

The assignment will be due on **Friday, February 21st by 11.59pm CT** on Blackboard. Please upload your file to Blackboard as a **.pdf** or as a **.doc** or **.docx** file so that our graders can open your file. No late work will be accepted, and files not submitted properly (Google Doc, Pages, screenshots, etc.) will automatically receive a failing grade. We also will automatically fail any file that is a OneDrive, SharePoint, Google Drive, or similar link. Students must upload the actual file.

The Assignment:

Scenario:

You have been hired as an external consultant for Reynolds Walker (RW), a mid-size retailer with its corporate office in Dallas, TX. It recently acquired Bara-Mishima, a company in Yokohama, Japan. RW kept several employees from the Yokohama team and moved them to their corporate headquarters in Dallas. Everyone has been working together for four months, and management notices the Japanese employees are uncomfortable with expressing disagreement. What can the management of RW do to make all employees comfortable with speaking up? **All employees speak English, so a language barrier is not a problem.**

For example, after a meeting to decide strategies for marketing a new line of affordable health and wellness products to the 18-35 age group in East Asia, a manager noticed that the Japanese employees didn't feel comfortable disagreeing with the manager or providing feedback. Here is an excerpt of the meeting transcript between Sara, the manager, Akira, a former Bara-Mishima employee, and Sam, a longtime US employee:

Sara: I'm thinking that the best social media strategy for this stage is to utilize X, Instagram, and TikTok. What does everyone else think? Can we think of any negatives?

[No one says anything.]

Sara: Akira? What are your thoughts?

Akira: I am very interested in the possibilities of focusing on these platforms instead of LINE and WeChat

Sam: I think that it might be useful to consider something else.

Sara was surprised when she heard from another employee that Akira was unhappy with the final decision. She didn't understand why he didn't feel comfortable bringing it up in the meeting. When she tried to confront Akira about the miscommunication, he felt extremely uncomfortable.

To avoid any future miscommunication and create an environment where everyone feels comfortable, the management of RW has hired you as a consultant to help them figure out what potential cultural barriers might prevent all the employees from collaborating successfully. Specifically, the RW management team has asked you to help them

understand the disconnect at their next meeting, so that U.S employees and Japanese employees can move forward. You have scheduled a meeting with the upper management of RW to present your findings and suggestions.

Some questions to consider when making recommendations:

- What are the feedback styles (confrontational vs. avoiding confrontation) in these various cultures?
- For future meetings, what type of communication solutions should upper-level management use for employees of different cultures that have different approaches to feedback and chain of command?
- How does RW ensure strong relational ties between their Japanese and U.S employees while addressing these miscommunications?
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Task: Compose a **one-page, single-spaced memo** with 1" margins that suggests **two** practices RW can use to address their communication problem. Your recommendations should be heavily researched (see "Research" below) and presented in **paragraph form**. Make sure to communicate *how* your recommendations address WH's problems.

Note: you will need to cite **4 different sources in APA** on your references page. Your references page will not count towards the 1-page requirement. When citing sources, use parenthetical citations (see *Publication Manual of APA* 6.11-21), not footnotes. The readings cited below are all in APA format but remove the hyperlinks/URL when you cite.

Readings that will help you form your recommendations:

- We strongly recommend reading Erin Meyer's *The Culture Map* (2014) pgs. 195-218. (You can access this text through our university library at <https://libraries.uark.edu/>).

Note: Sources with an asterisk (*) only recommend specific sections/chapters of the text. The citations will indicate which portion we suggest.

Dai, X., & Chen, G.-M. (2022). *Conflict Management and Intercultural Communication: The Art of Intercultural Harmony* (Second edition). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003252955>

Gavin, M. (2019). 6 Tips for managing global and international teams. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/how-to-manage-global-teamsEBC/1365265/bookReader?accountid=8361&ppg=20>

Gelfand, M., Gordon, S., Li, C., Choi, V., & Prokopowicz, P. (2021, September 17). *One reason mergers fail: The two cultures aren't compatible*. Harvard Business Review.

<https://hbr.org/2018/10/one-reason-mergers-fail-the-two-cultures-arent-compatible>

Kwan, L. (2019). The collaboration blind spot. *Harvard Business Review*.
<https://hbr.org/2019/03/the-collaboration-blind-spot>

McIvor, M. (2022, July 22). How to give negative feedback in high-context cultures (like Japan). *Globis Insights*. <https://globisinsights.com/career-skills/communication/how-to-give-negative-feedback/>

Meyer, E. (2017). Being the boss in Brussels, Boston, and Beijing: If you want to succeed, you'll need to adapt. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2017/07/being-the-boss-in-brussels-boston-and-beijing>

*Meyer, E. (2014). The Needle, Not the Knife. In *The culture map: Breaking through the invisible boundaries of global business* (1st ed., pp.195-218). PublicAffairs.
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uark-ebooks/detail.action?pq-origsite=primo&docID=1634787>
Please note pgs. 61-88 of this book are also helpful

Potrel, V. (2022, December 1). Four tips for effectively managing multicultural teams. *Forbes*.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2022/12/01/four-tips-for-effectively-managing-multicultural-teams/?sh=444f52055821>

Soontornchaiya, P., & Charoensukmongkol, P. (2024a). Interaction effect of management communication and workplace formalization on shared goals and commitment of employees during post-merger and Acquisition Integration. *International Journal of Business Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884241235661>

Stahl, A. (2021, December 21). 3 benefits of diversity in the workplace. *Forbes*.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashleystahl/2021/12/17/3-benefits-of-diversity-in-the-workplace/?sh=7d9e486222ed>

Yamada, H. (2023). *Different games, different rules: why Americans and Japanese misunderstand each other*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780195094886.001.0001>

Zagelmeyer, S., Sinkovics, R. R., Sinkovics, N., & Kusstatscher, V. (2016). Exploring the link between management communication and emotions in mergers and acquisitions. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences / Revue Canadienne Des Sciences de l'Administration*, 35(1), 93–106. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cjas.1382>