Communication Filters and Models

Introduction

The twenty-first century and its technological developments have created a world system of communication. Each international business should determine its global communication model. To begin to develop a model, a business should consider the following concepts:

- filters
- world communication network
- interpersonal skills

The Filter

Individuals develop filters to interpret the world. Filtering is a cultural and personal screening process that happens when a receiver gets a message from a sender. In the sender-receiver communication model, filtering allows the sender to compose a message while the receiver screens information to understand a message. Culture influences the filter and can become a barrier in communication because the filter may cause people to make assumptions about other cultures' behavior and practices. When a sender or receiver makes assumptions or stereotypes about a culture, miscommunication can occur.

World Communication Network

To continue to develop a global communication model, a business should examine the world communication network. When designing any message, it is critical to consider where a country or a region lies along the central-to-periphery continuum. In this global world, countries such as Canada and the United States and regions such as Western Europe lie at the center; countries and regions with less complex economic activities and technology lie at the periphery. Therefore, a nation and culture determine information flow.

The Internet has become a global center of the communication network, and technological links strengthen relationships between cultures around the world. Interestingly, despite cultural differences, Internet users create online communities or centers of communication in similar ways (Chen, Boase, & Wellman, 2002).

Related to world system theory, Rich (1974) developed the following classification system for five types of intercultural communication:

- Intercultural communication examines how people interact with different cultures.
- International communication examines how representatives from different countries interact.
• Interracial communication shows how different races interact with each other.
• Interethnic communications is the study of coculture interaction within the same nation.
• Contracultural communication studies how intercultural and interracial communication are linked.

Cultural Conversations—The Interpersonal Side of Intercultural Dialogue

Not only are filters and communication theories important for businesses to develop effective communication models, knowledge of interpersonal communication skills help too. Interpersonal communication, or person-to-person dialogue, is essential in developing an intercultural system of communication. Intercultural communication takes three forms of dialogue: self-centered, dominant, and equal (Guan, 1995).

Self-centered communication is ethnocentric using one's own cultural standards to make judgments about others.

Dominant dialogue is associated with one person dominating the dyad, taking advantage of cultural differences to manipulate the conversation.

Equal dialogue involves a give-and-take conversation showing mutual respect and understanding of cultural differences.

There are different levels of communication. There are three tiers or levels of communication in a global system. The parochial cultural level relates to universal ideas that touch people on a local level. The next level, intercultural, allows people to communicate with a shared language or way of communicating beyond the parochial level. Conversely, at a supracultural level, local cultures dispense with their local language and incorporate their words into a universal system for understanding among other cultures (Reflections of Babylon, 2004).

Communication Conflict

When cultures come to the negotiation table, conflict is bound to occur. It usually is brought on by misunderstanding and not appreciating the other culture's value and way of life. Negative stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice can result in communication conflict. Due to the fact that many cultures place more value on human relationships than issues, learning to separate people from the issues may be the key element to reducing conflict across cultures in business negotiations. In addition, not all issues are negotiable for a multitude of reasons tied specifically to the respective cultures.

References

Chen, W., Boase, J., & Wellman, B. (2002). The global villagers: Comparing Internet users
and uses around the world. In B. Wellman & C. Haythornthwaite (Eds.), *The Internet in everyday life* (pp. 74–113). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

