



or after a team meeting you can solicit their input that may otherwise not be presented if they are averse to direct conflict or prefer to stay quiet to respect the formal or even informal hierarchy within a group.

Authority. Do you adopt a flat, egalitarian approach to leadership, or do you practise a top-down, hierarchical leadership style?

Typically, and representative of the Anglo culture, a leader in the US would encourage shared decision-making, actively seek contributions, and ultimately work towards consensus within a team. On the contrary, in the Arab culture, there is generally a hierarchical structure that emphasises differences in status. It is mostly expected that superiors will make decisions.

Does your team connect with your approach? For example, you may strive to empower people but recognise that not everyone seeks to be empowered. Some people prefer to follow a chain of command.

Consider how your team members demonstrate initiative or approach decision-making and whether this varies across the cultural groups you interact with. Is there a need to introduce decision-making guidelines or authority matrices to consider and create clarity for those with different styles?

Achievement: Cooperative versus Competitive. Do you prefer to achieve results collaboratively, or are you more competitive?

Western business is largely structured around competition, with a strong task-first orientation. Communication often serves the purpose of sharing information or updates and checking in on progress. Collaborative cultures, such as can be seen in Latin American cultures and the Arab world, value establishing and nurturing relationships before tackling the task at hand.

Do you allocate time for personal check-ins at the start of a meeting, or do you prefer to get down to business first and see if there's

time left? How might you need to adapt in order to increase your influence and ability to motivate teams, especially in this time of restricted travel when we are reduced to less-than-ideal communication channels?

Given that few of us are exact representations of our national cultures of origin, it is essential to dig below the surface to avoid the instinctive trap of stereotyping. By understanding your cultural preferences versus those of others you interact with, you can develop insights that will bridge previously obscure differences with those of other cultural backgrounds. **MPA**

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