

Phase 2 Individual Project

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Doing Business in China and Understanding Similar and Different Ethical Values

Introduction

The United States for the most part is a free and open society. The country is made up of laws and Judeo-Christian beliefs. The basic concept of Judeo-Christian is to begin with a deep understanding that honest business practices are the norm and these beliefs are transferred to how we (The United States) do business, generally speaking. As with business partnerships in the United States, Asian businesses also believe that “It takes time to cultivate relationship ‘A friend in need is a friend indeed’ (Sing, 2011). Sing also points out that it is important to adapt and adopt some cultural ethics and it involves unlearning and relearning behavioral issues on both sides of the business table. Being sympathetic and considerate of cultural bases for ethical conduct in both the USA and China can support both marketers with knowledge desirable to prosper in cross-cultural business environments (Pitta, Fung, & Isberg, 1999).

Building an Ethical Relationship

When dealing with China a business should research and abide by their rules and ethical concerns. United States business should also only implement lawful practices all the time (Sing, 2011). For example, in China it may be very difficult to understand when it is proper to give a gift (Steidlmeier, 1999). According to Steidlmeier (1999), for a foreign culture it may be the hardest business practice to learn and do correctly in China. Reciprocity is a way of life in many Asian cultures, and in China it is common. Steidlmeier also pointed out that “... cultural logic provides the fundamental ethos of business practices...” (p. 122).

Du, et al., (2013) examined the influence of religion on environmental practices in China. Since Buddhism is the prevalent religion in China an understanding of the concepts and teachings of that particular religion will allow the foreign business to merge into China's business mind. Very similar to Judeo-Christian businesses practices, Buddhism philosophy encourages a "deep respect for the natural world" (p. 2). This belief system, as with Western cultures, can transform many new and existing business ethics into more sound ecological practices.

Understanding and Appreciating the genesis of Eastern culture, Values, and Beliefs

Moran, Harris, & Moran, (2012) have claimed that diversity is the structure of how humanity has dealt with common problems associated with doing business in different countries. Understanding that ethical globalization can affect the "how" we do business is at the fore-front of building a relationship. The genesis of Eastern cultures goes back almost 5000 years. Ignoring the rich history of Chinese philosophies would be a great injustice to go Chinese-Western business relationships (Rarick, 2008). Rarick points out that the Chinese give great respect and practice to Confucius (531 BCE – 479 BCE). Confucius professed that relationships within a group are more important than an individual's relationship. It is based on the Five Relationships; interactions with seniors, parentages, husband/wife, the elders of a clan, and friends. With this in mind, a solid relationship with groups allows for harmony and virtue to prevail. Rarick (2008) stated that the Chinese believe; "Without a significant relationship, the duty of ethical action is diminished." (p. 3).

Although there are many ethical and moral influential Chinese philosophers and leaders throughout their history, the guiding force behind their ethical stance, is that the group is more

important than the individual. Unlike the West, where the individual is paramount and extremely important, that difference has caused clashes. Comprehending this difference in relationships and ethical behavior between Western and Chinese business actions can only increase mutual understandings.

Conclusion

Any foreign business endeavors between different cultures are ripe for misunderstandings. There are many scholarly papers about how to minimize their affects (Reidenbach, & Robin, 1990; Robertson, & Fadil, 1999; Wang & Young, 2013). A mutual respect and knowledge of both Chinese and American ethical and cultural genesis can ultimately provide a foundation for future business and management considerations when seeking a corporate relationship for the perceived benefit of both parties.

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