Abstract: Organizations today, operate mostly in an international or global environment. They need to address the issues of diverse cultures and communicate effectively to all levels of employees to integrate their efforts towards achievement of the aims of the company and also fulfill the expectations of the employees. This requires the commitment and efforts of all members of organization, through a well-designed and orchestrated strategy. This process can be dangerous and illusory if not done effectively, because of the diversity of the work force and cultural differences which make a communication ineffective. The article deals with the problems, perspectives and organizational challenges of doing this. Organizations deal with the situation differently, but the ultimate objective is one of integrating the efforts of culturally divergent people towards the organizational goal. This paper will examine the present strategies of organizations and the learning thereof for futuristic planning and effective implementation. The objective of this paper is to find out ways and means of overcoming the illusion and direct the policy frame work towards the achievement of the stated goals of organizations.

Key words: Cultural Diversity And Employer Expectations, Employee Commitment And Efforts, Communication Effectiveness In The Orchestrated Strategy, How Organizations Overcome The Illusory Effects Of Organizational Strategy And Plans To Combat Cultural Diversity

I. INTRODUCTION

The business environment of the 21st century is expanding to include people from cultures and countries around the world. It takes special skills to communicate across these many cultures. Your courteous and respectful attitude help establish a good foundation for effective communication. People respond to courtesy and feel comfortable when they know they have your respect. This helps them to be open and willing to ask questions when they don't understand something. By making people feel comfortable, you help them to be better listeners. Avoid words that require a dictionary when communicating cross-culturally. Fill your communication with words that everyone understands. The growing presence of workers from different races and cultures since the 1980s has meant dramatic changes for the global workplace. To head off conflicts, coworkers must take those differences into account when communicating with each other. Employers have also responded by changing their own practices, such as moving away from cultural- or religious-based time off. However, major challenges remain, particularly for businesses that fail to take on the challenge of addressing cultural diversity.

Figure 1: Cultural differences are not illusion

Figure 2: Although we’re all different, we share many similarities.

As global workplaces grow more diverse, employers and coworkers must also learn to communicate differently than in the past. For example, employers may wish to rethink the scheduling of office parties and other food-related celebrations during Ramadan, one of the Islamic calendar’s holiest months. Failure to consider these issues may put employees in counterproductive or embarrassing situations. Foreign-born workers who speak poor English pose major challenges. This inability to communicate has lethal implications where a grasp of safety standards is vital, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Development noted in a position paper. As an example, the board cited the growing number of Hispanics working in local construction. On-site training remained available to improve language barriers and safety conditions, yet many employers were unwilling to participate. The board questioned how such attitudes persisted, given the high costs associated with work-related deaths and injuries.

Objectives and Research Methodology

The research objectives are pretty clear from the above paragraphs. But it is imperative to enlist the main objectives so as to keep the focus on the research to arrive at the right conclusions. The cultural diversity issues for companies operating in an international business environment are pretty obvious, but the present research questions is, how the companies, through their orchestrated strategies meet the challenges because the mirage like issues are slippery and progress is no tional. With this in mind the following research objectives have been identified for this paper.

- Review of Impact of the business environment on cultural diversity issue
- An overview appraisal of present organizational efforts to counter the impact
- Understand where the organizations fall short of efforts
- A critical examination of strategies directed towards such deficiencies.
- Recommendations for a futuristic focus.
The Questionnaire method of doing a survey was considered. But this has the potential to fall short of expectations, since monitoring the questionnaire for correct and complete feedback from senior management professionals, was found to be tedious for the limited purpose of the present research and its objectives. In the meanwhile, during the process of literature review, it was found through a careful study of the various published documents that adequate data exist for the purpose of meeting the objectives of this research study. What it required was a detailed collation of all the data to arrive at meaningful conclusions. Data analysis was done thoroughly and the researcher was able to make the Conclusions as indicated at the end of this research study.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As corporate companies grow more diverse, employers have responded by revising their internal policies. For example, the many Christmas and team-building celebrations that mark the year's end are now labeled holiday parties, according to University of Phoenix business professor Reginald B. Gardner. Other notable trends have seen a shift from cultural and religious-based vacation days. Instead, these occasions are increasingly called personal days that employees can use as they wish. Such gestures show a company's respect for its workers' various lifestyles and cultures. Ignoring employers' cultural needs often yields costly legal consequences. In 2000, Coca-Cola paid $192 million to settle its African-American employees' pay and promotion discrimination claims. The amount represented the largest payout in a corporate racial discrimination case, according to the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. As part of the settlement, a task force was named to monitor the soft drink maker's willingness to address the problems. By December 2006, the task force ended, stating that the company had made significant progress.

The art of business communication has evolved as globalization has set disparate businesses cultures of the world on a collision course. Emerging economies have begun to integrate the business cultures of traditional powerhouse nations into their businesses, and they have been leaving traces of their own culture wherever they go. The impact of cultural diversity on business communication has widespread implications—from corporate boardrooms to employee break-rooms—and small business owners can benefit from gaining an understanding of the eccentricities of all cultures to which they are exposed. According to lecturer and author Stephen Dahl, languages are highly influenced by the unique world views of their indigenous cultures. This means words and expressions themselves can have vastly different meanings and implications for people from different backgrounds. Employees in today's workplaces must be careful to ensure that their intended messages are understood clearly as they communicate with culturally diverse co-workers. Taboo topics of conversation, biases in spiritual, political or social issues and the nuances of life experience differ between cultures, making it a challenge for co-workers to find a common ground when communicating. Conflict management styles vary dramatically by culture as well, creating possible tensions. Imagine an employee from the Netherlands, where people see arguments as a constructive and necessary part of communication, trying to solve a problem with an employee from Japan, where public disagreement is deeply offensive, and you'll begin to grasp the types of problems that can arise due to cultural differences.

Slow down when you speak. Allow those who don't have the same native language as you the time to interpret what you are saying. Speak clearly and concisely. Make eye contact and enunciate plainly. Avoid using ambiguous or dual-meaning words. One of the problems non-native-English-speaking cultures have with the English language is misunderstanding the many meanings one word can have. Keep it simple. Think in terms of your audience, and speak to their understanding. Don't make long speeches that lose your group. Allow listeners the time to soak in what you have said. Pay attention to your audience and be an active speaker and listener. You can ascertain a group's grasp of your communication by their response to your words. Maintain respect and courtesy for people who come from different cultures. When you respect the people you communicate with, this helps reduce the stress they feel when trying to understand what you are saying. Doing basic research on specific ways to interact with the cultures you will be coming into contact with is a great way to show your multi-cultural group that you respect them.

Smile and be open. Your body language communicates your acceptance -- or non-acceptance -- and respect, as it helps put listeners at ease. Your body language conveys unspoken communication. Avoid large gestures with your hands, as this can be intimidating to people who might misunderstand your meaning. Keeping your arms crossed often makes people think you are not open to what they have to say. Avoid slang. Slang words are unique to individual cultures and not always interpreted correctly. To ensure effective cross-cultural communication, don't use slang words others might not know. Shun humor. What is funny in one culture might not be in another. Humor might be misunderstood and interpreted in a bad light. While humor is a good icebreaker, it can backfire when the cross-cultural group misses humor's meaning. When in doubt, avoid using humor when communicating with people from many cultures.

Adopt a formal communication approach until you develop a rapport with your group. A casual, informal approach can be upsetting to people from different cultures, especially when you have just met them. Use a respectful and formal mode of speech until you have developed a relationship with your cross-cultural group. In a cross-cultural situation, double negatives are easily misunderstood. Keep questions and answers simple so everyone understands. Ask for feedback. Request members of the cross-cultural group to speak up and provide interaction or ask
questions. When you permit two-way communication, this helps prevent misunderstandings and clears up questions people might have. Summarize what you have said. Don’t assume that just because you said it everyone understands. Repeat what you have said in a different way, summarize it and allow people the time to grasp what you have said. By summarizing what you have said, you can verify that everyone is on the same page.

In the past, it may have been commonplace for entrepreneurs and corporate managers to develop their own unique communication style for dealing with customers, business partners and suppliers. Today, however, managers must take the time to study the cultural eccentricities of their business counterparts before attempting to make contact with people in other countries or from other subcultures. The Texas oil tycoon, for example, has to understand that grabbing his Chinese partner’s hand in a firm handshake is not a good idea but that a slight bow and smile are the appropriate form of greeting. Verbal communication and body language are more important than ever in international business dealings because innocent hand gestures, mannerisms, or even posture can cause a rift between culturally diverse business partners. The diversity of culturally distinct managers has been melding slowly as globalization and Westernization give managers extensive experience in different cultures.

A fundamental shift in the form of written business communications is taking place to accommodate foreign speakers. University business-communication courses now stress simplicity and readability of correspondence over wordiness and technical prowess in writing. Being able to get your message across to all readers has become more important than showcasing a mastery of legalese or the complex language of business research. The growing presence of workers from different races and cultures since the 1980s has meant dramatic changes for the American workplace. To head off conflicts, coworkers must take those differences into account when communicating with each other. Employers have also responded by changing their own practices, such as moving away from cultural- or religious-based time off. However, major challenges remain, particularly for businesses that fail to take on the challenge of addressing cultural diversity.

However the work place communications have to be evolved over a period of time to suit the business requirements. As pointed out in the caption a perfectly designed and well intended strategy may burst! The purpose of this article is to highlight the importance of considering the appropriate form of greeting. Verbal communication and body language are more important than ever in international business dealings because innocent hand gestures, mannerisms, or even posture can cause a rift between culturally diverse business partners.

As global workplaces grow more diverse, employers and coworkers must also learn to communicate differently than in the past. This principle goes beyond race and sex to religions like Islam, which is America's fastest-growing faith, "Diversity Inc." reported in August 2009. For example, employers may wish to rethink the scheduling of office parties and other food-related celebrations during Ramadan, one of the Islamic calendar's holiest months. Failure to consider these issues may put employees in counterproductive or embarrassing situations.

As corporate America grows more diverse, employers have reacted by revising their internal policies. For example, the many Christmas and team-building celebrations that mark the year’s end are now labeled holiday parties, according to University of Phoenix business professor Reginald B. Gardner. Other notable trends have seen a shift from cultural and religious-based vacation days. Instead, these occasions are increasingly called personal days that employees can use as they wish. Such gestures show a company's respect for its workers’ various lifestyles and cultures. Ignoring employers' cultural needs often yields costly legal consequences. In 2000, Coca-Cola paid $192 million to
settle its African-American employees’ pay and promotion discrimination claims. The amount represented the largest payout in a corporate racial discrimination case, according to the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. As part of the settlement, a task force was named to monitor the soft drink maker’s willingness to address the problems. By December 2006, the task force ended, stating that the company had made significant progress.

During the advent of civil rights and affirmative action in the 1960s and 1970s, the term diversity usually meant employee differences based on race, sex, color, national origin and religion. Over the course of 40 to 50 years, additional employee characteristics became part of the definition of diversity. Generational diversity, in particular, is a topic that refers to the mix of values, work styles, ages and skill sets that employees of four to five distinct generations bring to the work force. The generations are traditionalists, baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and members of the Millennials generation. Diversity in the workplace also includes workers with physical limitations or developmental disabilities and employees who represent various cultures and backgrounds. The demographics of the workplace make diversity a term with an ever-changing definition.

Communication for a diverse workforce requires understanding how diverse employee populations perceive business communication. Some employees believe constant memoranda and employee meetings are time wasters and, as such, might simply tune out both the message and the messenger. Other employees want to be informed of every company move, and if they believe transparency is missing from communication with employees, they begin to feel undervalued and unappreciated. Employee communication is critical to maintaining the employer-employee relationship. It’s difficult to modify the communication method in a workplace of several different communication preferences. Nevertheless, employers should consider preparing their business communication in a variety of formats to suit employee preferences. For example, give employees the option of attending a face-to-face meeting on the state of the company or signing up for a webinar broadcast of the company president’s message. Another option is to release the meeting transcript, complete with attendees’ questions and answers.

Likewise, employers who improve their communication styles and increase the media they use should also be flexible in receiving communication from employees. Some workers find one-on-one meetings more productive, while others are satisfied with a brief email exchange. Effective communication generally is defined as the method that clearly accurately conveys the intended message. Managing communication for a diverse workforce calls for knowledge of differences and flexibility in conveying and receiving information. Communication barriers lead to problems in a company attempting to create a diverse workplace. When a U.S. company hires employees of other cultures whose first language is not English, employees and managers may experience difficulties communicating with one another. This can lead to misunderstandings and a decrease in productivity. For example, if a manager gives instructions about completing a certain task to an employee who fails to fully comprehend the instructions, the employee may make mistakes if he tries to complete the task without receiving clarity. Sometimes it helps for companies to hire bilingual employees who can mediate and reduce language and communication barriers. Although workplace diversity benefits an organization as a whole, some employees and managers may not react positively to changes made. Employees who oppose workforce diversity usually reject new ideas and make work environments more difficult. If the company doesn’t handle opposition properly, workplace diversity initiatives may not provide the intended benefits to the company. To deal with opposition, companies should explain the reasons for diversity and what benefits changes in diversity bring to management and employees. Alleviating fears some people possess about workplace diversity may reduce much of the opposition.

Social integration at work can only be influenced to a small degree. The formation of cliques and exclusive social groups is a natural process that can be impossible to control at times. Because of this, companies can experience informal divisions in their staff, creating a situation where culturally diverse employees avoid exposure to each other during break times and after work. Although there is nothing fundamentally wrong with this scenario, it can hinder the effectiveness of sharing knowledge, skills and experience, thus curbing productivity growth and the effectiveness of teams. The Internet and modern technology have opened up new marketplaces that allow us to promote our businesses to new geographic locations and cultures. And given that it can now be as easy to work with people remotely as it is to work face-to-face, cross-cultural communication is increasingly the new norm. After all, if communication is electronic, it’s as easy to work with someone in another country as it is to work with someone in the next town. And why limit yourself to working with people within convenient driving distance when, just as conveniently, you can work with the most knowledgeable people in the entire world?

However, some learning the basics about culture and at least something about the language of communication in different countries is important. This is necessary even for the basic level of understanding required to engage in appropriate greetings and physical contact, which can be a tricky area inter-culturally. For instance, kissing a business associate is not considered an appropriate business practice in the U.S., but in Paris, one peck on each cheek is an acceptable greeting. And, the firm handshake that is widely accepted in the U.S. is not recognized in all other cultures.

While many companies now offer training in the different cultures where the company conducts business, it is important that employees communicating across cultures practice patience and work to increase their knowledge and understanding of these cultures. This requires the ability to see that a person’s own behaviors and reactions are oftentimes culturally driven and that while they may not match our own, they are culturally appropriate. If a leader or manager of a team that is working across cultures or incorporates individuals who speak different languages, practice different religions, or are members of a society that requires a new understanding, he or she needs to work to convey this. Consider any special needs the individuals on your team may have. For instance, they may observe different holidays, or even have different hours of operation. Be mindful of time zone differences and work to keep everyone involved aware and respectful of such differences. Generally speaking, patience, courtesy and a bit of curiosity go a long way. And, if
you are unsure of any differences that may exist, simply ask team members. Again, this may best be done in a one-on-one setting so that no one feels “put on the spot” or self-conscious, perhaps even embarrassed, about discussing their own needs or differences or needs.

Acceptance is essential. However, you need to maintain standards of respectable behavior. The following “rules of thumb” seem universal:

- Team members should contribute to and not hinder the team’s mission or harm the delivery to the team’s customer.
- Team members should not damage the cohesion of the team or prevent it from becoming more effective.
- Team members should not unnecessarily harm the interests of other team members.

Other factors (such as national law) are obviously important.

When dealing with people in a different culture, courtesy and goodwill can also go a long way in ensuring successful communication. Again, this should be insisted on. If your starting point in solving problems is to assume that communication has failed, you’ll find that many problems are quickly resolved.

When you communicate, keep in mind that even though English is considered the international language of business, it is a mistake to assume that every businessperson speaks good English. In fact, only about half of the 800 million people who speak English learned it as a first language. And, those who speak it as a second language are often more limited than native speakers. When you communicate cross-culturally, make particular efforts to keeping your communication clear, simple and unambiguous. And (sadly) avoid humor until you know that the person you’re communicating with “gets it” and isn’t offended by it. Humor is notoriously culture-specific: Many things that pass for humor in one culture can be seen as grossly offensive in another.

Finally, if language barriers present themselves, it may be in every one's best interest to employ a reliable, experienced translator. Because English is not the first language of many international businesspeople, their use of the language may be peppered with culture-specific or non-standard English phrases, which can hamper the communication process. Again, having a translator on hand (even if just during the initial phases of work) may be the best solution here. The translator can help everyone involved to recognize cultural and communication differences and ensure that all parties, regardless of geographic location and background, come together and stay together through successful project completion.

CONCLUSION

Cultural differences and linguistic barriers are here to stay. How the corporate companies and multinational business houses which have operations around the world in different host countries have to pay attention to various points discussed in the foregoing paragraphs. There is no “one size-fit all” strategy for companies which is the most dangerous illusion. Companies have to innovate continuously and tread the path carefully and measure each step. This was the main focus and it resulted in concluding and recommending the following.

As corporate companies come across diversity, employers have reacted by revising their internal and external policies. A notable shift from cultural and religious-based vacation days which are increasingly called personal holidays that employees can use as they wish. Such gestures show a company’s respect for its employee lifestyles and cultures. Ignoring employees cultural needs often result in costly legal consequences.

The art of business communication has evolved as a result of challenging needs of business communication across divergent cultures and employees. Today, however, managers must study the cultural eccentricities of their business counterparts before attempting to make contact with people in other countries or from other subcultures. Topics of conversation, differences in spiritual, political or social issues and the nuances of life experience are quite unique between cultures, making it a challenge for co-workers to find a common ground when communicating. Approach to Conflict management vary dramatically for different culture as well, creating possible opportunities to integrate the difference in cultures.

The art of listening before making any remarks has been illustrated in Figure 3. A few tips on how you can make your communication more efficient have been given. Other tools for improving cross-cultural communication are:

- Learn how different cultures best receive information. Some cultures don’t trust information that comes from a manager and would rather take direction from a shop foreman or team leader. Employees differ in whether or not they appreciate praise for their efforts in front of a group or in private.
- Prepare all of your employees with cultural awareness and diversity programs. Teach empathy and mutual respect. Also provide ongoing acculturation training to new employees so that they can truly understand your company’s overall culture: your goals and the behavior you expect.
- Assign mentors to employees so that integration is facilitated and employees have someone that understands them to turn to.
- Avoid using slang, common jargon or metaphors when you address employees of different cultures. These can make no sense at all to someone from a different culture.
- Use graphics whenever possible in explaining goals and processes to employees of different cultures.
- Ask for feedback but be prepared to use an intermediary if necessary.

In a dynamic international business environment, cultural diversity does exist due to the fact that employees come from different countries and cultures. What differences we observe today, will be resolved in the near future and business will be as usual; but in the intervening time new cultural ethos have started their advent and so the dynamic nature of the business environment particularly with respect to cultural challenge continues. His is where the Human resources department and corporate planners have to sit together and evolve a lasting game plan to meet the exigencies of the cultural context.
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