of diversity, etc. Do this "mapping" by also considering the origin (corporate socialization, national culture, age, etc.) of these differences and similarities. Use the mapping tables to help you.

Tables 1 to 3 provide an example of mapping using the information in the case and general knowledge about the various countries. When data is not available, a '--' is used; when an element is implied or can be guessed, a '?' follows.

	Pierre	Simone	Sales & Marketing teams	Marco	Janne	Lena
Generation Parent	40+? yes	60+? --	Diverse	30+? --	30+? yes	-- --
Profession	Sales & marketing head	CEO	Diverse	Sales	Sales	Sales
Gender/sexuality	Heterosexual male	Heterosexual female	--	Heterosexual male	Heterosexual male	--
National culture of origin	France	Netherlands	Diverse	Argentina	Finland	Sweden
Company of origin/years in the company	12 years in Pant	25 years in A'Dam	Pant & A'Dam	4 years in PaDam	Few years in PaDam	Few years in PaDam
International experiences	France, Senegal, 2 years, Sweden, 2 years	Netherlands + ?	Nordic countries, Sweden, South Europe, South America	Argentina + Sweden 4 years	Finland, France, Sweden 2 years	Sweden, +?
Languages spoken	French, English, Swedish +?	Dutch, English, +?	various	Spanish, English, Swedish +?	Finnish, English, French? Swedish? +?	Swedish, English, +?
Cultural sensitivity	Some, knows Swedish, values cultural diversity	Unclear, maybe low	--	--	--	--

Table 1. Mapping actors' profiles.

	Pierre	Simone	Sales & Marketing teams	Marco	Janne	Lena
Hierarchical relationship with others	Low (empty the dishwasher)	High?	Diverse and probably low (Sarah's views)	-- Knows both high and low logics	-- Knows both high and low logics	-- Knows a low logic
Decision making	Consultative	Non consultative	Consultative (Sarah's views)	-- Knows both consultative and directive	-- Knows both consultative and directive	-- Knows consultative
Preferred mode of work	--	Individuals?	Group work (Sarah's and Malin's views)	-- Knows group-work logics	-- Knows group-work logics	-- Knows group-work logics
Incentives	Intrinsic	Extrinsic (money)	--	--	--	--
Reward	Individual	Individual	Collective according to Malin and Sarah	-- Knows collective reward system	-- Knows collective reward system	-- Knows collective reward system
Communication style	Indirect?	Direct	--	--	--	--
Orientation	People's well-being. Group harmony	Performance. Pragmatism	--	--	--	--

Table 2. Mapping actors' views on management

	France	Pant	Nether-lands	A'Dam	PaDam	Sweden
Hierarchical relationships	Likely high	Likely to be high	Low	Not low	Not low	Likely low
Decision making	Likely directive	Hierarchical, so maybe directive	Likely consultative	--	--	Likely consultative
Reward	Likely individual	Collegiality, so maybe collective?	Likely individual	--	--	Likely individual
Leadership preferences	Likely directive	Likely directive	Likely empowering	--	--	Likely empowering
Preferred mode of work	Likely individualist	Collegiality, so maybe collective?	Likely individualist	Not team work	Not team work, Likely individualist	Likely individualist
Orientation	Likely people	People (family metaphor)	Likely performance	Performance	Performance?	Likely people

Table 3. Mapping of organizational and country profiles on management

Tables 1 to 3 indicate many similarities and differences among the actors and the environments. In the next table, bridging centres on the elements and persons core to the challenge faced by Pierre.

1.2 In this case, Pierre is the person facing the challenge. Use the differences identified in mapping and select key issues that you will address in “bridging”. Consider Pierre’s point of view and how others think about the same topic (de-centring), and then try to re-centre Pierre’s point of view. What ideas emerge? Use the tables to help you.

	Original position	De-centring	Re-centring	Emerging ideas
Reward	Individual should be rewarded	Teams are to be rewarded because this was a team effort	Individuals’ performance is also contingent on the team they are a member of, so both are to be rewarded	Reward the team and ask the team to reward outstanding individuals Reward individuals and ask them to acknowledge or reward the team
Orientation	People’s well-being	Performance is primordial in a corporate context	Performance is unlikely to be sustainable if employees do not feel well	Develop organizational processes that link organizational performance to employees’ well-being
What to prioritize	Group harmony, group spirit	Groups are ultimately made of individuals, therefore, individuals should be prioritized	Individuals who are part of a thriving group (high group spirit) will be valorized	Develop organizational processes that value the group and individuals in the group Develop group processes that value individual and group contributions
Decision making	Consultative. Respect and listening to employees’ preferences and views is key	The role of a boss is foremost to reach a decision, to show leadership. Effectiveness is key	Decisions based on alignment (consensus) are more likely to be implemented and thus reach higher effectiveness	Acknowledge employees’ contributions in decisions that are made but present decisions as one’s own.

Table 4. Pierre’s possible bridging in regard to four key elements where he stands in contrast with the team, the organization, or his boss Simone

1.3 By now you are most probably already seeing synergies between the actors in the case. Work on possible solutions that would satisfy each person and respect their points of view and preferences.

Assuring participation	What is at stake? For whom?	Building on ideas and possible solutions
<p>Informal conversations seem to have been a valid way to collect ideas and preference from the group.</p> <p>Need to ask several group members so that not just one person's opinion is considered valid for the entire group</p> <p>PaDam corporate values and communication are probably available and should be consulted</p> <p>Conversation with Simone made her position clear</p>	<p>Pierre's evaluation by Simone could be bad if she believes he is not rewarding individuals</p> <p>Loss of motivation by individuals performing outstandingly</p> <p>Loss of team spirit</p> <p>Loss of team performance</p> <p>Loss of self-esteem by Pierre if he does not follow what he believes is right</p> <p>Simone may be trying to influence Pierre's leadership style so that it becomes more like hers, so that she is not "alone" against the local employees</p>	<p>Instead of a dinner a high tea in the organization's facilities can be done (much cheaper and convivial) so that it can be financed from the department budget. If not allowed by Simone, Pierre can finance it privately (will bring high esteem from the team following "Swedish norms")</p> <p>Praise the group with the high tea moment and valorize individuals in the talk and their embeddedness in the team</p> <p>Use the common reference to PaDam to frame the praise, so that it is in line with the three employees' experiences and expected positioning by the hierarchy (Simone). Refer for example to corporate values. This way the positioning is encompassing everyone (the team, Pierre and Simone)</p> <p>Avoid financial reward and choose instead valorization of employees' well-being (alignment to the common "Swedish" norm of the group) with for example a voucher (thereby valorization of the individual). It could be an activity linked to the private sphere (but not family nor kids nor be linked to being heterosexual)</p> <p>Write a specific report on outstanding behaviour of the three persons to help in their promotion within the organization</p> <p>Ask for feedback from the three employees about how they experienced this valorization</p> <p>Ask for feedback from group members about their experience of the high tea</p>

Table 5. Integrating and solving the challenge of rewarding the three outstanding individuals

2 Further reading for the lecturer

Barmeyer, C. & Davoine, E. (2011). "The intercultural challenges in the transfer of codes of conduct from the US to Europe". In: Primecz, H., Romani L. & Sackmann, S. (Eds), *Cross-cultural management practice*. In: *Culture and Negotiated Meanings*, 53–63. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

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