

Learn to Communicate Through a Global Lens

Our world has transformed, and so your colleagues may sit in the next cubicle or at a workstation on another continent. How do you build productive work relationships with team members with whom you can communicate instantaneously, but may not achieve true understanding with, due to cultural differences, language barriers and national characteristics? You are not alone in experiencing these challenges!

Thanks to Yael Zofi, CEO of AIM Strategies®, you can gain another perspective and learn how to use cultural diversity to your advantage. In this booklet Ms. Zofi shares her expertise on cross cultural communication and leadership development. You'll learn about the dimensions of cultural differences and how to develop effective strategies to work with these perspectives. Also included are a Quick Guide to raise your Cultural Practices IQ, and practical pointers for handling global business relationships. This handy guide provides suggestions to build your personal action plan and to increase your cross cultural communication skills. Remember, quality business relationships grow through understanding. You don't have to walk a mile (or kilometer) in someone else's shoes - you need to learn to communicate through a global lens.

An excellent guide that will raise your awareness and provide helpful tips to working and living in an increasingly multicultural and global workplace;

Renoka D. Singh
Former Equal Employment Opportunity Officer
The Federal Reserve Bank of New York

Easy and fast to read. Very practical. I can put these ideas into practice immediately. And I learn more about myself and where I need to go so, that I can become a more effective manager in an increasingly global environment.

Chris Lubrano
Organizational Effectiveness Consultant
International Business, MetLife



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Communicating Through a Global Lens™

How to Broaden Your Perspective in a Cross Cultural World

2nd Edition



AIM
STRATEGIES

Yael S. Zofi

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LINKING PEOPLE MANAGEMENT WITH BUSINESS STRATEGY

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yael Zofi is an Author, Coach, Professor, Trainer and CEO of AIM Strategies®, a Human Capital Consulting Firm focused on developing global leaders, managing virtual teams and facilitating cross cultural interactions. With 20+ years of experience, she works with leaders and teams on transformational initiatives that improve bottom line and enable stronger human connection in the workplace.

Ms. Zofi is a frequent guest speaker, has served as a Professor at New York University since 1995 and currently teaches Virtual Teams & Global Communications. She authored three books on related management topics and has recently released her latest book, *A Manager's Guide to Virtual Teams* (August 2011). Ms. Zofi has been featured in *Business Week*, *Bloomberg*, *CNBC*, *Forbes*, *All Business*, *Halogen Talent Management*, and *Entrepreneur Magazine*.

Prior to AIM Strategies®, Yael was Global VP of Leadership Development with JP Morgan. She also spent several years with Accenture and Price Waterhouse Coopers. Ms. Zofi holds a Business Degree from Rutgers University, a Masters Degree in Organizational Development from Columbia University, and has done post-graduate work with AU/NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science.

Communicating Through a Global Lens™

How to Broaden Your Perspective in a Cross Cultural World

by

Yael S. Zofi

2nd Edition



This booklet has been percolating for a long time. It started from a conversation about how our evolving world has truly become global, requiring greater understanding and appreciation of differences. As human beings placed on this earth, we are all different - and yet so similar.

Thank you Susan Meltzer for editing this document so many times. Thank you to Lauren Mutz for initial research, to Saro Varjabedian for the visuals and targeted research, to Carolyn Jamry, Whitney Cook, Becky May and various other organizational development interns, AIM associates and consultants who reviewed, edited, reviewed again and provided feedback.

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Lastly, I'd like to thank my clients, colleagues and friends who have been valued partners and supporters of my work.



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*To my precious daughter Maya Paulina Wohl
who will only know a global neighborhood
called Earth.*



Through my interactions with clients, colleagues and professionals in the Organizational Development field, I concluded that a key advantage in today's business environment is mastering the skill of working effectively with diverse groups. I have created this booklet as a guide for those who spend some, if not all, of their work life interacting with co-workers across the globe.

In our shrinking world, as people from various cultures increasingly interact, the importance of *Communicating Through a Global Lens* can hardly be overstated. And yet, people are often reluctant to discuss cultural traits because they do not want their generalizations to be interpreted as stereotyping, which has a negative connotation. In actuality, generalizations and stereotyping differ. Stereotypes tend to be negative statements emerging from perceptions about a few individuals that are applied to an entire group. Generalizations are claims based on thoughtful analysis. While stereotyping is undesirable, making generalizations about a cultural attribute can help someone understand another culture, creating a foundation for a relationship.

The materials and action steps presented in the following pages use these cultural generalizations, as starting points to help you better understand other cultures. Please note that these generalizations are not intended to imply that all individuals from a specific culture share certain characteristics or act the same way. No doubt, as opportunities to interact increase, we will all gain greater knowledge about our co-inhabitants on this planet.

As you read this booklet, my recommendation is to follow the activities as written in the order they are presented. The results, you will see, will be a stronger and deeper understanding of *Communicating Through a Global Lens*.



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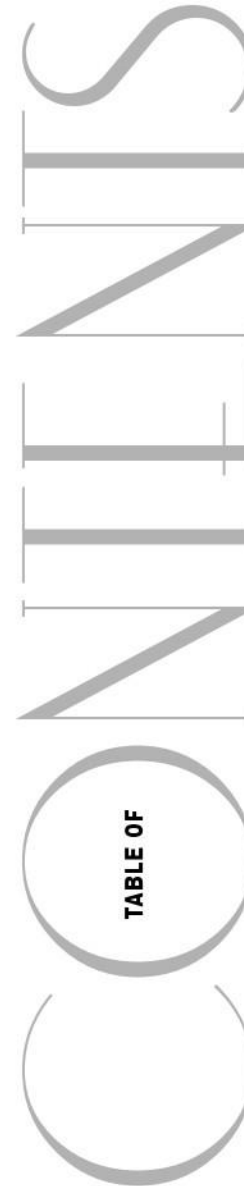
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Introduction

The ability to compete in the global economy is the single greatest challenge facing business today.

Marty Blalock, lecturer in Business Communication at the University of Wisconsin.

The global neighborhood is fast becoming a major factor in today's economic environment, and so organizations must have people at all levels who can comfortably interact with cultures other than their own. At its most basic definition, culture refers to a group, or community, whose members share similar experiences, worldviews and values. Up until a few generations ago, most Americans worked solely with local counterparts who shared similar backgrounds. Today, thanks to the pace of technology and globalization, it is probable your typical workday includes interaction with colleagues, clients or vendors from different parts of the globe.

As the pace of business transactions quickens, the ability to communicate with and manage people from other cultures is not just a necessity; it is a requirement. Confounded by language barriers, different worldviews and experiences, communication can be a great challenge. However, not meeting these challenges can be costly, setting a project back days, weeks or even months. Communicating effectively greatly augments your success when working and negotiating with individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Quick Points

COMMUNICATE RESPECT

Showing respect for differences through verbal and nonverbal messages will prove extremely important to your cross-cultural communication success.

BE CAREFUL WITH HUMOR

It can be easily misunderstood, or even considered offensive, in many cultures. In most cases, it is best to just avoid making jokes.

RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN ASSUMPTIONS

Our judgment can be clouded by our cultural backgrounds, past experiences and subconscious bias. If we STOP to recognize that our reactions may be constrained by these factors, we will increase our understanding.

DEMONSTRATE FLEXIBILITY

Be open to discussing other options. If you find that you and the person with whom you are speaking want different things, try to find a middle ground and compromise. Being rigid and too tied to your way of doing things could set back your progress.

VALUE DIVERSITY

Diversity is something that should be valued, not just tolerated. The unique perspectives and skills that each person can bring to the team will create value in your organization/company.