



# Getting The Message Right

Culture Variations Make a Difference



“

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

”

George Bernard Shaw

# Business Communication



**Emails**



**One-on-One  
Conversations**



**Presentations**



**Meetings**

# Cultural Variations Impact Communication

- ▶ Indirect or Direct
- ▶ Formal or Informal
- ▶ Animated or Low-key
- ▶ Concepts or Details
- ▶ Images or Table & Chart



**It takes effort to effectively communicate in a multi-cultural setting**

# Indirect vs. Direct Styles

## High Context

- Indirect
- Ambiguous/vague
- Relationship focus
- Message also in what is not said
- Face-saving
- Choice of words is vital
- May be apologetic
- Quite formal
- Common interest
- We/Our

## Low Context

- Direct
- Explicit/clear
- Task centered
- Goal oriented
- Clarity is primary
- Feedback in message
- Rational solutions, not personal ones
- Sense of urgency
- I/ You

**Misinterpretations can occur when sender and recipient use opposing styles**



# Communication Issues

- ▶ English isn't English
- ▶ Errors
- ▶ Greetings
- ▶ Humor
- ▶ CYA
- ▶ Conflict
- ▶ Numbers
- ▶ Gestures



Understanding  
the message



# Ensuring You Get The Message Right

## Requires:

- Information
- Effort
- Willingness to adapt
- Training
- Practice
- Ability to learn from mistakes

“If You Don’t Have Time to Do It Right, When Will You Have Time to Do It Over?”

John Wooden



# We Can Help You Get Your Message Right

**Elizabeth Vennekens-Kelly**

*Director*

*Cross Cultural Consulting*

[www.crossculture-training.be](http://www.crossculture-training.be)