

CULTURAL TYPES
WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Business culture around the world differs greatly, and if you are to succeed in building relationships, working in different regions, or even just visit a foreign office or colleague, it is important for you to be competent in dealing with the cultural differences.

Now with business travel restrictions in place it is even more important to understand these differences and develop your inter-cultural competency.

The aim of this course is to introduce the three basic cultural types, identified in the renowned Lewis Model, for managers to be able to be able to confidently approach a meeting with a foreign office, speak with foreign colleagues or partners, or manage meetings of mixed business cultures.

The Lewis Model describes three types of cultures: Linear-Active, Multi-Active, and Reactive. Each are typically found in certain regions of the world and they are unique in the way that people in those cultures communicate, form relationships, and build trust.

An outsider stepping into a culture they are not knowledgeable on may find themselves tripping over lots of rules and etiquette which will a) make them look incompetent in the local culture and b) lead to a breakdown of trust and professional relationships.

Therefore, a profile on each of the three culture types explaining where they are found, typical traits of someone from that culture, and how they operate makes sense as an approach. This course will help delegates to understand what these types are and where to find them.

LOOK – watch the video and reflect on the content and message

THINK – activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace

REMEMBER – a summary of the key learning points

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes

PRACTISE – At the end of the series of videos there is a practical exercise which will bring the learnings together. Delegates should be encouraged to record any personal development actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Multi-Active Types
- Reactive Types
- Linear-Active Types

FILM 1 – MULTI-ACTIVE TYPES

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to consider what is important when working with Multi-active cultures:

Pick 3 Multi-active cultures as a group and discuss what they have in common and where they differ.

What are the key strengths and weaknesses of Multi-active cultures in business?

Discuss how Multi-actives may respond to working remotely – what they may like, not like, do well, do less well, and what they can contribute to the team.

What may non-Multi-actives find frustrating about working with Multi-actives?

REMEMBER

- Multi-Active types are warm, emotional, loquacious, and impulsive.
- They tend to talk most of the time in conversations, often interrupting, and are flexible with truth.
- They often do several things at once.
- Predominantly found in Latin countries, Africa, and the Middle East.

FILM 2 – REACTIVE TYPES

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to consider what is important when working with Reactive cultures:

What are some of the key challenges Reactive Types may find difficult about working with a) Linear-actives b) Multi-actives?

What are the key strengths and weaknesses of Reactive Types in business?

Discuss how Reactive Types may respond to working remotely – what they may like, not like, do well, do less well, and what they can contribute to the team.

Consider how you can get the best input from Reactive Types in your team and decide on the three most important things you should avoid doing with Reactive Types.

Remind the group that, as well as active listening, asking questions is a key skill for Mentors.

REMEMBER

- Reactive types are courteous, amiable, accommodating, compromising and listeners.
- They will listen most of the time in a conversation, prioritising diplomacy over truth.
- They tend to react to a partner's action and do not allow anyone to lose face.
- Most prevalent in Eastern Asia.

FILM 3 – LINEAR-ACTIVE TYPES

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

Ask the group to consider what is important when working with Linear-active cultures:

The USA, UK and Germany are all what we would call Linear-active cultures – rather cool, decisive, factual planners. However, there are some differences between them. Discuss some of those differences (e.g. in how they communicate, make decisions, lead, motivate staff, use humour...)

What are the key strengths and weaknesses of Linear-active cultures in business?

Discuss how Linear-actives may respond to working remotely – what they may like, not like, do well, do less well, and what they can contribute to the team.

What are some of the key characteristics of Americans in business that other cultures may find challenging to deal with? (If you are American, what are some of the key characteristics of the British in business that you may find difficult to deal with?)

REMEMBER

- Linear-Active types are cool-headed, factual, decisive, planners.
- They are polite but direct, prioritising truth over diplomacy.
- They tend to do one thing at a time.
- Found in regions such as USA and Western Europe

GROUP EXERCISE

This exercise is designed to get participants to put themselves in the shoes of other cultural types by role-playing a meeting in which – as far as possible – they act like a cultural type different to their own.

1. Everyone in the group should reflect on what cultural type they think they are themselves – Linear-, Multi- or Reactive. Remember this may not be connected to their nationality. For instance, an Italian engineer may be more Linear than a German salesperson. Then discuss your type with the others in turn. If you feel you are atypical for your nationality, explain why you think this is the case. (15 minutes)
2. Everyone decides which cultural type they find it hardest to identify with (3 minutes)
3. Try and split into groups of three where one person plays a linear-, one a multi- and one a reactive, assigning roles – as far as possible - so that people take roles they feel least comfortable with. This may not be feasible in every instance; in which case some roles may need to be given more randomly. Choose a nationality for your role – e.g. a linear- German, multi- Italian, reactive Japanese. If the group doesn't split into 3s, then some roles could double-up. (5 mins)
4. Have the groups work separately to create an authentic topic for a meeting or negotiation and draw up a brief agenda (10 minutes)
5. Run the meetings/negotiations simultaneously, playing the roles according to type. In other words, deliberately don't accommodate to other cultural types. (20 minutes)
6. Bring the groups together and let each individual talk briefly about how they felt in their role, particularly what was difficult, then each group comments in general on the experience and what they learned from it (15 minutes)