

Assessing Intercultural Effectiveness: *A Model and a Case Study*



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Continuous Learning

- The degree you engage the world by continually seeking to understand the world around you.
- It influences your intercultural success by acting as a motivator to learn about why people in other cultures behave and think the way they do.
- People who strive to learn new things are more successful at living and working with people from other cultures than those who are comfortable with what they already know.



Self-Awareness

- The degree to which you are aware of your personal values, strengths, weaknesses, interpersonal style, and behavioral tendencies, as well as their impact on others.
- The degree to which you reflect on this knowledge in order to engage in personal development and learning activities.

Exploration

- Openness to understanding ideas, values, norms, situations, and behaviors that are different from your own.
- Fundamental inquisitiveness, curiosity, and an inner desire to learn new things.
- Willingness to seek out new experiences that can cause learning or a change in your perspective.
- Ability to learn from mistakes and to make adjustments to your personal strategies to ensure success in what you do.

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Interpersonal Engagement

- This factor assesses your interest in other cultures and the importance of developing relationships with people from other cultures in general.
- The development of positive interpersonal relations is essential for effective performance in an intercultural environment.



Global Mindset

- The degree to which you are interested in – and seek to actively learn about – other cultures and the people that live in them.
- The degree to which you seek out such learning by your own choice in order to expand your global knowledge about people and their cultures

Relationship Interest

- The extent to which you initiate and maintain relationships with people from other cultures.
- You find that engaging others is an energy-producing vs. an energy-depleting activity.
- Your willingness to use a foreign language in developing new relationships.

Hardiness

- Managing your thoughts and emotions in intercultural situations, along with your ability to be open-minded and nonjudgmental about ideas and behaviors that are new to you.
- The tendency to not get upset, stressed, frustrated, or angry when you encounter situations, people, behavior, and ideas that are different from what you are used to.
- Managing your emotions constructively and learning from failures and setbacks.



Positive Regard

- Assuming the best about people and being more accepting of different behaviors.
- Not resorting to negative stereotypes about other cultures or people.

Emotional Resilience

- Your level of emotional strength and ability to cope with challenging emotional experiences.
- Your capacity to recover quickly from psychologically and emotionally challenging situations.

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Case Study: German accepts an international assignment

- German, Hispanic-American male, 40's, married w/ children
- Promising senior legal talent in the company
- Short-term international assignment (6 months)
- Opportunity to develop, opportunity to return home
- 30 days in - something's wrong, risk of failure (work and career)

German, an Hispanic-American man in his 40's, has been given an international assignment in Mexico. He is married with three children between ages ten and six. The assignment is on short notice (30 days) and is scheduled to last six-months, making him the interim chief legal officer (CLO) in the region where this U.S. company has important manufacturing and growing retail operations. His company will support his family going with him. He will be working with local legal and human resources leaders and staff in several countries. There have been difficulties coordinating the legal staff in this region as the company has had no CLO in place yet and has been making due by borrowing the "virtual" CLO from another region. This would be German's first time living and working back in Mexico since his departure as a teenager. German is expected to hold things together while the formal regional CLO search process takes place and to use this as a developmental opportunity. German is excited about this opportunity, excited to return to Mexico, and confident he will do well.

One month after German's arrival in Mexico, he reports that things are not going well. The stress is too great for him, he has not received the support he needed in his transition and is considering moving back to the U.S. before his assignment is over.

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Let's rewind the clock back three months, look at German's IES profile to anticipate what questions we might want to ask in order to advise him where he needs to focus to become effective in this situation.

Notes on German:

(Continuous Learning)

- ✓ German is a highly successful performer
- ✓ Manages international contracts from U.S. HQ
- ✓ Individual-contributor role player
- ✓ Adapts quickly to new environments & finds out how to get things done

(Interpersonal Engagement)

- ✓ Fairly cosmopolitan outlook
- ✓ Successfully integrated into U.S. culture, finds common ground, well thought of by peers
- ✓ Tends to be more task-oriented than relationship-oriented
- ✓ Finds building new relationships too draining
- ✓ Has little extra time after work and family

(Hardiness)

- ✓ Sees this as a homecoming and an easy transition as he knows the culture
- ✓ Healthcare and school will be challenging to set up; One child has special-needs
- ✓ Wife has never lived in Mexico – speaks moderate Spanish

Activity: Coaching German using assessment data

	Low	Mod	High
Continuous Learning (CL)		X	
Self-awareness	X		
Exploration			X
Interpersonal Engagement (IE)		X	
Global Mindset			X
Relationship Interest	X		
Hardiness (H)	X		
Positive Regard		X	
Emotional Resilience	X		
Overall IES Score		X	

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Activity: Coaching German

Discuss German's assessment within small groups & make recommendations for success in this assignment, and for ongoing training and development.

- **Areas of Strength**

- **Potential areas for growth**

- **Specific recommendations for German to be successful in this assignment**