FRANCE - CANADA

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NOT FOR SALE. PLEASE DISPOSE OF RESPONSIBLY.
Intercultural management
Managing an international team, leading a project abroad or being expatriated – all these situations are becoming more and more frequent in our careers. For French people working abroad, the biggest difficulties are in adapting to a different culture – its language, society and ways of doing business. Nowadays, French companies are realising the importance of this challenge as they become aware of the need to be prepared for the cultural differences they are likely to meet in other countries. In Canada, on the other hand, the situation is different because intercultural management has been part of business life for a long time and the country’s intercultural background is much more extensive than that of France. So, for our second edition, we have chosen to talk about intercultural management in France and Canada. In it you will read about the experiences and advice of professionals who can shed some light on the different methods of intercultural management practised in France and in Canada, the pioneer in this subject. I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.

CHRISTOPHE DELEBARRE
Co-Director of Intercountry

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An economic power

Canada is the second largest country in the world (after Russia). A huge country, with spectacular scenery, Canada is 18 times bigger than mainland France.

Life is good in Canada! The country ranks 4th in the world for quality of life so attracts a lot of people to live and work there.

Indeed, thanks to specific measures that were taken, Canada has survived the recession better than most countries and has one of the strongest growth rates.

In the years to come, the prospects of the Canadian economy, whose markets are very closely linked to those of the United States of America, remain superior to those of its principal partners in the OECD.

Just like “the American dream”, many entrepreneurs who come to try their luck in Canada are dreaming “the Canadian dream”.

This is true for many French companies who are driven by the idea of developing economic partnerships.

On average, Canadian subsidiaries of French companies have turnovers 8 times bigger than French exporters.

Major French companies have been established in Canada for some time. For example: Eurocopter, Alcatel-Lucent and Sanofi-Aventis.

Every year the country welcomes between 250,000 and 300,000 immigrants, two-thirds of whom arrive in Toronto, Ontario, the economic capital of the country.

3 principal markets

Canada has 3 principal markets:

- Quebec, which has a reputation for being welcoming to French products,
- Ontario, the country’s economic powerhouse and banker,
- Alberta and British Colombia, whose lifestyle is close to that of the West Coast of the USA.

Doing business in Canada

Canada has an entrepreneurial spirit similar to that found in the USA. Business relationships are direct and practical.

Rigorous in their approach, Canadians prefer the written to the oral. They are less emotional than the French and leave little to chance.

Getting-to-know-you meetings are very rare and foreign companies only have a few minutes to convince the client – hence the importance of “the pitch” and the presentation which tells the client what you can do for him.

Finally, as in France, networking is highly recommended to help you build up your business contacts.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2012 Economic Figures</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>France</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>1,297bn [Est. 2012]</td>
<td>2,059bn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP Growth Rate</td>
<td>2.5% [Est. 2012]</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>7% [January 2013]</td>
<td>10.8% [1stQ, 2013]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation Rate</td>
<td>0.8% [January 2013]</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
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Sources: UBIFRANCE, Insee, Banque de France
Can you tell us about your function within the Renault group?

I am the director of automobile trade shows for all Renault-Nissan makes on a worldwide scale. Since last April, I have been based in Japan, in Yokohama. I have also worked for many years in Spain and Turkey.

Are your teams multicultural?

Yes, I have one team of ten people in Japan and another in France, where I spend a third of my time.

How do you manage your teams on two different continents?

Working with a team located abroad leads to a “magnifying-glass effect.” One’s managerial qualities must be even more developed when the culture is not the same. One must be a better listener, more present and know how to obtain buy-in from teams of different cultures. Beyond a collective commitment, individual commitment is also very important. The Japanese only rarely give their personal opinion and will voluntarily follow the collective opinion. It is very rare to hear the word “no” in Japan. The group being more important than the individual, linguistic difficulty. Language can be very tricky. We have a natural tendency to pay more attention to the person who speaks the common language best (in our case, English). It’s a trap worth avoiding. We must not choose the path of least resistance. In the same manner, we who perfectly master another country’s language may not understand its culture and may be very marked by our culture of origin. Sometimes it’s better to use a language that is foreign for everyone because then all participants have to be attentive, reformulate and express themselves clearly. This obviously takes more time, but in the end we understand each other better.

What differences have you observed in the work habits of your two teams?

In our field, preparing auto shows, we usually begin with a brainstorming period which message...). This stage allows us to develop specifications for the agency or the designer. On the other hand, with a Japanese team, we come quickly to the concrete, to a drawing or a prototype... This nonetheless risks restraining the creativity. Incidentally, from a creative point of view, it’s sometimes rather amusing because we don’t have the same cultural references, except obviously for those that are international, American, but these are not necessarily the richest. When we work on visuals, perception will be different for French and Japanese people. Minerals, for example, will evoke something cold for French people whereas they take Japanese people to an idea of volcanoes, so something warm! There is a whole culture of makes and common references to develop without losing sight of the richness of each particular culture. As pertains to auto shows, for image reasons a stand for a make should be recognisable and have the same characteristics in every country. We are really dealing with global systems, but it is nonetheless imperative to leave each country room for expression, in order to be closer to the consumer. Are there also differences in terms of project management?

In France I have seen that we often begin by looking at the bad sides of an idea before being able to eventually appropriate it. We generally like taking off with a new idea, and this even if we haven’t taken the current one to full term. We love the blank page! In Japan, they prefer building on something that already exists and that has shown its merit, improving it little by little until it reaches perfection. However, the day there is a complete environmental change, it’s more difficult to start over with a blank page, with something new.

How do you succeed in making your two teams work together?

To be honest, the two approaches to work are different but complementary. There is a lot of interaction between the two teams, notably as regards best practices. We haven’t yet reached the stage of working together directly, but this will happen one day!

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www.nissan-global.com

Interpretation

COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATION...

Creating and sending messages seems simple. Intercultural communication depends on interpretation, non-verbal communication and using a common language. Isn’t it interesting to note the paradox that using a language that is not native to any of the speakers creates better communication? Lacking a common reference point, teams have to be more precise about what they are thinking, about asking questions and about being sure they are understood. It is also interesting to look at the points of reference and what they refer to. So, one idea can have different meanings and values in different cultures...This is primordial for marketing... and for understanding the importance ascribed to things and thus avoiding mistakes. Finally, we need to bear in mind how different cultures treat information. We have to react differently according to the importance they place on the past – should we root ourselves in what already exists or start from scratch?
Pierre Matuszewski
Intercultural Management: a Profitable Challenge!

The Chief Executive Officer of Société Générale Canada, Pierre Matuszewski, extols the virtues of pro-active intercultural management which aims at the integration and mutual understanding of his teams without looking for assimilation.

Could you tell us about what you do at Société Générale Canada?
Société Générale has been in Canada for 40 years, in Toronto, in Calgary, and in Montreal, where we have our headquarters. As CEO my job is similar to that of the conductor of an orchestra. I ensure that our corporate strategy is in line with that of the bank in France, I lead the management and I stand guarantor for the achievement of the bank’s objective – client satisfaction.

Do you have multicultural teams? Altogether in Canada we have 180 employees of whom at least a quarter are recent immigrants, having arrived in Canada in the last 5 years. These immigrants, who are often the younger generation from France, find Quebec welcoming and are now completely integrated. Without forgetting their origins, they have adopted Canada as their own and become locals. That’s what every culture. The role of a manager is to convey our corporate values, which may not be the same as those of the employees’ cultures. Respecting these collective corporate values will enable everyone to feel that their individual moral integrity will be respected and protected.

What have you done to ensure the success of this intercultural management?
We have regular training courses about business ethics and behaviour. Every year we send all our employees a copy of the “Employee Conduct Code” which they must sign and return. We take everyone’s well-being very seriously and have zero tolerance for misconduct. On the other hand, I have decided to support my employees’ personal community service by giving them time and money to invest in a local organization or charity. For example, I have a young employee in Toronto, who is originally from India, who spends a lot of time helping young immigrants. Every year we send all our employees a copy of the “Employee Conduct Code” which they must sign and return. We take everyone’s well-being very seriously and have zero tolerance for misconduct.

What have you noticed over the last few years?
The CEO of Société Générale Canada has always been a French expatriate in the past. I am the first Canadian CEO. There was a real desire to hand the reins over to a local. In the same way, for the last 18 months the American CEO has been an American. This has been a big change for the group and has allowed us to get rid of the feeling we often get in Canada that the French will always be at the top of the hierarchy. From now on everyone has the same possibility of promotion, whether they are Canadian born, immigrants or expatriates.

In conclusion, would you say that interculturalism is an advantage or a drawback for a company?
It’s a profitable challenge! It would be ignoring the evidence to say that it’s not a challenge or that it doesn’t change how a team works. That’s not true. On the other hand, a mix of ideas and cultures can only be a good thing for a global company.

Are there still intercultural differences in your teams?
Yes, of course. It is extremely important not to confuse integration and assimilation. To assimilate means to lose your identity. I believe that in Canada we encourage the integration of immigrants but never their assimilation. You can also see interculturalism at work in the way that we interact with our colleagues all over the world. It’s fascinating to see how differently people work! The French are quite pessimistic and always tend to see the glass as half empty whereas the Americans are always advocates of the “I can do” attitude. These are stereotypes, but there is some truth in them.

What problems have you encountered with intercultural communication?
When it comes to external communication I can talk to you about advertising. At Société Générale’s investment bank the official working language is English. Nonetheless, I’ve had to explain to the advertising department in France that in Quebec it is just not possible to advertise in English for a French bank that has its headquarters in Montreal. As for internal communications, I’ll just mention that different people find different subjects or situations sensitive, depending on their cultures. For all these Canadians of different origins, working together in a small space can sometimes make for tricky interpersonal relationships. In fact, it’s a reflex to blame it on cultural diversity. For example, an e-mail joke will not be understood in the same way by every culture. The role of a manager is to convey our corporate values, which may not be the same as those of the employees’ cultures. Respecting these collective corporate values will enable everyone to feel that their individual moral integrity will be respected and protected.

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What intercultural changes have you noticed over the last few years?
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Interpretation
INTEGRITY AND INTEGRATION – QUESTIONING IT AND UNDERSTANDING ITS MOTIVATIONS
Integration is the final step of the cultural shock that is felt by every immigrant or expatriate. After the honeymoon, where everything in the new country is perfect, and the hell, where, on the contrary, everything is appalling, come the adjustment period, where we work on ourselves in order to get to step 4 – integration.
Integration requires us to take stock of our strengths, our possible weaknesses, our values, of what we can bring to our adopted country or company, of what we are ready to let go of and of what we can offer. It is only after thinking about this that we can progress our expatriation project, complete it successfully, and work with diversity.
You have to know yourself well. Canada is the country for diversity and variety but it is not easy to find your place there. The stereotype of the “superior” Frenchman is very much alive in some provinces and it is important to be able to show that you can integrate yourself and work intelligently.

VOCABULARY
- To ensure
- Assurer, garantir, veiller sur
- Advertising
- Publicité
- To convey
- Transmettre
- Wellbeing
- Bien-être

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Intercountry

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Intercountry
Christophe Gendron

The Skill of Intercultural Negotiation

Product Manager at Alstom, Christophe Gendron describes his involvement and expertise in intercultural relations.

Could you tell us about your role?

I am the Product Manager at Alstom for suburban trains deployed in Spain, Chile, Australia and Germany. As of April 2012, I have also been entrusted with responsibility for a 600-train proposal for South Africa. This project must be finished between now and the end of the year. It represents today the major focus of my activity.

What intercultural differences have you been able to identify?

Regarding the South Africa project on which I have been working for a few months now, I have indeed noticed certain cultural differences. In order to work on structuring projects with South Africa, one must have a shared common objective and a long-term view that guarantees the development of their country. South Africans are more pragmatic than the French, who are themselves more theoretical. They are also more flexible in the application of rules and procedures. For example, South Africans are not so concerned about the deadlines.

One must take the time to speak with one’s counterparts and get to know them better before entering into a work relationship. It can be useful, for example, to have an interest in and knowledge of sports, like cricket or rugby.

Negotiation

In the last few years what intercultural changes or developments have you been able to identify?

In terms of management, the fact of being an experienced negotiator and a negotiator who is open to different ideas.

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Interpretation

NEGOTIATING ACROSS CULTURES – MANAGER AND COACH

Listening, learning and understanding how other people “work” beyond stereotypes and widely held beliefs...these are the keys to successful intercultural negotiation. It is what will make all the difference between an expert who is an experienced negotiator and a negotiator who is open to different ideas.

Taking into account the differences and expectations of others, even, perhaps above all, when we find them surprising, enlarges the field of possibilities and thus of opportunities.

Curiosity and an openness of spirit leave room for a constructive dialogue which can lead to a better result than applying a single methodology.

VOCABULARY

- An invitation to tender
- Un appel d’offre
- Donner suite à
- To train
- Former
- To neglect

Negotiation

The relationship with others, is fundamental to a business relationship in South Africa. One must take the time to speak with one’s counterparts and get to know them better before entering into a work relationship. It can be useful, for example, to have an interest in and knowledge of sports, like cricket or rugby.

South Africa is often called the “rainbow nation” in reference to the diversity of its population. The invitation to tender on which I’m working struck me. Their evaluation criteria not only covered the number of people who were going to be involved in realizing the project, but also included criteria such as their skin colour [white or black], age [young or old] and even gender [man or woman]. These criteria arise from the politics of “Black Economic Empowerment” initiated in South Africa in the aftermath of Apartheid. BEE refers to the affirmative action programs implemented in 2000 to advantage the black majority, long undereducated and excluded from the professions.

To give you an example of interculturalism, let me tell you about a conversation I had with an English partner who was based in Norway, at the end of an air traffic control project for NATO. As project leader I amazed him that whenever he asked one of his Norwegian colleagues to execute a task it was done straight away and in the simplest manner possible. On the other hand, a French colleague rarely responded to the request unless he was formally required to do so. Then, he did his work professionally and within the deadline but he would never go directly towards the expected outcome. In fact, a Frenchman will carry out various investigations around the request, perhaps simply because he is curious, and will zig-zag his way to the final objective. For a Norwegian or a German, it’s always straight to the point! My partner thus felt that we wasted time investigating other solutions even though we met our deadlines.

The next step is the establishment of active listening and open and respectful dialogue so that each person can speak freely of his/her experiences and feelings. Once this awareness is achieved, one must then favour team work, innovation and performance on the basis of these differences, all the while promoting the development of each. It’s a long process that requires a lot of effort and a lot of openness within the team and for which all the steps that we have already discussed are essential.

For a Norwegian or a German it’s always: straight to the point!
Another example is that business culture work is done and colleagues are present communication. For example, working hours of misunderstandings in cross-cultural problem you encounter, it is usually a result of culture and environment. Whatever have you experienced?

During your professional career you have been responsible for managing multicultural teams. What problems have you experienced?

As you know, integration is always a question of culture and environment. Whatever problem you encounter, it is usually a result of misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. For example, working hours are not important to me – so long as the work is done and colleagues are present for meetings, they can work at night if they prefer! Some people think this is too liberal. Another example is that business culture in India and Pakistan puts a huge amount of pressure on employees to perform well. Carried to the extreme, this pressure to perform has already caused problems within teams. Then, a Chinese colleague will find it difficult to talk about personal matters so it is more difficult to develop a relationship with them. On the other hand, investing in immigration and integration is more interesting. It is critical to explain to expatriates how a country works. In the United States, for example, there is a lot of ghettization. It is evident when you look at the high unemployment rate of the Spanish speaking population who don’t have the same access to education and work as people born in the States.

Have you ever been an expatriate? No, but a lot of our clients are based in.

What business are you in today? After selling my previous business, I bought some image recognition technology and we developed forensic tools that are used by the police to automate and speed up the processing of child pornography cases. I also reopened a dairy near Quebec, something we hadn’t had for 80 years! There is a strong demand for local organic produce so we decided to get into the market. It’s incredibly successful. In our first year of business we were already turning over what we had predicted for year 3, and by year 3 our turnover was at the level predicted for year 5.

Interpretation

Understanding How People Work and Building on the Strengths of the Individual

Everyone acts according to their own standards, which vary according to their country and their values. So, whilst working late is a proof of motivation for some people, for others it shows a lack of organization. Talking about your private life is difficult for those who believe in separating professional and private life but for others, this reserve will make it very difficult to create a relationship. How can we honour all these values, understand the different attitudes and build something solid whilst respecting them? This is the art of the intercultural manager, who prioritises communication and training to encourage integration. Understanding the different terms of reference in the team is the key to good multicultural performance. The possibilities for change based on the team’s experiences are huge.
Emmanuel Parisot

Interculturalism - One of the Consequences of Globalization

After 22 years of private and professional life spent in the four corners of the Earth, Emmanuel Parisot no longer has problems with different cultures, only new experiences.

Which countries have you lived in? It’s a long list! For example, the USA, South Africa, Brazil, Germany, the Canary Islands, Tunisia, Canada, Malta, China, the Balearics.

What cultural differences did you notice when you were expatriated to these different countries? There are as many differences as there are countries... Firstly, it is essential to understand that cultural differences are the result of education, and not its cause. They are entirely linked to the education that each society gives to its children. For example, French education is quite generalist and based on the idea of a “good average”. That is to say, we try to ensure all children have a fairly good general education. On the other hand, American education has a more “elitist” approach, in trying to ensure that each society gives to its children. For example, French education is quite generalist and based on the idea of a “good average”. That is to say, we try to ensure all children have a fairly good general education. On the other hand, American education has a more “elitist” approach, in trying to ensure that each child is capable of mastering his or her education to the highest possible level. In France, learning takes place in a setting that is more structured and formal, whereas in America, learning takes place in a more informal and relaxed setting. This difference in educational approach is reflected in the way that education is perceived by the children themselves. In France, children are expected to work hard and achieve high grades, whereas in America, children are encouraged to be creative and think outside the box.

Do you have any intercultural stories you could tell us?

Yes, of course. One day, I was giving a talk in Tunisia in 4 different languages simultaneously. At the end of the talk, a little boy stopped me and said, “Are you poor too?” Astonished, I asked him why he thought I was poor and he replied, “Because you speak 4 languages.” In Arab culture, if you need to speak foreign languages it is because you need to work and therefore, obviously, are poor. In western culture it means that you are rich because you are better educated than most people who only speak one foreign language.

The most significant strength of a multicultural team?

Their multicultural skills. However, to use all the intercultural skills of your team to their best advantage, there is only one solution: optimization. No one can be a rock-star and an accountant at the same time! Let me explain... In order to manage a team that is so culturally diverse, the only solution is to optimize the use of their different cultural, educational and social skills according to the targets of each Business Unit in a way that gets results as quickly as possible and that best suits market demand. In other words, having the power to pick and choose amongst the advantages offered by each nationality is the way to optimize the intercultural skills of a team. The object here is to get everyone to work together and not to point the finger at their differences. Be careful though, let me remind you that we are talking very generally here. Do you have any intercultural stories you could tell us?

We have, and we will have in the future, more and more different nationalities within teams. Today the question is how to adapt so that we can handle this intercultural management. I participated in a multicultural situation which demonstrated what might happen to business relations in the decades to come. I was in Madrid, at a business dinner, with colleagues from Spain, Italy and Germany. The waiter was surprised because he heard each of us speaking in our native language, which meant each of us replied to the others using a different language, but we had no problems understanding each other!

Interpretation

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION...

Education and social norms are the two key elements which determine a person’s values. What is important, even vital, for one, will be pointless for someone else. So an intercultural manager must adapt himself to each person, manage on a case by case basis. To find a solution that satisfies 22 people with 17 different nationalities is truly a “mission impossible”. Cultural understanding means being able to comprehend this, to accept it and to create a climate of mutual trust, transparent communication and teamwork which means objectives can be reached whilst respecting the individual. This is what we call recognising the strengths of the individual and putting them to use for the benefit of the team. Identifying and using local talents is the start of innovation and making the most of our potential.
Could you tell us about RDÉE?
The Réseau de Développement Économique et d’Emploiabilité (RDÉE - a network to help improve the employability and economic development of Francophone immigrants in Canada) is an organization for all the Francophone communities in Ontario or Canada as a whole. It is present in every province and territory through local RDÉEs which together make up the national network. Could you tell us what you both do for the RDÉE? Annie Dell – I am originally French but have been living in Canada since 1978. My function at RDÉE is to support the economic development of both the local French speaking population and French immigrants. Valérie Sniadoch – After spending many years in Europe and the United States, I have been living in Canada since 1978. My main area of work is in improving employability, where we have several different programmes aimed at helping newly arrived French speaking immigrants. What is your biggest intercultural challenge? The challenge today is the culture gap experienced by immigrants to Canada. Being an immigrant is not the same as being an expatriate and immigrants need to become 100% integrated. This is one of the reasons why non-profit-making organizations like RDÉE are being used by immigrants more and more. In Canada today it is difficult for immigrants to become integrated on a professional level. Unfortunately, we have noticed companies are unwilling to employ immigrants. It is important to emphasise this because this is not how the situation is represented in the media, whether it be in France or other countries. The lack of “Canadian Experience” can be an obstacle to the employment of an immigrant. By “Canadian Experience” we mean a degree from a Canadian university, professional experience in Canada, and/or that the company feels certain that their new employee will be able to get used to a different way of working. Immigration affects your whole life plan and when part of this plan doesn’t succeed, it is very difficult for the immigrant to accept it, to understand it, and to start another project. By our actions we are increasing awareness of the problem amongst Canadian companies and trying to show them that employing an immigrant can be advantageous because their natural resources and skills are highly diverse and not exclusively local. What is the Canadian government’s visa policy? The Canadian government favours economic immigration. Thus, a declaration of the mutual interests of the employer and the prospective immigrant has been established. Since 2010 we have tried to participate in this policy by taking part in events such as Destination Canada. As part of this we are also working with government services to make access to offers of skilled jobs easier. That said, our principal purpose is still to increase the number of French speaking immigrants in Ontario. What are your biggest success? The successful outcome of our intermediary activities between immigrants and companies. That is to say, the recruitment of immigrants in Canadian companies in jobs which reflect their qualifications. In 2012, 420 immigrants from French speaking countries were hired by Canadian companies. How do you see the future? We are confident because RDÉE is becoming more and more well-known by both immigrants and local companies. Our employees are highly skilled and passionate about their mission. Our team is made up of people from different cultures, which helps us to understand and to share our life experiences with the people we are supporting. The dialogue we have built with Canadian companies has led them to see us as trustworthy and reliable, so they are willing to listen to us and take risks. What we want now is to strengthen our initiatives for the integration and employment of immigrants, to offer them ever more opportunities of employment directly with companies or with recruitment agencies. In order to do this we are continually deepening those relationships of trust that we have established with our partners and with Canadian organizations that specialize in diversity. 

VOCABULARY
- Culture gap
- Ecart(s) interculturel(s)
- Non-profit-making organizations
- Organismes à but non lucratif
- To emphasise
- Souligner, insister sur
- More and more well-known
- De plus en plus connu

Interpretation
CANADIAN IMMIGRANTS – CHALLENGES IN MAKING THEMSELVES HEARD AND MARKETING THEMSELVES
Immigrants and expatriates know how much work integration is – identifying your strengths and weaknesses, “selling” your skills, letting go of beliefs, values or desires. It is also important to take into account the beliefs of their potential Canadian employers, sometimes reluctant to employ someone « different », someone who is not a Canadian. They will have to really become a part of local life, use their networks and community contacts, work twice as hard, and all that requires twice as much energy. Becoming integrated in Canada is not as easy as it looks, but all your efforts will be rewarded when you sign your first contract of employment.
Anaïs Durand
When Operational Marketing Goes Hand in Hand with Multicultural Teams

A French woman who has been living in Barcelona for 3 years, Anaïs Durand is the Chief Marketing Officer at Pronovias. As Manager of Diversity, she is certain of the added value of a multicultural team and is sharing her insights with us.

Could you tell us something about your professional career?
I studied Operational and International Marketing. I began my career with the Richemont Group, at Lancel and then Alfred Dunhill, in the export department. Then I went to Barcelona where I worked for three years as Head of Marketing Operations Europe at the European headquarters of the Swarovski Group. Recently I seized the opportunity to join Pronovias as Chief Marketing Officer. As part of your experience have you had to manage multicultural teams? Absolutely - since the beginning of my career I have worked in international markets and in the management of multicultural teams. I was most impressed by my experience at Swarovski where I was Transverse Manager of an international team. There are ten different nationalities working at the European headquarters at Barcelona. It was just like that working at the European headquarters. There are ten different nationalities Manager of an international team. Swarovski where I was Transverse of multicultural teams. I was most.

Anaïs Durand

film “Lauberge espagnole”? I had to coordinate that team with the one at the global headquarters in Zurich, which is even more multicultural. In addition to the internal multicultural management, there was also a strong external element as I was working with “the locals” in 9 different markets – Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, Benelux, Austria and Greece.

What intercultural differences have you noticed?
Whatever the culture, there are differences in the way of working, of communicating and of managing conflicts. On a European scale, geographic proximity tends to smooth out these differences and make them less obvious but that doesn’t mean they aren’t there! The sense of time, for example, is completely different for a German and an Italian. A German will respect a deadline whatever happens. Being on-time is his top priority. An Italian on the other hand is not pressurised by time constraints and prefers to hand over a project that has been done well, even if it is late. Their priorities are not the same. Ways of communicating can also reveal intercultural differences. When you have a conference call, for example, a French person will always begin the discussion with a few minutes of small talk to break the ice (How are you? Did you have a good holiday? etc.) An English person or a German will immediately start to discuss business and once that is concluded will go on to some more friendly conversation. It sometimes causes a few misunderstandings! On a global scale the differences are bigger and more obvious. The effects are especially obvious in our marketing campaigns which are systematically adapted to local cultures. For example, women are always covered up in Middle-Eastern posters. Bearing in mind these differences, has managing an intercultural team been an advantage or a problem for you? Without any hesitation an advantage! Particularly so in a company that has to work in different markets and in mass communication. Their different experiences and cultures provide us with an extraordinary variety of creative ideas and approaches.

What intercultural changes and developments have you noticed over the last few years?
I would say intercultural awareness. Because of globalization, companies were already becoming more culturally aware but since the economic crisis it has increased. Companies which tended to be unadventurous and only work with local markets are having to be more open. This is the case in Spain where a lot of Spaniards are expatriating because it’s difficult to find a job. The large number of expatriations has also caused changes in language needs because Spaniards, who in the past rarely spoke a foreign language, now need to be better linguists in order to work abroad. The economic crisis and the new means of communications available nowadays have brought about a real breakdown in barriers between countries. From Barcelona I work with 4 different countries every day and travel a good 70% of the time.

How do you see your professional future? Intercultural! My next challenge is to manage a team of 20 people at Pronovias. In the years to come I hope to expand the team, and make it even more multicultural to maximize its creativity and humanity.

Companies which tended to be unadventurous and only work with local markets are having to be more open.

INTERPRETATION
Working together and putting cultural differences to work
One of the big surprises is discovering cultural differences, like the importance of time or the conventions dealing with communication. The difficulty lies in not interpreting the behaviour according to your own references but in identifying it and how it works, and understanding the challenges. How should you act with a team that prioritises deadlines over content, or vice versa? What can we bring to a team if we have different values or customs from the rest of its members? Seeing these things as additional strengths will be an asset for the whole group.

VOCABULARY
- To smooth out Lisse
- Intercultural awareness Ouverture interculturelle
- Foreign language Langue étrangère
- To work abroad Travailler à l'étranger
A Global Leader’s skills
How to manage “interculturally”

Nowadays a lot of managers are confronted with problems linked to their international roles. In charge of teams that are based on different continents, they work via cyberspace, manage colleagues from different countries or different corporate cultures, carry out projects across several countries, or regularly work abroad. These men and women are really orchestral conductors whose “value added” is not technical expertise but their amazing ability to adapt.

In 2011 the DDI (Development Dimensions International), a Canadian body which is specialised in developing leadership skills, began a study into the skills that are essential for a “leader” in 2013. Companies from more than 30 countries took part in the study. The results demonstrated the differences between countries. Some broad tendencies became apparent and 5 skills that responded to a universal need were identified.

1/ Vision – the global leader always wants to know more, to know why, what for and how. He wants to know more about himself and about others. He knows there are differences, real differences, but he recognises them and acts accordingly, he can put them to good use. He is open to new ideas, new thoughts, new behaviour. He can capitalise and mutualise. He learns and he shares.

2/ Curiosity and empathy - the global leader wants to understand his colleagues, to better performance, he will adapt his management style, his hierarchy or uncertainty avoidance, factors that can be obstacles to intercultural performance. On the other hand, if they are known, recognized, identified, measured and used, they are real assets which increase our chances of success. Think about the Anglo-Saxon phrase: “Think Global and Act Local”.

Once the global leader is conscious of his culture’s stereotypes, of the importance he ascribes to a particular skill, or diploma or anything else that he considers essential but which is not so considered by his foreign neighbours, then he will not only be able to put himself in someone else’s shoes, but will also be able to think about another way of working. If he knows how to adapt to other cultural values and preferences he will be able to identify the best way to manage and reward a team, for example. The American will be able to forget his preference for the individual and reward the whole Brazilian team for the work that has been done, rather than only rewarding the best salesman. If he recognizes only one person, it is likely that the team’s future results will be negatively impacted by this – the person who was rewarded will not want to repeat an experience that singled him out and none of the other members of the team will want to be in his position, so everyone will be more inclined perform less well.

The global leader will guide his colleagues to better performance, he will adapt his behaviour to support change and he will know how to get the message across in a way that is understood by his colleagues, even if it means changing the usual rules of the game or inventing a new language. All these differences in values, education and cultural preferences which are linked, for example, to time management, the importance of the hierarchy or uncertainty avoidance, are factors that can be obstacles to intercultural performance. On the other hand, if they are known, recognized, identified, measured and used, they are real assets which increase our chances of success. Think about the Anglo-Saxon phrase: “Think Global and Act Local”. The manager will identify the differences at stake; be aware of cultures and values; establish connections, adapt himself to local realities and be able to put the differences to good use. He is open to new ideas, new thoughts, new behaviour. He can capitalise and mutualise. He learns and he shares.

3/ Action – the global leader favours action, he takes risks, he pushes his teams and his companies.

Thuis intercultural management, which can be the source of discontent, a feel of injustice or misunderstanding and daily conflict can be transformed into opportunities for better performance, training and experience, for team work and success. In his book, “Solving tough problems”, Adam Kahane demonstrates our capacity to deal with conflict by developing an ideology that is about open-mindedness and debate about our differences. This positive debate about different points of view can help organisations to develop, grow and find new strengths... we can all do it.

CHRISTINE BAUDOT
A Teaching Aside

Why Keep Managers Informed about their Team’s Training Courses?

Imagine if the managers of your company were able to keep an eye on the progress of their team’s language skills training...

Managers often make decisions about English language training for a team member during the annual review meeting, but afterwards they are seldom informed about the progress being made despite the fact that this progress can greatly influence:
- the employability of the employee;
- how well the company performs internationally.

A little more than 3 years ago, some of our clients asked us to help them keep their managers informed about the completion of the language training they had authorised, as well as the benefits it brought.

After several experiments we instituted a system which has unanimous support; we send managers just 3 messages at 3 important moments of the training course:

When the training course is beginning

The manager is told:
- the level at which his team member is starting and his general skills,
- the date that the training course will begin,
- the training method.

At the mid-point of the training course

The manager is told the extent to which the team member is participating in his training course, with regard to both their attendance at meetings and how well prepared they are for the meetings.

At the end of the training course

Managers receive an end-of-training assessment file, which they can refer to during the next annual review meeting. We tell them clearly and simply:
- how hard the team member worked during his training course and the knowledge they have acquired,
- the level they have achieved at the end of the course.

Obviously, the manager will let his team member know that he is keeping an eye on the progress of their training course.

Even more than the usefulness of the manager being kept informed, we have noticed that the more the manager is involved in the training course, the more his team member is too; when this system is used, completion rates are between 96 and 99%.

THE INTERCOUNTRY TEAM

INTERCOUNTRY

We are a teaching systems company specializing in language and intercultural training.

The company was formed in 1992 after major work researching the structures of value systems. Our first assignment was helping French and British Eurotunnel teams to work together.

In 1998, Intercountry developed its first programmes “Language, Business & Culture™”, to meet the need for language training for the Auchan group’s managers, dispersed throughout the world. We thus devised our first mixed training system that combined two forms of learning: courses on CD-ROM developed by Intercountry and courses by telephone.

In 2001, Renault entrusted the training of 700 people to us. In order to be able to handle them whilst maintaining a high level of quality, we decided to develop our own LMS and our own online resources centre. We were thus one of the first providers to offer a combined training system that was fully integrated, combining e-learning and courses by telephone.

Since 2001, we have continually improved our training system in association with our clients.

Today, we are one of the five foremost providers, in terms of turnover, in the distance learning language training market.

What sets us apart is:
- Our capacity to help learners progress by one reference level for each 40 hours with a coach and 80 hours of e-learning, which gives an excellent ROI,
- An attendance rate of 93% over 100,000 hours of training carried out in 2012,
- A satisfaction rate of 95%,
- Our capacity to manage the entire training system for our clients from registration to evaluation and to enable them to monitor the progress of training sessions based on key indicators.

Key Figures
- 65 staff,
- € 2.2 m turnover in 2012,
- More than 100,000 hours of training given in 2012,
- People trained in 16 countries for two years.

Our Awards
- Deloitte

In 2010 and 2011, Intercountry took part in FAST 500 organized by Deloitte. We feature as one of the 500 companies in Europe, Africa and the Middle East that has shown the strongest growth in turnover over five years.

- Expolopangues

Intercountry has won the 1st prize for teaching innovation 3 times at the Expolopangues exhibition in Paris. The prize is awarded by a European jury.

GONTRAN LEJEUNE

PRESIDENT OF CJD INTERNATIONAL

Created in 2010, CJD International (International Centre for Young Directors) comprises 13 national bodies and brings together 5,000 entrepreneurs. This organization has as its aim to unite, coordinate and create a network of young business leaders from the different countries.

CJD’s goal is to give a voice to its members, who work on a daily basis for a more humane and responsible economy, advocating the development of business conduct that is more conscientious of future generations.

Our founding
Created in France in 1998 by Jean Mensch, CJD set out to be an offbeat and visionary organization, one that promotes an economy in the service of mankind.

Since the late 90s, CJD has proliferated to several countries, thereby spreading its philosophy and values beyond a simple worldwide expansion of entrepreneurial organizations.

Our Objectives
- To reflect on the major challenges of today and tomorrow,
- To aid our leaders and entrepreneurs in instilling a responsible, viable and sustainable ethos at the centre of their business strategy,
- To promote a responsible economy, one that is respectful of stakeholders and the social as well as physical environment.

Our members
The Young Director (JD) is a managing director or senior executive, from any profession or industrial sector, who has autonomy in the realms of leadership and management, as well as sufficient latitude to be able to drive change, innovate and make his business progress. He joins the network in order to break out of his isolation, to share best practices and advice among his peers and to progress in his career as a managing director or senior executive.

Commitment and Values
Membership in CJD is an act of engagement that is beneficial to the movement, to the JD’s business and to the JD as an individual. Each member commits to reflect; self-educate; experiment; influence and develop his business.

By joining the CJD, the JD also promises to refrain from using the network for commercial or financial gain and to share our four fundamental values: responsibility, solidarity, loyalty and respect for human dignity. He always acts according to the essential principles of transparency, confidentiality and goodwill.
Smarter training
Better Results

Are you ready to go?

Intercountry focuses on developing communication in foreign languages

Language
Foreign Language Training: English, Spanish, Portuguese, French as a foreign language...

Business
For Real-World Professional Situations.

Culture
Finding Out the Cultural Codes for Business Abroad.

The entire Intercountry team is at your disposal to discuss your training project
+33 3 21 13 75 21 or contact@intercountry.com

Follow us on Social Media!