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Diversity begins at home: Team-building across companies after mergers or acquisitions

- Workshop 45 mins -

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Abstract

This workshop will focus on an aspect of cross-cultural teams that is less related to diversities among nationalities. It addresses an issue that may occur within one country and even within one company. After merging with another company or subsidiary or after being taking over, new teams emerge from the inevitable restructuring of workplaces. As each company harbours its own culture, any such team-building has to consider the diversity of these cultures, too, in order to establish a good working relationship and team spirit. If this diversity is not acknowledged, resentment caused by the often unwelcome restructuring, and suspicion of 'the others' are often the result, something which can lead to a deterioration of work quality in turn. Added to this issue are, in many cases, external influences if the new parent happens to be a foreign or multinational company. Using a case study in which a British company bought a group of German companies and learned the hard way that, in fact, they bought three different cultures instead of one, participants will learn to analyse what went wrong with integrating the new companies and shaping new working teams.

Participants in this workshop will explore in a role play based on the case study how to become aware of stereotypes and traps; how to avoid patronising and antagonism; how to make a fresh start and realise cultural differences and their impact on the workplace.

Learning outcomes for participants

- Handling own cultural baggage more sensitively
- Understanding hidden drivers in team building
- Using enhanced cultural awareness in work environment

Profile

Kirsten Waechter, born in 1968, is a freelance trainer and translator of international business English. She read media studies and English literature at the universities of Bochum and Glasgow and later taught in the field of British Cultural Studies. Teaching in-house and at universities, she focuses not only on financial and engineering English, but also on business manners and business culture. For German publisher Cornelsen, she has written three related guide books on e-mailing, meetings and applying for a job in English.