



# CASE STUDY

## Intercultural sensitivity

### A key for successful international project work

#### AT A GLANCE

##### Initial situation customer side

A globally active industrial company is faced with the challenge of adequately reflecting the increasing complexity of customer requirements in its own project-related forms of organization and work (e.g., in product development).

More and more, services for customers are provided by globally distributed virtual teams, which are made up of representatives from different areas of the company with different backgrounds.

These teams are made up of representatives from different areas of the company with different cultural backgrounds and leadership cultures. In addition, there are different experiences and perceptions of working methods, planning, dealing with hierarchies, goals, time and deadlines.

##### The result:

Misunderstandings and resulting friction losses. The task was to support executives, project managers and technical specialists in leading globally operating intercultural teams appropriately.

#### Success factors

- Practical approach with real case studies from everyday project work
- Quick gain of knowledge through simple models
- Experiencing and reflecting on the own culture
- Assumption of perspective and understanding of the other culture through realistic role plays
- Peer coaching approach / learning from each other
- Two modules with transfer plan and individual learning process between the modules
- Focus on what is common and unifying (not just on what separates)
- Strengthening or dampening of those cultural patterns that are helpful or less helpful for the success of the project.

#### Project result

In day-to-day project work, there was a visible change in the individual behavior of those involved and a noticeable increase in sensitivity in dealing with colleagues, employees and cooperation partners from and in other cultures.

As a result, existing frictional losses in project-related cooperation were reduced, which led to higher quality, adherence to deadlines and implementation speed in the projects.

The interplay of reinforcing and dampening cultural patterns that were helpful or less helpful for project success was the basis for establishing a common standard for leadership and cooperation within the company - even and especially beyond all cultural differences.

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