



As an intern at UKON I have had the pleasure of working with experienced and respected leaders and consultants, while assisting ALIGN with my communicative skills. Being part of the project and UKON has made me reflect on the roles of leaders and consultants as important stakeholder in giving the right advice and asking the right questions in order to solve the right issues. Therefore, this blog post is based on my personal experiences and thoughts on global leaders while being part of ALIGN.

Are Leaders In Global Need?

By Marlene Fabricius Jepsen, October 2016.

Businesses are accelerating faster than ever and we have no time to stop and reflect upon how we actually work to makes things work. What is actually going on inside businesses in such a rapidly changing international world? Are things getting out of reach and are we at the deadline? Yes, we are at the deadline, as we need to face the changes now! Especially for leadership teams – without competent and functional leadership teams to manage, plan, implement and accomplish, businesses cannot keep spinning its wheels so fast.

Much is already known on the matter, however this is an important area to investigate further. We are facing changing times. We need to accept, and adapt to, the mechanisms of globalization in order not to lose face! Culture is a great determiner of everything we do and face every day, thus losing face is very unfortunate. And how do you manage this as a leader in a global organization? How do you balance differences in behavior and attitude, and more importantly, how do you take advantage of those differences? Does it mean anything for leaders to be part of a leadership team, and how is leadership terminology understood among different leaders depending on national background? How big a role does trust actually play, and how can leadership teams solve problems without causing problems?

So far, we have been asking these questions at workshops and in focus groups, thus we know there is a need to address the issues in intercultural consulting of global leadership teams. But how do you ask the right questions that will make people talk? How do you address the issue with respect

for the culture you are in? One must remember that what is not of importance in one culture, can be crucial in another and might end up destroying or preventing a relationship from growing. It might be explained by the barrier-breaking globalized world we live in, where interaction, innovation and internationalization are important buzz words. What used to be tangible barriers are becoming increasingly invisible due to online interaction. But we cannot forget that culture and nationality have an important power, regardless of the shrinking world. We do not easily adapt to different cultures or situations where something unknown occur, and more importantly, we forget the issues that we know already will happen when we meet people with different backgrounds. And it will happen constantly, especially in business related activities, since we depend on each other's knowledge and competencies in producing unique and competitive products that can make our businesses flourish. So is it not time to stop now, remember and notice what we are, what we have and reflect on why the world is suddenly spinning so fast?

These are just some of the questions we have asked ourselves in the startup phase of ALIGN, and which we seek obtain a deeper understanding of throughout the project. It is difficult to actually ask the right questions, which is why it has been our primary focus so far. We aim to share the answers to these rather abstract questions and thoughts with you along the way. We hope that you will join the process and ask curious questions. We are very interested in learning of your experiences with culture, especially from working in global teams with a diverse workforce. And last not but least, do you believe us to be on the right track? What are we missing?

Please like, share and comment – we can only inspire and learn from each other by sharing our thoughts and beliefs.

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