Learning From Hispanic Employees

Understand your employees and improve human resource management

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Cornell University, Department of Animal Science
Training and Facilitation in Spanish has been provided to dairy farms across New York State since July 2007.

To date, the program has worked with over 200 Hispanic employees on 41 farms in 17 counties.

This program is provided through Cornell University, Department of Animal Science and made possible by funding from the New York Farm Viability Institute.
A Learning Experience

- Deliverable training modules were created at the beginning of the project in July ’06
- The nature of the project changed from delivering training modules to providing facilitation
Cultural Dynamics

- Power Distance
- Collectiveness
- Context in Communication
- Context of Communication
Culture Is Like An Iceberg

Visible Behaviors

invisible Sources

Values
Beliefs
Assumptions
Power Distance

The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.
High Power Distance cultures

In high power distance countries the less powerful accept power relations that are more autocratic and paternalistic.

Subordinates acknowledge the power of others simply based on where they are situated in certain formal, hierarchical positions.
Low Power Distance cultures

Low power distance expect and accept power relations that are more consultative or democratic.

People relate to one another more as equals regardless of formal positions.

Subordinates are more comfortable with and demand the right to contribute to and critique the decision making of those in power.
The power distance index for 50 countries and 3 regions is as follows (high scores indicate larger power distances):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/3</td>
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<td>95</td>
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<td>81</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8/9</td>
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<td>10/11</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>West Africa</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Salvador</td>
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<td></td>
<td>18/19</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<tr>
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<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>42/44</td>
<td>Germany FR</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>Israel</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*from Geert Hofstede’s work on Cultural Dynamics*
Power Distance

Reducing the power distance:

- Share relevant experiences
- State common goals
- Share examples of mistakes that you have made in the same way, and what you learned
Collectiveness

- Agreement with the group
- Deference paid to trainers and facilitators
- Concordance with the status quo
- Asking questions may be seen as disrespectful
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualism</th>
<th>Collectivism</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity is based on the individual</td>
<td>Identity is based on one’s social network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task prevails over relationship</td>
<td>Relationship prevail over task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking one’s mind indicates honesty</td>
<td>Harmony should be maintained &amp; confrontation avoided</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USA, Australia, Britain, Netherlands | Central and South America, East Asia

United States ranks #1 out of 53 countries observed: HIGH individualism
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collectivist Societies</th>
<th>Individualist Societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Positive association in society with whatever is rooted</td>
<td>• Positive association in society with whatever is “new”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in tradition</td>
<td>• Students expect to learn how to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students expect to learn how to do</td>
<td>• Individual students will speak up in class in response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual students will only speak up in class when</td>
<td>to a general invitation by the teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>called upon personally by the teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individuals will only speak up in small groups</td>
<td>• Individuals will speak up in large groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Neither the teacher nor any student should ever be made</td>
<td>• Face-consciousness is weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to lose face</td>
<td>• Education is a way of improving one’s economic worth and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education is a way of gaining prestige in one’s social</td>
<td>self-respect based on ability and competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment and of joining a higher status group (“a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ticket to a ride”)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Context in communication

Give deep, contextual explanations—often times we forget to teach why a job must be done.

Visual Cues
Body Language
Hand Gestures
Repetition
Visual Aids
Context in communication

High Context Cultures

Japanese
Arabic
Latin American
Italian
English
French
North American
Scandinavian (except Finland)
German
Swiss-German

Low Context Cultures

Information implicitly received

Information explicitly conveyed
Communicative Style

From Kaplan’s *Contrastive Rhetoric*
Some examples of excellent graphic aids:

- Posters
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Schedules
- Realia
Milking Routine - La Rutina del Ordeño

Dip 5 cows, Strip and Redip
Sellar, Exprimir y Sellar 5 vacas

Wipe and attach 5 cows
Limpiar y conectar 5 vacas

Attach 5 cows
Conectar 5 vacas

Dip 5 cows
Sellar 5 vacas

Strip and Wipe 5 cows
Exprimir y Limpiar 5 vacas

Attach 5 cows
Conectar 5 vacas
Context of Communication

- Be mindful of the setting and participants in a meeting and the nature of that meeting.
- Group meetings are not a good setting for calling an employee out on the carpet.
- Neither is too much praise for one single employee.
Learning From Hispanic Employees:  
*From a trainer’s point of view*

- Look at the employee while speaking, not at the trainer/interpreter.
- Don’t outsource the task of reprimanding employees to the trainer/interpreter.
- Don’t ask the interpreter “*What do you think should be done?*” in front of the employees.
Learning From Hispanic Employees:

*Back to Human Resource Basics*

- Important Documents
- Employee Evaluations
- Staff Meetings
Staff Meetings

- Regular staff meetings can be an effective tool to get employees on the same page
- Helps to build a sense of “team”
- Can be used as a think-tank to help solve issues on the farm

If possible, they work best if Spanish-speaking and English-speaking employees are integrated into the same meeting
Employee Evaluations

- Offers the employer an opportunity to provide feedback to the employee
- Likewise, it offers the employee an opportunity to provide feedback
- Requires a lot of groundwork to be effective
- Always use a third-party translator
Important Documents

- Policies
  - Employment contracts
  - Housing Agreements
  - Promotion structure, Vacation time
- Standard Operating procedures
  - Milking routine
  - Calving Pen Management
- Record Keeping
- Contact Information
Learning From Hispanic Employees: Timesaving and Innovating

“El que conoce bien el trabajo se llama empleado. El que no conoce bien el trabajo se llama Patrón”

“The one who knows the job well is called employee. The one who doesn’t know the job well is called Boss.”
Preventing Turnover

- Successful employers make a concentrated effort to learn about the culture of their employees.
- Successful employers use several strategies to develop cultural understanding.
- Successful employers support social and recreational activities for Hispanic employees that will create a quality of life outside of the job.
Happy employees can make happy cows
A note on job responsibility

- Able to make good, independent decisions
- Accountable, responsible to get the job done
- Takes pride in the work that he/she does
- Respectful of the farm and of others
Individualized responsibilities

- Should be paired with employee interests and skills
- Job specialization and increased responsibilities can ignite employee motivation and performance
- Managers will have more time to focus on the endless to-do list
Thank you

Questions?