

“Brazil-U.S. Intersections” Cross-Cultural Project Management

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Agenda

- Quick Comparison: Brazil - USA
- Concepts
 - Culture
 - Global Collaboration
- Is there a “Sweet Spot” for cross-cultural project management?
- How do you compare project management between cultures?
- Challenging Questions
- Conclusions

Quick Comparison: Brazil - USA

| | Brazil | USA |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Population | 186 million | 300 million |
| Size | 3.3 M sq.miles | 5.98 M sq.miles |
| Economy: GDP | \$619.7 B | \$11.75 T |
| Per capita GDP | \$8,400 | \$40,100 |
| Language | Portuguese | English |
| Government | Democracy | Democracy |
| Trade Balance | \$44 B surplus | \$68 B deficit |

The Concept of Culture

- Culture may be defined as “the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, speech, action, and artifacts and depends upon man’s capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations.” -- Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary
- Culture is a complex concept because it may have many dimensions.
- Culture may transcend conscious awareness.
- Our understanding of culture influences our perception of cultural diversity.

The Concept of Global Collaboration

- Collaboration may be defined in this way, “to cooperate with an agency or instrumentality with which one is not immediately connected.”

-- Webster's Collegiate Dictionary

- Communication and competition foster global collaboration.
- Global collaboration drives many forms of partnership agreements.
- The over-arching process is globalization.
- The force of globalization pervades all things with positive and negative consequences.

Is there a “Sweet Spot” for cross-cultural project management?

- “The Sweet Spot” is in that zone of human interaction where development, the economy, the environment, history and politics are perceived to be in a positive alignment with prospects for profitable outcomes.
 - The juxtaposition of these key elements is dynamic.
- It is a delicate balance of key factors, for example:
 - A shared economic situation is perceived to be positive.
 - The interacting groups are strongly connected.
 - Each group has a complementary view of shared cultural diversity.
 - Each group is willing to share the experience and the potential for profit.
- If the cross-cultural business models match up, cross-cultural project management follows.

How do you compare project management between cultures?

- The process to make business deals
- Management structure and reporting
- The process to involve the project manager
- Formation of the project team
- Interaction of project team members
- Use of project management standards
- Ability to distinguish cultural differences

- What I observed in Brazil

Challenging Questions

- Can cross-cultural project management really work?
- How do you prepare to be a project manager when the project team has cross-cultural challenges?
- How many cultures are there? How can you find out?
- Can you truly understand another culture?
- How can you compensate for a lack of cultural awareness?
- How do you deal with dissension, escalation, success, or failure, in a cross-cultural project?
- Does cross-cultural apply to local, regional, national or international projects?
- What are Best Practices for cross-cultural projects?

Conclusions

- It is important for the professional project manager to understand the concepts of culture and global collaboration.
- The cultural context affects the business model, deal-making as well as project planning.
- Project planning processes are even more critical in cross-cultural projects.
- The ability to successfully lead cross-cultural projects or teams is a unique test of our professionalism, our perseverance and our performance as project managers.

Thank you!

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