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# CORPORATE TRIBALISM

HISPANIC/LATINO & U.S. MAINSTREAM CULTURAL PATTERNS



DISCUSSION GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

VERSION 0917



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LEADER'S DISCUSSION GUIDE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES.....</b>	<b>4</b>
TRAINING DESIGN .....	5
EFFECTIVE WAYS TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS .....	7
ICE BREAKERS .....	8
ADDRESSING RESISTANCE.....	9
<b>COMMUNICATION STYLES .....</b>	<b>10</b>
COMMUNICATION STYLES VIGNETTE .....	13
GROUP DISCUSSION .....	15
REWORKING THE SCENE WITH MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS.....	18
STUMBLING BLOCKS .....	19
CROSS CULTURAL COMPLICATION - "I QUIT" .....	20
BUILDING SOLUTIONS.....	23
<b>ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY .....</b>	<b>25</b>
ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY VIGNETTE #1 .....	28
GROUP DISCUSSION .....	29
REWORKING THE SCENE WITH MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS.....	32
BUILDING SOLUTIONS.....	33
ATTITUDES TOWARD AUTHORITY VIGNETTE #2.....	34
GROUP DISCUSSION .....	35
REWORKING THE SCENE WITH MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS.....	38



STUMBLING BLOCKS.....	39
BUILDING SOLUTIONS.....	41
<b>UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR.....</b>	<b>42</b>
UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR VIGNETTE.....	45
GROUP DISCUSSION.....	47
REWORKING THE SCENE WITH MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS.....	50
STUMBLING BLOCKS.....	51
CROSS CULTURAL COMPLICATION - WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE.....	52
CROSS CULTURAL COMPLICATION - MEDIATION RULES.....	53
BUILDING SOLUTIONS.....	55
<b>ACROSS PATTERNS .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>57</b>



## LEADER'S DISCUSSION GUIDE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this guide is to prepare leaders to facilitate group discussions that reinforce and build on the KMA "Corporate Tribalism" cultural diversity web-based training series.

Discussion group leaders help participants increase self-awareness and analyze workplace interactions with the goal of creating new strategies for effective communication. The discussion group objectives are:

- Identify cultural patterns of difference
- Acquire greater self-awareness of communication and cultural styles
- Determine specific strategies that enable multi-cultural flexibility
- Identify opportunities for change that will lead to greater employee satisfaction, development and retention.

### **KMA Approach**

KMA brings more than 20 years of field-tested experience to their training. Understanding the importance of culture and the role it plays in everyday interactions is central to the KMA approach.

Leveraging extensive research, KMA leads organizations and individuals through a unique training process using multimedia, group facilitation and discussion.

### **"Corporate Tribalism"**

The name Corporate Tribalism, given to KMA's training programs and book, has its roots in cultural anthropology. It's the essence of what makes KMA diversity training unique. We look at what individuals share culturally by virtue of being members of the same group or "tribe." Tribal affiliations - social, ethnic, class - impact everything from the way we see the world and others, to how we see ourselves.

Corporations have traditionally been places where people are expected to conform and de-emphasize their unique characteristics - and yet, what we've learned and teach is that recognizing tribal and cultural differences is the key to unlocking our collective ability to create and excel.



## TRAINING DESIGN

This leader's discussion guide is divided into three discussion content areas:

- Communication Styles
- Attitudes Toward Authority
- Understanding Behavior

These content sections mirror the construction of the web-based training series and are used to examine specific cultural background areas. In this guide we examine and compare a specific traditional culture and U.S. Mainstream culture. Video vignettes that appear in the web-based modules are used as part of the group format to launch discussions.

Group discussion questions are posed after each video to elicit participant feedback. Discussion group leaders are encouraged to lead participants to a desired conclusion by posing questions and facilitating answers in a directed manner. Potential answers and leader's tips are provided throughout this guide to help support desired conclusions and ensure consistent training.

To ensure your discussion objectives, it's important that every participant completes the corresponding web-based training modules prior to the group discussion and finishes their participant worksheets and guides.

## LEADER INSTRUCTIONS AND KEYS

Throughout this leader's guide, you will find grey callout boxes and icons. The following key explains what each icon represents:



To-do checklist for leaders



Ideas and suggestions for leading the learning session



Show video vignette



Discussion item or group activity



## PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Prior to leading the discussion, make sure you:

- ☐ Distribute an e-mail reminder for attendees
- ☐ Review the web-based learning module and preview the DVD vignettes
- ☐ Check classroom A/V equipment and hang posters

Materials you should have to lead the discussion group:

- ☐ Vignette DVD and DVD player
- ☐ Participant Discussion workbooks
- ☐ Posters for class or meeting room

## SAMPLE E-MAIL REMINDER:

Subject line: Corporate Tribalism Discussion Group

To:

Subject:

Signature:

Dear participant:

Please join me for an informal discussion on the "Corporate Tribalism" web-based training you recently completed. Our conversation will focus on Communication Styles of Hispanic/Latino (insert appropriate culture and content section) and U.S. Mainstream cultures.

Be sure to bring your web-based learning worksheet and questions or topics you want to discuss. We will meet (insert date/location/timing).

I look forward to sharing ideas and continuing the conversation.



## EFFECTIVE WAYS TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS



*Begin the meeting with a quick round of introductions (participant names and work functions). After establishing the ground rules, asking ice breaker questions will allow participants to speak up and become comfortable offering their ideas in the group forum.*

### GROUND RULES - "SPILLING THE MILK"

To support the training's interactive design, participants must feel comfortable sharing ideas in a non-threatening environment. It's important to review a number of ground rules:

- The discussion group setting is a "safe place" for difficult conversations.
- Participants are present because they want to learn.
- Creating change requires speaking your mind, disagreeing and even making mistakes. Experiences and conversations remain in the group.
- Your organization values this change, and as a result, there are no career-threatening mistakes.



*Keep in mind: Members from traditional cultural groups may want to identify issues collectively rather than individually. Allow small group breakouts to accommodate this preference where possible.*



## ICE BREAKERS

As you start discussions, ask participants to think back to the culture quiz they took during the introduction module of the web-based training series. Depending on the frequency with which your group meets, you may want to vary the suggested ice breaker questions offered here.

- How many discovered they were more traditional in their answers? How many were more mainstream? Did anyone have a mix of mainstream and traditional answers?
- Were participants surprised by the quiz findings?
- Did participants see a link between their quiz answers and the styles of the people who raised them?



*Ice breaker note: Allow participants to share some of their personal views as you begin each meeting, but don't enlist a lengthy discussion at this point. Let participants know that the discussion is designed to review and further explore concepts and learning introduced in the web-based modules.*

*The ice breaker exercise transitions a discussion on addressing resistance. If needed, this should be done before discussing specific cultural archetypes.*





## ADDRESSING RESISTANCE

### ISSUE: CULTURAL PATTERNS DON'T FIT MY EXPERIENCE

The primary issue of concern that many participants have with cultural patterns is when they don't fit their social or cultural experience as a member of that group. (See: Bell Curve poster)

#### **Remind participants:**

Archetypical patterns don't have to represent 100% of a group to be culturally representative of the group. However, even those group members who are not in the center of the bell group – outliers – recognize that the pattern is true for many members of their group.

### ISSUE: CULTURAL ARCHETYPING SEEMS LIKE A FORM OF STEREOTYPING

Conventional social etiquette makes many feel uncomfortable talking about group differences. Because generalizations are often associated with stereotypes, over time people have learned to avoid talking about differences.

Some may assert that differences don't exist or that people should be ashamed or defensive about differences (otherwise why would we be reluctant to discuss them?). If the result is that people don't acknowledge and discuss differences, it leads to numerous problems as illustrated in the web-based learning modules.

#### **Remind participants:**

Archetypes differ significantly from stereotypes. (See: Stereotype vs. Archetype poster)

- Archetypes are non-judgmental, research-based generalizations with the intent to include, not exclude
- Archetypes are representative of insiders' views
- Archetypes do not have to apply to all group members to be true for a majority
- Archetypes enable constructive discussions about group differences



## COMMUNICATION STYLES

### HISPANIC/LATINO & U.S. MAINSTREAM PATTERNS





# ARCHETYPES

## ARCHETYPES OF HISPANIC/LATINO COMMUNICATION STYLES

### **Influence of Catholicism**

Because Spain and Portugal colonized much of Latin America, their predominantly Catholic culture influenced common group characteristics and core values within Latin America.

- Catholicism is predominantly collectivistic, hierarchical and role-driven.
- Loyalty and respect is demanded of leaders who in turn take care of their people. At work this translates to bosses who take care of their employees' careers in exchange for loyalty and hard work.

### **Importance of Family**

Hispanics/Latinos are traditionally patriarchal and collectivistic with regard to family. Their concern for family and their familial group comes first. Also, they believe work and family life are integrated and inseparable, because one area directly affects the other.



## ARCHETYPES OF U.S. MAINSTREAM COMMUNICATION STYLES

### **Influence of Protestantism**

Because the U.S. was colonized primarily by the Protestant Anglo Saxon culture, this dominant culture influenced their group characteristics and core values, which also is reflected in U.S. Mainstream corporations.

- Protestantism is individualistic, self-reliant and legalistic.
  - These traits influence employees to place a high value on rule-governing and self-promotion.
- From the mainstream perspective, individuals are in charge of their own careers and success.

### **Independence of Family**

In mainstream culture, personal and work life is separate. Personal issues are seen as an intrusion on work and should be kept out or minimized whenever possible in the workplace.



*After reviewing the communication points, play the Hispanic/Latino – U.S. Mainstream Communication Style vignette: “Waiting to be Recognized – Part 1.” Ask participants to keep the archetypes in mind as they watch the video.*



## COMMUNICATION STYLES VIGNETTE

### "Waiting To Be Recognized – Part 1"

**Mr. Pearson:** We'll soon be beginning our year-end reviews. And as you're all well aware, here at Leveritt Pottery, we do have an open promotion policy. We like to promote from within. And since I'll be seeing each of you individually, I would like you to keep in mind the five steps to promotion here. Being on time. Initiative - this company is founded on the ideas of its employees. Quality work. Customer satisfaction. Cost consciousness. I'm sure I'll be speaking to each one of you individually very soon. Eddie, congratulations on that new baby. I just heard. How's your wife?

**Eddie:** She's fine.

**Mr. Pearson:** All right. Give her my regards, will you?

**Eddie:** Okay.

**Mr. Pearson:** Good. Keep up the good work. Good Morning everybody.

**Gustavo:** Oh boy. How many times have we heard this before?

**Eddie:** Mr. Pearson has a lot of nerve, Gustavo.

**Gustavo:** What do you mean?

**Eddie:** You know what I mean. How can he talk about promotion when he knows he doesn't mean it?

**Gustavo:** Well, he does that once every six months. You should be used to it by now.





**Eddie:** Come on. Look. Brent and I started at the same time. Now I am still doing Account Collections while he has moved up to Sales.

**Gustavo:** You're right.

**Eddie:** Gustavo, you know that I have done everything on this list that he has mentioned.

**Gustavo:** Yeah – I know you are very committed Eddie, maybe you should make an appointment to talk to Mr. Pearson about this.

**Eddie:** He is our manager; he knows my performance.

**Gustavo:** Well – you know how it goes, if you are not talking about yourself and your accomplishments, who will? Sometimes you just have to remind people about what you're doing.

**Eddie:** I don't know; it should not take someone this long to be recognized. I am going to start looking elsewhere.

**Gustavo:** Do you want me to say something to him? He needs to know how unhappy you are.

**Eddie:** He'll know when he doesn't see me around anymore.







## GROUP DISCUSSION



### *Discussion management points:*

- *The first set of analysis questions are designed to reinforce key information. Be quick to address and correct any misconceptions or inaccuracies that may undermine the learning of the group at large.*
- *If necessary, remind participants that patterns/archetypes are based on research and are not stereotypes.*
- *If necessary, remind participants that patterns do not have to apply to everyone within a group to be representative of the group.*

## OPENING POINT

To better understand what is going on in this scenario from a cultural perspective, we need to look at each person and examine how they are acting, what they are saying and why.



## LET'S BEGIN BY EXAMINING THE SCENE FROM EDDIE'S PERSPECTIVE (Possible participant answers in italics)

### **Why doesn't Eddie approach Mr. Pearson about his desire to be promoted to sales?**

- *Eddie expects his boss to know his high performance and achievements without having to be told.*
- *Given Eddie's cultural deference to roles and hierarchy, asking for a raise or promotion would be a sign of disrespect and could be interpreted as a criticism of his boss not doing his job.*
- *On a personal level, Eddie sees asking for a promotion or raise that he deserves as demeaning or begging.*

### **How might the importance of family factor into the situation for Eddie?**

- *Eddie understands that the quality of his work is ultimately the reason for which he should be promoted. However, since Hispanic/Latinos view family and work life to be inseparable, the birth of a child would be one more reason - from Eddie's perspective - that he shouldn't have to wait any longer for Mr. Pearson to consider him for promotion.*
- *Eddie does not believe that he deserves a promotion because he has another child. But since Mr. Pearson now knows that Eddie has a new baby, taking a more active interest in Eddie's career would not only be seen as timely, but would indicate to Eddie that his boss really sees and values his work as well as caring about his well being and that of his family.*





## NEXT, LET'S LOOK AT THE SCENE FROM MR. PEARSON'S PERSPECTIVE

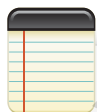
*(Possible participant answers in italics)*

### **What assumptions do you think he draws from Eddie's silence?**

- *From his Mainstream individualistic and self-reliant perspective, Mr. Pearson expects Eddie to take the initiative, express interest in moving forward and make a case for himself.*
- *He also assumes that unless Eddie says otherwise, he is content and happy.*

### **How might Mr. Pearson view Eddie's new baby?**

- *He would see his congratulatory acknowledgement in the staff meeting as the appropriate level of recognition. However, he would not see a growing family as a reason to re-evaluate Eddie's work. In an effort to remain impartial and fair to all employees - family matters should not impact workplace decisions.*



*Next, invite participants to work through some better solutions using their multicultural knowledge and shared responsibility awareness.*



## REWORKING THE SCENE WITH MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS

**How could Mr. Pearson and Eddie have approached the scenario differently understanding each other's cultural patterns?**

### MR. PEARSON

Mr. Pearson should make a practice of rewarding work that speaks for itself, rather than waiting for his employees to bring it up. He should not assume that silence equates to satisfaction.

Additionally, Mr. Pearson should take the opportunity to praise his employees when they're doing a good job. Hispanic/Latinos welcome praise and it's an important part of feeling good about their work environment.

### EDDIE

Eddie should keep in mind that Mr. Pearson expects him to tell him what he is doing in a straight-forward way and to promote his own accomplishments.

He also needs to understand that Mr. Pearson, as a U.S. Mainstream manager, expects employees to do that, and will not view Eddie's self-promotion as a criticism of his management style.



## STUMBLING BLOCKS

Even when we know what's required, we can still find it difficult to do.

**Consider the possibilities for Eddie and Mr. Pearson to change their attitudes toward each other's behavior. What gets in the way of accommodating each other?**

### EDDIE

Eddie needs to overcome his pride as it relates to his feeling that asking for something feels like begging. And while Eddie, personally, is more frustrated than fearful when addressing his boss (as shown later in the video) many traditional Hispanics would, in addition to pride need to overcome fear. Hispanic bosses traditionally, do not look kindly upon employees who ask for raises or promotions that fall within their discretion to give. For traditional Hispanics, asking for a promotion or a raise is like "shooting themselves in the foot."

### MR. PEARSON

Mr. Pearson needs to overcome his bias of assigning weakness to employees who "won't (or can't) stand up for themselves" in matters relating to self-promotion. This bias grows out of the mainstream values of self-reliance and self-determination.



## CROSS CULTURAL COMPLICATION - "I QUIT"

Consider Eddie's comment to his colleague, Gustavo, "He'll know when he doesn't see me around any more." This comment illustrates an important difference in the way U.S. Mainstream and Hispanic cultures communicate dissatisfaction at work.

### TRADITIONAL HISPANIC PERSPECTIVE:

When traditional Hispanic employees say they're going to leave the company for a specific reason, it may not be the true reason but mean something else like, "I deserve a raise" or "I want a promotion." This is what Hispanics call an *indirecta* -- a way of letting the boss know something is amiss without having to tell him or her directly. For Hispanics and other traditional hierarchical groups confronting a boss on an issue should be avoided.

For example, in one traditional Latin workplace when a female employee threatened to quit, her traditional boss said, "I order you not to quit, you are too important to me." He then gave her the raise that she deserved.



## U.S. MAINSTREAM PERSPECTIVE:

When a traditional employee says they are leaving the company for an unspecified reason or one not directly related to their work, U.S. Mainstream bosses will see that as the real reason they want to leave. They would not pick up that it may be code for, "It's time to give me a raise or promotion."

One way to know if there might be a work-related reason without asking the employee is to review where that employee stands with respect to his or her peers. Are they being paid considerably less for essentially the same work? Have they been in their position substantially longer than their peers who arrived at the same time and since moved up? Do they deserve to be paid more or promoted based upon what they have done? If the answer to those questions is "yes," then make corrective changes without having to discuss the matter with the employee first.

One way a manager can determine if the reason given is true, is to pretend at first that it is not the true answer and follow the steps outlined in the above paragraph. The critical distinction is to figure out indirectly, without confrontation, what the employee is trying to communicate. If it turns out that the reason given is true, then no harm is done. Hispanics will simply reassert that they really need to leave, but will also be grateful for your efforts to keep them. If indeed the employee is trying to convey dissatisfaction at work, you will have succeeded in taking the necessary corrective action in a non-confrontational way.

Remember not to force the Hispanic person into a verbal confrontation with you about their unhappiness at work by asking, "Is anything wrong at work?" One reason Hispanics use *indirectas* is precisely to avoid that kind of confrontation. In fact, if Hispanics were to confront the boss about their work situation (which they feel the boss has been remiss in correcting) it usually means that they really are quitting. Indirect communication is a way of sending a message while still leaving the door open.



*Next, lead the group through open-ended questions. This is an opportunity to further explore the communications patterns and apply them to current situations in the workplace.*

Review Copy  
Do Not Distribute



## BUILDING SOLUTIONS

### GROUP FEEDBACK QUESTIONS

#### Take a quick pulse:

- With a show of hands, how many of you are comfortable self-promoting? How many are uncomfortable?
- How many of you feel that the inability or reluctance to self promote has damaged your career? Has anyone been advised to “not” self promote?”



#### **Based on how participants answered the pulse questions, note some of the following points:**

*For those of you who are uncomfortable self promoting, you are probably more traditional than U.S. Mainstream Anglos. (Remember U.S. Mainstream culture is based on White Anglo Saxon Protestantism, once referred to as “wasp” culture, and that whites who are not Protestant, like Catholics, Jews, Eastern Orthodox, Muslims, Buddhists etc. - may be more traditional in how they approach authority.*

*Many African Americans believe work should speak for itself, but can and will self-promote if necessary. However, if the self-promotion is slightly more intense than mainstream Anglo self-promotion style, African Americans will be accused of “pushing too hard too fast.” Even if a person of color pushes with the same intensity as a white man, they may be judged as pushing too soon based on the legacy of racism in the U.S. that viewed black self-assertion as “uppity” (a term used especially in the South) and a sign of not “knowing their place.”*

*In the case of white women, many will wait to be told when they will receive a raise or a promotion, feeling that it’s the prerogative of their boss.*



**Call on individuals or address the group with these questions:**

Why do you think U.S. Mainstream culture makes a case for self-promotion?

What does it do for the individual? (*selling of self displays self-confidence and a willingness to stand up for oneself*)

What does it assume? (*desire to get ahead, willingness to compete and distinguish oneself from others, sees oneself as a marketable commodity*)

To what extent is self-promotion required for advancement in your job?

Can you think of other ways to be recognized within the workplace? Are they as effective?