Cross-Cultural Coaching

Presented by
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Cross-Cultural Coaching
Shape of the session

• Background and summary research findings
• Introduction to ‘The Kaleidoscope’ model
• Knowledge café: Exploration of culture in coaching practice
• Reflections and application to practice
The importance of culture

Discussion: Is culture important to the coaching relationship? Why?
Why culture is important

• A global market
• A mobile global middle class
• Emergence of ‘global nomads’ into leadership positions,
• Coaching intervention for global executives, expatriate postings, multi-cultural/remote teams & during international mergers & acquisitions
## The problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Level</th>
<th>Business Level</th>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Concept of separate personality a Western one (Hsu, 1971)</td>
<td>▪ Different perceptions of good leadership and what makes sound business goals</td>
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<td>▪ Psychological constructs can hold different meanings in different cultures with different cultural rules for expression (Fisher, 1998)</td>
<td>▪ 50% overseas mergers &amp; acquisitions produce negative returns due cultural clashes (Shelton et al 2003)</td>
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<td>▪ Talking interventions and self-disclosure may conflict with certain cultural values (Sue and Sue, 2008)</td>
<td>▪ Lack of confidence &amp; skills in coaching profession: “How do I coach a German?” UK chat forum, 2008</td>
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The importance of culture

Discussion: Does culture manifest itself in the coaching relationship? How?
What is it?

- The nationality of the coachee compared with the coach
- The nationality of the coachee compared with the host country
- The nationality of the coachee compared with the organisation
- Groups or organisations characterised by people from multiple cultures who are working together
- The presenting issue – manifest by communication issues or misunderstandings of differences
Findings: Background, experience & qualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key aptitudes</th>
<th>‘Trans-culturalism’</th>
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<tr>
<td>Challenging assumptions</td>
<td>Long-term &amp; multiple international tenures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Own cultural self-awareness</td>
<td>Multi-cultural families</td>
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<td>Remaining open</td>
<td>Multi-cultural socialisation process &amp; lifestyle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tolerance for ambiguity &amp; paradox</td>
<td>A large capacity for change and a lack of pre-determination. May have witnessed social injustice</td>
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Towards accumulated cross-cultural wisdom

“I made all the mistakes and got all the scars myself. I had my cross-cultural battles. I now support people on all the mistakes I made.” Participant 2
## Findings: Key competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raising cultural awareness</th>
<th>Working with culturally mandated issues</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Working with difference</strong></td>
<td><strong>Culturally sensitive coaching</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Raising differences</td>
<td>• “you have to let them feel that you put the relationship first; then they can meet goals” P.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cultural values and meanings (cultural self)</td>
<td>• “The American coaching culture is about not giving away a lot of information about yourself, I have found that this doesn’t work well in other cultures.” P8</td>
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<td>• Conflicting values due globalisation</td>
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<td><strong>Training/Development tools</strong></td>
<td><strong>Emerging goals</strong></td>
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<td>e.g. the international profiler (TIP)</td>
<td>• “modifying awareness” P.9</td>
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<td><strong>Beyond language</strong></td>
<td>• “helping to take a stronger part in her life” P.1</td>
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<td>• Clean Language (Grove, 1989)</td>
<td>• “working at the emotional level” p3</td>
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<td>• Symbolic modelling (metaphor)</td>
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<td>(Lawley&amp;Tompkins, 2000)</td>
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<td>• Drawing, Art and music</td>
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<td><strong>Creating a safe place</strong></td>
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<td>• “working with energies; mix of humility &amp; respect” P.3</td>
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<td>• “neutral space” P.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “suspended belief” P.5</td>
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<td>• “holding different values lightly” P.6</td>
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### Findings: The coaching relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Other values</td>
<td>“Executive coaching is great, the concept that came out of the USA, but transporting a Western way of doing things and not taking into consideration other values, can underestimate certain conflicts or potential conflicts.” P8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural norms</td>
<td>“You need to understand the norms, otherwise you can’t coach across cultures” P7</td>
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<td>The impact of economics or politics</td>
<td>“The economy was so uncertain and inflation so high at 200%, you could simply not plan the way.” P5</td>
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<td>The degree of flexibility of thought in the education system</td>
<td>“people seem to be at a different stage of learning.” P6</td>
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<tr>
<td>The history of a culture that might have a bearing on personality or emotions</td>
<td>“In Brazil there is a history of being the biggest importer of Africans into slavery in the world” P 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drawing on theory to understand the tendencies of certain cultures</td>
<td>“Not only the power-distance that creates a trust issue, also the uncertainty-avoidance creates a challenge.” P4</td>
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Conclusions

• Opportunity to work with culture-as-meaning
• Culturally-derived concepts of self differ
• Culturally sensitive coaching can increase awareness & understanding in the relationship
• Western theories/models may not be appropriate across cultures
• A systems approach accommodates cultural complexity
The cross-cultural kaleidoscope™ A systems approach

http://www.10consulting.co.uk/kaleidoscope
You are coaching a woman in her late 30’s who was born and went to school in China (Beijing). She was educated at degree level in Canada. She now works for a US company in London. She is having problems with her British boss, a male in his 40’s. The company have sent her to be coached as she is a talented scientist, but perceived to be unassertive in management meetings.
Knowledge café questions

1. When and how might you use the Kaleidoscope in this situation?
2. What questions might you ask?
3. How would you demonstrate cultural sensitivity over this issue?
Knowledge café terms of engagement

1. Each table represents a different Q
2. Try to discuss all Q’s (10 mins. each)
3. All share insights (20 mins.)
The Cross-Cultural Kaleidoscope

Raising Awareness
• To work at the level of cultural identity (emotional level)
• To identify the impact of external influences upon the psyche/leadership style
• To identify cultural imperatives and conflicting internal values
• To raise awareness to the coach’s cultural bias

Taking Responsibility
• To create choice and behavioural change in a culturally sensitive manner
• To use as a basis for unlearning those cultural values that no longer serve the coachee
The Cross-Cultural Kaleidoscope

Applications

• Use as a discussion point before the coaching session
• Use as a process for the entire coaching session
• Identify which lens holds most resonance and use as a starting point
• Present as a global ‘wheel of life’
Learnings?
Learnings for coaches

• Do not assume everybody wants same treatment
• Develop creative opportunities for dialogue
• Adopt a systems approach
• Build cultural intelligence
• Check own cultural awareness
• Allow more time
• Build trust
• (Cultural) Values are like fingerprints, nobody’s are the same, but you leave them over everything you do
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www.crossculturalexecutivecoaching.com
Key References

- Cultural Orientations Framework (COF™), online assessment tool questionnaire, Rosinski and Company
- United Nations (2006), *Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)*, Statement by Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA