



7 Cross Cultural Marketing Tips

Presented by: Kari Heistad, Culture Coach

1. Know Your Own Cultural Background

When we learn about other cultures we often think about it as "us " understanding "them". But when developing a deep understanding about cross-cultural issues, we must first start with understanding ourselves or "us" understanding "us". Take a moment and think about how you see the world. How have your education, traveling, gender, faith, children, sexual orientation, hobbies, and/or recreational interests shaped who you are? What celebrations and rituals are important to you? These elements collectively form your unique cultural identity, the lens through which you see the world. In this sense, every encounter we have with another person is essentially a cultural exchange, not just those with someone who obviously speaks, eats, dresses or appears differently. The next time you interact across cultures, share who you are, too. This will help us to learn from each other and not just about each other.

2. Know Your Expertise

There are numerous challenges when going overseas. It is vital to understand what your expertise is, and to then find the other expertise that you need to be successful. Don't be afraid to bring in marketing experts for your target countries.

3. Do Your Homework

Spend time researching the culture of the target countries. Learn about communication, negotiation and work styles. Is your target market a high context (for example Latin America) or low context market (US)? What do you need to know about non-verbal communication?

4. Cross Cultural Meetings

We all know communication is key to ensuring good relationships, no matter who we are communicating with. But, when communicating across cultures, it is even more important. If you are having meetings with participants from different cultures, put more of your communication in writing than you normally would. Under each agenda item, put bullet points of topics to covered and key issues that need discussion. This ensures that everyone (even those with more limited English skills) can feel confident that they are understanding what is being presented.

5. Ask Open Ended Questions

When we function in a foreign language, we have a tendency to say yes when we are asked a question, even if we don't understand what was asked. This is even true when we are asked "Do you understand?" The next time you are interacting cross culturally, ask an open-ended question such as "Can you tell me what we need to do next?" instead of "Do you understand?" If the person is unable to answer what needs to happen next, then you know that you need to explain further.



6. Always Use Professional Translators

Translating materials into foreign languages is always a challenge, even more so when you are trying to convey a concept in a way that is appealing to foreign cultures. Ensure that the translation firm that you are using has the ability to use native speakers for the translation. Ask if they also do a secondary translation check with another native speaker to act as a back-up. It is better to be more careful up front, then to try and correct mistakes later.

7. Know the National Holidays and Religion

If you are working overseas, make sure that you learn about local holidays and how they might impact campaigns and other business projects. The month of Ramadan is important in many parts of the world, and, having critical deadlines during this month is challenging. If your target countries have a strong religious basis for their culture, make sure that you learn about the religion and its taboos, restrictions and ways that religious beliefs can work in your favor.



Resources

www.worldbiz.com
World Business. Information on business around the world.

general overview than the statistics found on the CIA website.

www.businessculture.com
Business Culture. Business information from around the world

www.smalltownmarketing.com
Helpful marketing ideas for small businesses. Has more than 300 webpages of tips and articles.

www.bcentral.com
Microsoft's website for small business.

www.marketresearch.com
Instant access to global intelligence from 350 global firms. Search more than 40,000 market intelligence reports.

www.quirks.com
Everything from case studies to directories of custom research providers.

www.fuld.com/index.html
Provides 300 links to intelligence-gathering sites

www.cia.gov
The CIA has on its website The World Fact Book. This is an excellent source for country statistics and information for almost every country in the world.

www.state.gov
The State Dept. provides Background Notes on almost every country in the world. A more



<http://sun2.lib.uci.edu/HSG/RefHealth.html>
Find country information, time zones,
international law and shipping and all kinds of
other tidbits.

<http://go.grolier.com>
Subscription based service that has a wealth of
country information on all kinds of countries.
Easy to use and very comprehensive.

www.loc.gov
Library of Congress site. Has other connections
as listed below.

lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html
Country Studies
This site has 91 different country studies that
are extensive, covering all aspects of political,
cultural and economic aspects of the country.

<http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/>
Online database of countries and maps from
around the world.

[lcweb2.loc.gov/ammen/ndlpedu/resources/i
nres/area/index.html](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammen/ndlpedu/resources/inres/area/index.html)
Teacher Resources. Has links for all different
regions of the world.

[lcweb2.loc.gov/ammen/ndlpedu/resources/i
nres/area/index.html](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammen/ndlpedu/resources/inres/area/index.html)
Regional Links. Information Links for Regions
Around the World.

<http://oddens.geog.uu.nl/main.html>
Over 16,500 maps are located on this site. From
ancient to modern, from the simple to the
complex, you are sure to find them here.

<http://www.refdesk.com/>
Consider this your on-line reference librarian



www.ii.org

Used extensively by librarians to find information on the web. Listed by index topic in 40 categories. Weekly newsletter with new websites.

<http://onlinenewspapers.com>

Online Newspapers.com. Links to hundreds of newspapers from every region of the world.

<http://www.gksoft.com/govt/en/world.html>

Governments on the World Wide Web.

Comprehensive site for government resources.

<http://www.emulateme.com/>

World Encyclopedia. Anthems, flags, and maps to the nations of the world. Each nation is described by economy, government, defense, geography, and people.

www.culturalorientation.net

Cultural Orientation. Best part about the site is the resources list. A wealth of connections.

Also provides information on immigrants and refugees.

www.kidlink.org

Has a multicultural calendar that lists holidays from around the world.

www.education-world.com

Has a huge set of links for countries around the world (93 links for Venezuela for example).

Also has holidays and activities.

www.beliefnet.com

Spiritually oriented site that lists religions from around the world.

www.lib.utexas.edu/libs/pcl/map_collection

University of Texas. Collection of world maps

<http://geode.usgs.gov/>

GEODE. At this visually appealing site, visitors can use the GeoData Explorer (Geode) to view world maps based on population, transportation, natural resources, political boundaries, and more. Geographical relationships of data categories can be visualized with maps of countries of the world. Geographic data collected by the USGS and other government agencies are available for download from this site.

www.webofculture.com

Web of Culture . General cultural information, Do and Taboos from around the world.

www.wsu.edu/8080/%7edu?world.htm

Washington State University. Collection of cultural information

www.iorworld.com

IOR World. Cultural quiz, newsletter, international orientation, links to other sites

www.travelang.com

Travel Languages. Learn languages on the web

www.nmci.org

National Multicultural Institute. Examines multi-cultural issues.

www.worldinformation.com

Country and travel information for 228 countries from around the world.

<http://ucatlas.ucsc.edu/>

The UC Atlas of Global Inequality The Atlas explores the interaction between global integration (globalization) and inequality, and provides maps, graphics and data.

