

**Cross Cultural Training for Expatriates and Building Inter Cultural Competencies among them to make their Overseas Assignment a Successful One**

**\* Ms. K.P. Varalakshmi**

**\*\* Dr. K. Jawahar Rani**

\*Assistant Professor, Department Of Management Studies,  
Guru Shree Shantivijai Jain College for Women, Vepery, Chennai-7.

\*\* Assistant Professor, Department Of Management Studies,  
St. Josephs College Of Engineering Jeppiar Nagar, Chennai-119.

**Abstract:**

Cultural competence refers to the awareness, knowledge, skills, practices and processes needed by individuals, professions, organizations and systems to function effectively and appropriately in situations characterized by cultural diversity in general and, in particular, in interactions with people from difference cultures. Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. The past few decades has seen an explosion in research on expatriates and cross-cultural training. There has been controversy and an unending debate on the goals, effectiveness, implementation and processes of cross cultural training .Expatriate training is designed for reallocating assignee and their family to foreign countries. The training helps individuals and their families to adjust to the new environment and prepare for successful interactions both both in daily life and business situation in the destination country. This review also details the success and failure of expatriates. It also brings to light certain solutions that will make cross-cultural training more effective and provides directions for future research. Pre Departure training and Post Arrival Training are given to expatriates so that they can face the cultural shock in the foreign countries. Research has shown that these broad traits are useful in predicting work-related outcomes.

**Keywords:** Cultural Competence, Expatriates, Reallocation, Pre Departure, Post Arrival

**Introduction**

MNCs have realized that the way to thrive and not just survive in the global market is by developing global human resource management strategies. Even though the tasks carried out in the same organization are similar across continents, differences exist. A popular way of trying to have similar processes in the same organization in different parts of the world is to send an upper level executive overseas to manage the operations of a foreign subsidiary. These expatriates, usually from the head office, are responsible for various processes in the organization such as transferring technologies, starting up an operation in a foreign location, managing mergers and acquisitions, transmitting organizational culture, to name a few. Managing and developing the international careers of managers cannot be done by introducing isolated one time interventions in response to crises of succession, performance skill shortages or business operations (D'Annunzio-Green, 1997). Researchers have emphasized that CCT should be an integrated and coordinated approach, and if it is not, it would remain ad hoc and reactive. CCT will be effective if it takes into account the cultural

transition for the expatriate as well as the short term and long term goals of the organization. Such preparation would be more effective if it included goal-setting, performance expectations, and awareness of socio-cultural limitations of operating from a business and social perspective (Hutchings, 2003). This course uses a self-assessment cross-cultural adaptability to provide a company and its employees to adapt to the various culture in the new environment. It helps the individuals to understand what personal characteristics contribute to successful interaction with all culture. The HR department must train and prepare employees for their working abroad so that they can work and live effectively. The challenge of such training is that it must embrace not only business issues, but life style, technical and cultural issues. HR department of the organisation should provide social training for the employee assigned to work abroad and also the training should familiarize the expatriates with the local customs, taboos and expectations for social interactions. It seems that globalization has given rise to a paradoxical movement of cultures. On the one hand, emergent global cultures transcend national boundaries and cultures. On the other hand, the synchronizing power of the Internet and wireless digital technologies provide local companies and indigenous cultural values with unprecedented global

### **Need of the Study**

Cross-cultural training has become very important for each business organisations now a days as it imparts training to the employees who will be assigned to foreign countries as well as their dependants. The study shows the importance of the training in various areas like language, culture, custom, social interactions, laws, lifestyle, technical issues, disciplinary methods, leadership of the other countries where they will be assigned for their work. Such training imparted to the employees creates a confidence in them to adapt themselves to the new situation and so that they can face the competitive challenges very boldly.

### **Global Presence**

The development of global product and service markets is an important challenge. For companies with global operations, training is used to prepare employees for temporary or long-term overseas assignment.

### **Scope of the Study**

- To determine an employee's readiness for a work assignment abroad
- To raise awareness of the employees cultural adaptability and flexibility
- To evaluate the selection procedure for international assignments
- To provide cross cultural training to expatriates and their dependants
- To focus on daily life in the host country
- To focus on their role changes in the new environment
- To focus on cultural differences and to begin to bridge these differences

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To identify the role of training for cross-cultural assignments, cultural norms of the country where the expatriate is going to relocate and making the expatriates more productive and effective at work.
- To identify the pre departure training programmes on cultural awareness, preliminary visits and language skills and to meet challenges like different

communication styles, interpersonal dynamics and attitudes towards work life.

- To identify the importance of training in providing cultural adaptation, intercultural knowledge and competence and in building strategic network and ensure that expatriates can succeed in their career.

### **A culturally competent individual demonstrates the following capabilities:**

#### **1 Self-Reflection**

An individual staff member should be able to:

- Consider what your own culture is and how you feel about different cultural beliefs and values.
- Demonstrate a complex understanding of “culture”
- Conduct a cultural self-assessment to identify your own culture, and position your cultural beliefs against that of the health system.
- Conduct an assessment of the organisational and professional cultures to which you belong

#### **2. Cultural Understanding**

An individual staff member should be able to:

- Gain a better understanding of culture, and potential cultural differences
- Conduct a client cultural assessment to determine and accommodate different needs
- Elicit client explanatory models for health and respond appropriately
- Understand different consumer behaviours may be influenced by culture.
- Employ self-reflection to explore differences and similarities across cultures.

#### **3. Consider Context**

An individual staff member should be able to:

- Acknowledge and consider the range of social and economic factors that may impact on consumers (with culture sometimes not being the most important e.g. transport food).
- Understand impact of migration and exile on individuals
- Consider the interplay of other individual factors such as gender, sexuality, age on identity.
- Understand that individuals may not identify with their own culture, or that of their parents, and many individuals within Australia consider themselves ‘bicultural’
- Understand there are differences within cultures.

#### **4. Communication**

An individual staff member should be able to:

- Be sensitive and adaptive to varying cultural norms in relation to verbal and non-verbal communication
- Communicate effectively across cultures
- Be aware of, and overcome, potential barriers to effective cross-cultural communication
- Deliver information in culturally appropriate and targeted ways.
- Avoid making assumptions or judgements about individuals based on their communication style
- Assess the need for an interpreter and ability to work effectively with interpreters

## **5. Collaboration**

An individual staff member should be able to:

- Build trust and relationships with individuals across cultures
- Work towards consensus with individuals and families from diverse backgrounds
- Involve culturally diverse clients in decision-making processes and collaborative care
- Conduct community consultation and engagement
- Work across disciplines to provide appropriate care
- Facilitate linkages with community organisations and other agencies including development of referral pathways
- Be skilled at establishing formal and informal collaborative networks
- Value and facilitate the exchange of information across health and other disciplines

### **The Strategy for Building a Culturally Competent Workforce**

The Strategy for building a culturally competent workforce is based on:

- An analysis of the literature, which shows that cross-cultural training, is an effective mechanism to improve patient outcomes and team functioning
- The existing Learning and Development framework and current learning and development opportunities

The Strategy has five strategic priorities as follows:

- Conduct specific cross-cultural training (face-to-face and e-learning)
- Integrate cross-cultural capabilities into the relevant non-cross cultural training programs (face-to-face and e-learning)
- Integrate cross-cultural capabilities into departmental outsourced non-cross cultural training programs
- Build the cultural competency of the future Queensland Health workforce
- Ensure a quality approach to cross cultural training.

**Conclusion:**

Cross-cultural training is an essential component of every organisation as it shapes the way people conduct business and interact. When participants finish the programme, they are armed with information and solution a great way to maximise the success of an international assignments.

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