

Kramer, Jitske

The two main challenges in managing cultural dynamics in teams - Workshop 45 mins -

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Abstract

When confronted with cultural differences, we many times tend to focus on the cultural differences of the team members. However, the focus should not be on the differences, but on the effect these differences have on people, teamwork and business results. This means focus on the cultural dynamics. These dynamics involve feelings of uncertainty and anxiety, cultural misunderstandings causing low levels of trust and various forms of implicit or explicit exclusions. When these dynamics are not well managed, this can cost the business and the people a lot of energy and money.

We can improve this by making people aware of the psychological and group processes involved in working with differences, and by improving their competences to handle these dynamics. During this interactive presentation, we will focus on the question what a manager can and should do to guide the cultural dynamics in a team: how to make use of the diversity and create positive dynamics. Managing cultural dynamics means getting the balance right between diverging (acknowledging and using all different perspectives and views) and converging (getting to decisions and agreements which suits the business and the people involved). People in leading positions have the responsibility to guide these processes, others have the responsibility to open up for these changes and to have willingness to learn and create best possible ways to work together.

Learning outcomes for participants

After the presentation you will:

- have insights into the psychological interaction process between cultural strangers
- know the difference between two models of cooperation; cultural consensus and fusion
- know about the challenges in managing cultural dynamics:
 - regulating mechanisms of exclusion
 - preventing and solving cultural misunderstandings (with a practical framework)

Profile

Since 1998 Jitske Kramer has been working as a trainer/coach in the field of leadership and communication. She holds a Master Degree in Cultural Anthropology from Utrecht University. In 2006 she founded the network organization HumanDimensions, based in the Netherlands. She recently accepted a part time position as professor Cultural Dynamics at TIO University of applied sciences.

She has a vast experience in facilitating people, teams and organizations in improving international leadership competences, teamwork and intercultural competences. She is a trained psychodramatist and facilitator in Voice Dialogue. Her work characterizes itself by paying attention to the cultural, universal and personal levels involved by using creative action methods. As a child she wondered 'why do people do the things the way they do?'. This question still puzzles her sometimes.

She has designed and delivered many (intercultural) training and coaching programs for multinationals, governmental and academic institutions, including: Shell, Unilever, Mercedes-Benz CAC, Philips, KPN, National Railway Company (NS), Nyenrode University, Telia Sweden, Yokogawa, Petro-Canada Netherlands B.V., KLM and War Child.

Author of the book Managing Cultural Dynamics (Dutch Title: "Normaal is anders! – leidinggeven aan culturele dynamiek in teams" Publisher: Business Contact.)