MODULE OVERVIEW

# Working across cultures: Read the codes, not the stereotypes

Adaptive module | ~20 min

A silence read as disengagement, an invitation to debate taken as a trap: many conflicts are clashes of invisible cultural codes. This module teaches participants to read these codes with Erin Meyer's scales, without reducing a colleague to their country: a guide informs, a prejudice boxes people in. It also equips the team: explicit codes, a culture buddy for newcomers. McKinsey quantifies the stakes: 36% more likely to outperform.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01 Distinguish visible cultural differences, easy to plan for, from the invisible codes behind the real misunderstandings.

02 Read gaps in codes (hierarchy, feedback, time, and communication) using Erin Meyer's scales.

03 Replace assumptions with curiosity: ask, rephrase, and put the unspoken into words, without reducing anyone to a cultural map.

04 Equip the team: a shared user manual, a culture buddy for newcomers, AI pointers before an exchange, and a common mission and values.

## WHO IT'S FOR

Anyone who works with colleagues from other cultures and wants to turn this diversity into a team strength.

- **Prerequisite:** none

## HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

1. **Self-assessment**: on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
2. **Expert video**: 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
3. **Practice scenarios**: the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
4. **Dated commitment**: one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
5. **Memo to download**: key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

## A SAMPLE PRACTICE SCENARIO

Hanna, a buyer, is preparing orders with Pavel, manager of one of the group's plants abroad. They write to each other in English, which is neither person's native language. Pavel's messages are one line long, with no greeting or sign-off: "No. Deadline too short." Hanna thinks Pavel is annoyed with her. What does Hanna do?

## ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

### METHODS & MODELS

- 8 cultural scales – Erin Meyer (INSEAD), "The Culture Map"
- Cultural iceberg metaphor – classic model in anthropology and intercultural management
- Putting the unspoken into words / culture buddy – Afthonios method

### SOURCES & REFERENCES


- McKinsey, "Diversity Wins" – organizations in the top quartile for ethnic and cultural diversity outperform those in the bottom quartile by 36% in profitability
- Erin Meyer (INSEAD), "The Culture Map" – comparison of national cultures on eight scales (communication, feedback, leadership, decision-making, trust, time, and more)
- Ang et al. (2007) – cultural intelligence, adaptation, and intercultural cooperation
- Shore et al. (2011) – inclusion, belonging, and uniqueness in teams



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