



EMPLOYMENT LAW ALLIANCE

*Helping Employers Worldwide*

**AUDIO CONFERENCE ON  
CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR  
CONDUCTING BUSINESS IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY**

**July 22, 2010**

**CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE**

The undersigned certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ attended the **Cultural Considerations for Conducting Business in a Global Economy** Audio Conference sponsored by the Employment Law Alliance. The program consisted of 90 instructional minutes. The program contained no credit continuing legal education for legal ethics, elimination of bias in the legal profession or prevention, detection and treatment of substance abuse.

*Susan Frederick*

Susan Frederick

To be completed by Attorney after participation in the above-named activity.

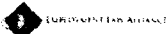
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# Cultural Considerations for Conducting Business in a Global Economy

Thursday, July 22, 2010

Co-Sponsored by:  
The Employment Law Alliance  
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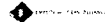


Aperian  
GLOBAL

## Moderator



Stephen J. Hirschfeld, CEO, Employment Law Alliance;  
Partner, Curiale, Hirschfeld, Kraemer, LLP  
San Francisco, CA  
[shirschfeld@employmentlawalliance.com](mailto:shirschfeld@employmentlawalliance.com)



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## Speakers



Ernest Gundling, Founder and Chief Operating Officer, Aperian Global, San Francisco, CA  
[egundling@aperianglobal.com](mailto:egundling@aperianglobal.com)



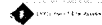
Simone-Eva Redrupp, Practice Group Leader for Europe, Middle East, and Africa, Aperian Global, Paris, France  
[sredrupp@aperianglobal.com](mailto:sredrupp@aperianglobal.com)



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## Agenda

- Overview of cultural dimensions
- Workplace applications
  1. Attitudes toward prospective employers and corporate brands
  2. Common employee engagement and retention issues in a multi-cultural work environment
  3. Performance management and feedback styles with employees in different regions
  4. Training and development challenges based upon cultural differences in learning styles
  5. What to do when you are in an environment that doesn't treat women fairly (according to your local standards)
  6. The impact that religious beliefs and practices can have on the workplace



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*"The single greatest cause of difficulties in global business transactions is not a lack of technical expertise, hard work or good intentions – it is a lack of 'people skills' for relating successfully across style differences attributed to factors such as national culture, organizational culture, job function, and personality."*

Ernest Gundling, PhD, author of *Working GlobeSmart*

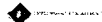


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We integrate thought leadership, technology and global reach to serve our clients' globalization needs.

Our mission is developing the capabilities of individuals, teams, and organizations to work effectively across cultures in order to create a sustainable global future.

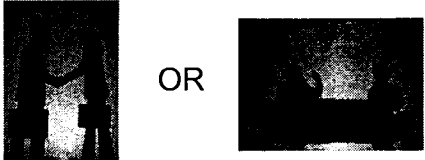


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We live in a working world that is more global every year.



So, what does this mean for me?



OR

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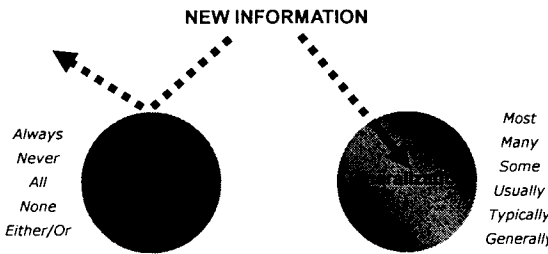
## Impact of Culture

Culture A		Culture B	
Visible	Visible	Visible	Visible
Food	Orass	Behavior	
Language			
Customs	Corporate Culture		
History	Region		
Assumptions	Beliefs		
Less Visible	Less Visible	Less Visible	Less Visible

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### NEW INFORMATION



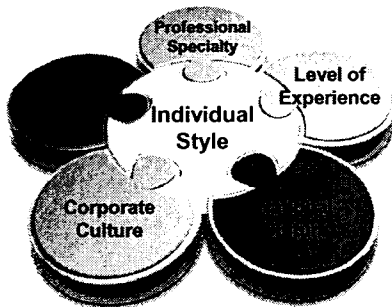
Always  
Never  
All  
None  
Either/Or

Most  
Many  
Some  
Usually  
Typically  
Generally

Fixed and oversimplified opinions, images or judgments

General statements, ideas or principles

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Professional Specialty

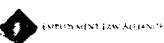

Level of Experience

Individual Style

Corporate Culture

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## Dimensions of Culture

**Cultural Dimensions**

Aspects of culture that represent a range of work styles in a multicultural work environment

Profile Components

Click a name at the right, then click a colored dot on any of the six Dimensions below. CLICK A NAME BELOW

INDEPENDENT INTERDEPENDENT

RISK RESTRAINT

TASK RELATIONSHIP

Legend:

- Fred
- Steve
- Frank
- Dennis
- Louie
- Paul
- Sam
- Susan
- The United Nations

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**Cultural Dimensions**

Click a name at the right, then click a colored dot on any of the six Dimensions below. CLICK A NAME BELOW

- Dimensions are on a continuum
- There is no "right" or "wrong" style
- Profile result is not a predictor of success

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**Cultural Dimensions**

What is the role of the individual?

**Independent**

- Independent action is a strong competency
- Identity tied to individual traits
- Individual decisions

**Interdependent**

- Group harmony and cooperation important
- Identity tied to group affiliation
- Group decisions (consensus among family, team)

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**Cultural Dimensions**

Independent (We)?

*"The squeaky wheel gets the grease."*

*"The nail that sticks up gets hammered down."*

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**Cultural Dimensions**

What is the relation toward hierarchy?

**Egalitarianism**

- Equal to others in professional settings
- Work roles can be flexible, less rules and protocols
- OK to challenge the opinions of people in power

**Status**

- Each role in hierarchy has its own code of behavior
- Status and position respected; Titles important
- Questioning opinions is seen as lack of trust

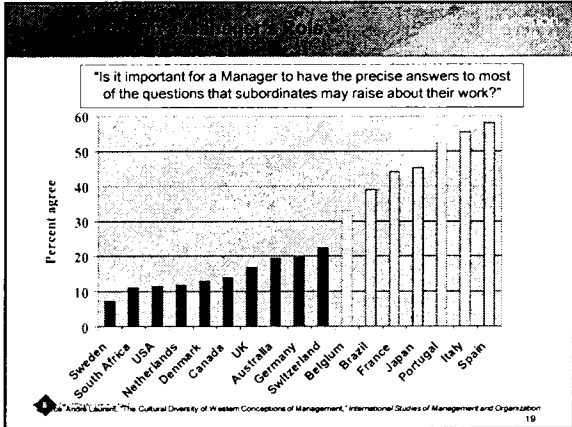
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**Cultural Dimensions**

*"Is it important for a Manager to have the precise answers to most of the questions that subordinates may raise about their work?"*

Source: André Laurent, "The Cultural Diversity of Western Conceptions of Management," *International Studies of Management and Organization*

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**What is the comfort level with risk taking?**

**Risk**

- Demonstrate quick results
- Flexibility and speed valued more than thoroughness

**Restraint**

- Spend time on research before making change
- Establish proper processes and systems

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**How is information communicated?**

**Direct**

- Concise, concrete, to the point
- Not afraid to "say it like it is"
- Difficulties confronted openly
- OK to give and receive "constructive" feedback

**Indirect**

- Great attention given to how messages are expressed
- Preserve harmony in group
- Pay attention to saving face and preserving personal dignity
- Unwillingness to saying no

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**Conversation?**

Mr. Dupont: We will probably need to keep the production lines open this Saturday.

Ms. Chin: I see.

Mr. Dupont: Can you come on Saturday?

Ms. Chin: Yes, I think so.

Mr. Dupont: It will be of great help.

Ms. Chin: Yes, Saturday is a very special day.

Mr. Dupont: Why is that?

Ms. Chin: It is my son's birthday.

Mr. Dupont: Oh, I hope you will enjoy yourselves.

Ms. Chin: Thank you for your understanding.

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**What is the work priority?**

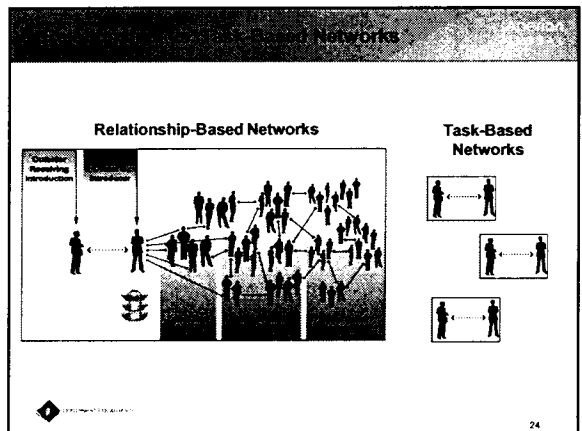
**Task**

- Relationship follows task
- Move quickly to task, get to know people later
- Being efficient, managing time

**Relationship**

- Task follows relationship
- Relationship building critical to getting any job done
- Business relationships develop over time via extended networks


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**What is the time horizon?**


**Short-Term**

- Demonstrate immediate results
- Efficiency, speed important in decision-making process
- Goals and reports focus on one-month and quarterly plans



**Long-Term**

- Big picture, long-term results
- Thoroughness, discussion of possible outcomes are key
- Goals and reports focus on one-year and long-term plans



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**Task Based Networks**


**Relationship**

**What works:**

- Emphasize long-term relationship more than task
- Information shared in different ways at different stages

**What doesn't work:**

- Focus only on immediate business need
- View information as data or a commodity that is easily shared



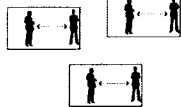
**Task**

**What works:**

- Explain purpose of potential use of information clearly
- Link information to business need

**What doesn't work:**

- Have too much background or context
- Make unclear requests based on relationship instead of business need



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**Workplace Applications**

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- Italian luxury company has difficulty recruiting key talent in India due to lack of "brand awareness" by local software engineers
- Strategic communication campaign launched by China-based French companies, to counter the "feminine image of French companies" and to show France's "heavy industry"
- Egalitarian leadership style = inspirational for the new generation in emerged countries; it projects personal advancement
- What are perceived as "opportunities" and positive "stretch assignments" in Central Europe (to accelerate career track) can be negatively perceived as "exploiting the workforce" or "lemon squeezing" in mature markets

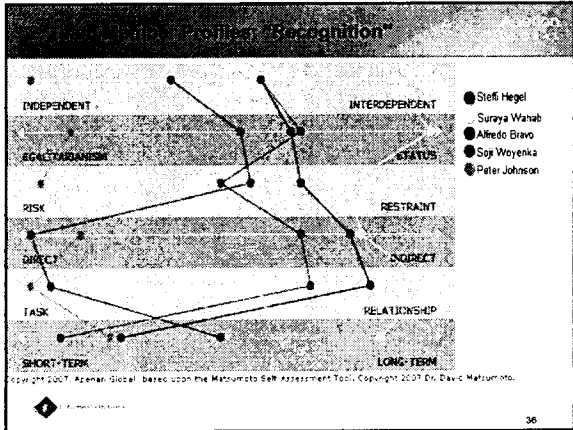
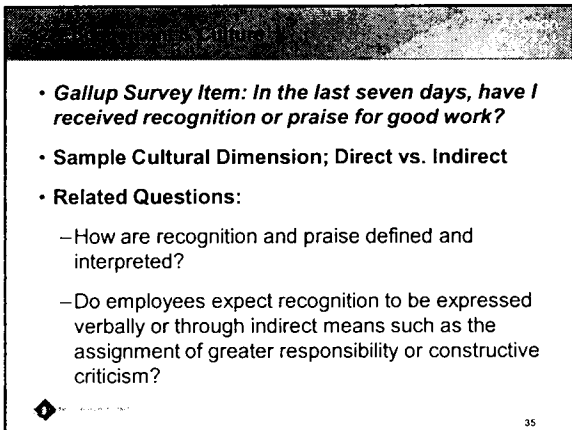
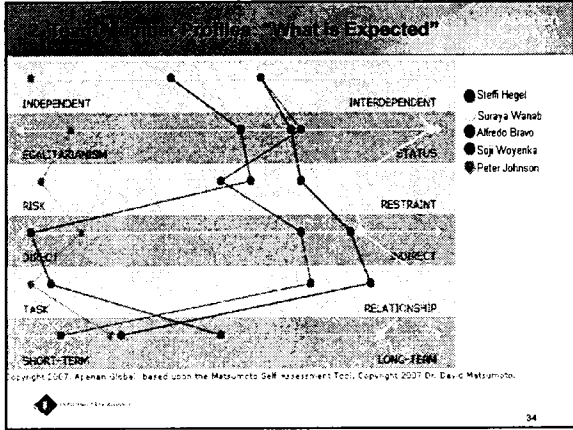
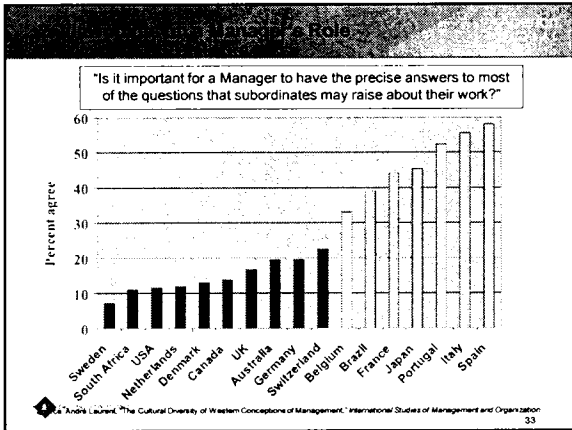
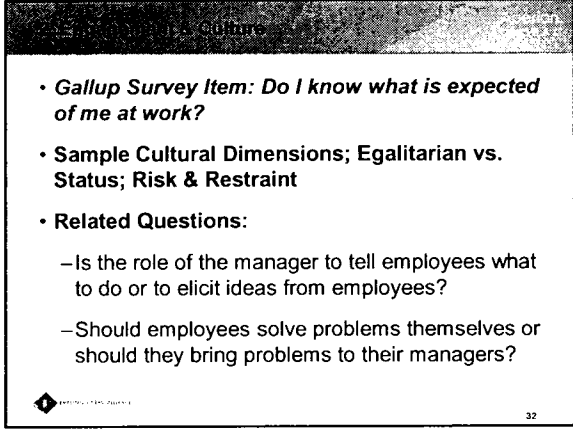
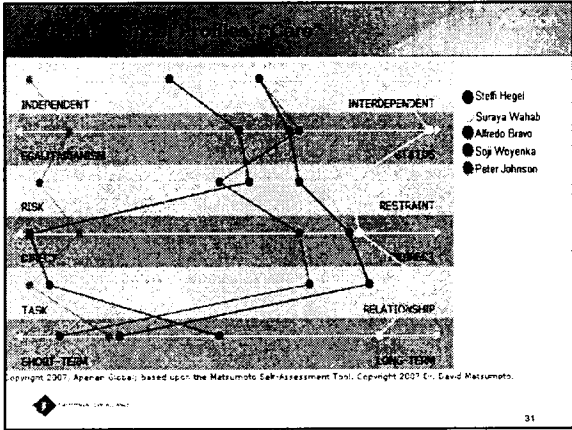
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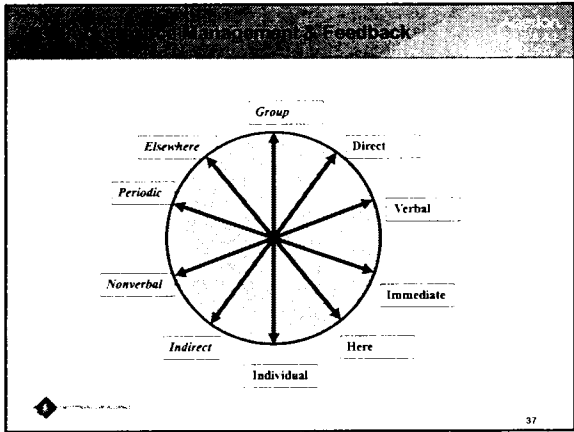
- In Eastern Europe, a Romanian subsidiary of a Silicon Valley software company was voted "Best Place to Work 2009" by its "millennium" workforce: one high potential employee even chose to wait six months for his contract because of his desire to be associated with this authentic business model.
- On the other hand, in Southern Europe (Italy, Spain), a North American entertainment company claims that "too much retention and loyalty" (average employment tenure: twelve years) is preventing innovation and creativity.

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- **Gallup Survey Item: Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?**
- **Sample Cultural Dimensions; Independent vs. Interdependent; Task vs. Relationship**
- **Related Questions:**
  - How is care demonstrated?
  - Does the employee expect to work closely with other team members or more independently?
  - How often does the team meet in person?
  - Are team member relations strictly professional or do they extend to more personal friendship ties as well?

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### Management & Feedback

Cultural Orientation	Feedback Expectations And Behavior		Cultural Orientation
INDIVIDUAL	Individuals who have feedback to offer should provide it to other individuals using the appropriate techniques	Feedback is commonly provided on a group basis and may be provided to a group even when it is intended for an individual	GROUP
EQUALITY	Feedback can be given both ways between a superior and a subordinate	Feedback is given, and expected, primarily from the superior to the subordinate	HIERARCHY
TASK	The person and the task are separated, and the focus is on how to do the task well	Person and task are not separated; feelings and facts are both important when giving critical feedback	RELATIONSHIP
UNIVERSAL	Work-related feedback is usually provided at work. It is important to follow the proper procedure and make it concrete, objective, and constructive	After hours venues may provide a setting where feedback can be given and received more freely, even between managers and subordinates	SITUATIONAL
VERBAL	Feedback is explicit to prevent misunderstandings	Feedback is not given explicitly to avoid confrontation and damaged relationships	NONVERBAL

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### Learning Styles: China

- Learning from the Master, from Respected Models
  - Apprenticeship System
- Incremental Learning; Repetition
- Memorization
- Hands-on Learning
- Examination System
- Other
  - Teacher is the Expert
  - Learning is the Teacher's Responsibility
  - Learning through Stories
  - Majority Use Right Hand
  - Posture Important
  - Highly Structured

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### Cultural Dimensions

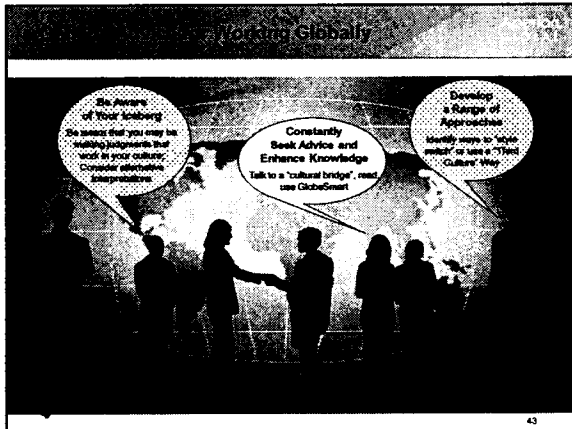
Culture	Race and Ethnicity	Socioeconomic Status
	Gender	Language
	Regional Origin	Organizational Affiliation
	Educational Background	Sexual Orientation
	Age	Job Function
	Religion	Physical Disability
	Family Background	Other

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- The concept of Meritocracy (irrespective of gender) and "equal gender representation" is not universal
    - French multinational corporation's female CEO announced in March 2010, "I will enforce 10% women representation in the Senior Management"
    - French renown "grandes ecoles" focus on diversity & inclusion since Jan 2010
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- ### Cultural Dimensions & Practices
- An increasing Muslim population has pushed a Western cosmetics multinational to adapt its office layout to include prayer rooms for the five daily prayers and adapt meeting times; Company events are not hosted during the fasting month of Ramadan
    - "Head coverings are seen by some in the West as a form of oppression of women. But it is important to recognize that many Muslim women feel that the head scarf is a form of modesty that shifts the focus from their physical appearance to their capabilities in the workplace."
    - "An Indian colleague, who knew about our customs told me 'Happy Ramadan' at the beginning of the Ramadan season. I also appreciate it when colleagues understand why I don't eat during the Ramadan fasting period and are not offended."
    - Ramadan in 2010 is from August 11<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of September.
  - An Asian petroleum company sends its employees on training courses "How to effectively manage Western women and international teams"
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