

Building Bridges Breaking Barriers

Chitaranjan (Jivan) Saran, PhD, PE, CPE, CHCM
Saran Consulting
Professor Emeritus, Safety Sciences,
University of Central Missouri

Introduction

This presentation and paper will break barriers to safety, health, ergonomics and environmental protection (SHEEP) communication and build bridges to the 21st century across managerial, cultural, linguistic and gender differences. It will involve audience participation. It will facilitate communication of SHEEP, productivity, economic and other challenges and controls across cultures. It applies directly to the diverse work force and multinational management.

The objective of this presentation and paper is to facilitate communication between management, labor, and professionals in the 21st century. It will build bridges across managerial, cultural, linguistic and gender differences. Relationship between various components of SHEEP will be explored. It will:

- promote a holistic approach to SHEEP
- enhance an understanding of the cultural variations of SHEEP risks
- discuss the role of sustainable development and profits in improving the quality for life
- review some challenges facing multinationals and small businesses
- conduct some exercises involving the participants to solve their specific cultural SHEEP challenges and appropriate case studies.

Rationale

People from different cultures perceive the same hazard differently. They act upon their perception. This perception is based upon their socio-cultural and ethical values. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' values. What may be right under one society's norms may not be so in a different society. These cultural divides may include gender, age, sexual orientation, language, ethnicity, management-labor relationships, disciplines/professions, socio-economic status, geo-political boundaries, and others.

Unprecedented progress in communication, technology, transportation, biotechnology in the 21st century will make the barriers/divides obsolete. For survival and improvement in the quality of life in a multicultural global village of the 21st century, building bridges, breaking barriers (BBBB) is essential for improvement of SHEEP. In an increasingly diverse workforce and corporate boardrooms, it is essential that the two (1) communicate with each other and (2)

understand the expectations, motivations, and goals of each other. SHEEP challenges of accidental injuries, illnesses, and pollution affect the bottom line and the quality of life. SHEEP factors affecting the bottom line include: workers' compensation, medical and health expenses, environmental cleanup and disposal, lost wages, productivity, quality, morale, work ethics, physical capabilities, and others.

Hazards do not respect socio-cultural or geopolitical boundaries. Gases from Union Carbide plant in Bhopal touched thousands beyond factory walls. Exxon Valdez and Chernobyl accidents affected thousands across borders. Birds, animals, and fish migrate across national borders with impunity. Carbon emissions from US automobiles and factories are the major culprits to the global warming. This interdependence of countries necessitates a multidisciplinary and multinational solution to global issues. This requires BBBB to improve SHEEP in the global village. It is a question of common survival or common annihilation

Definitions

Safety: Absence of accidental injuries and property damage

Health: Absence of 'dis-ease'

Ergonomics: Technique to improve productivity, safety and health

Environment: Physical and psycho-social time and space

Protection: Status quo or some predetermined state of development

Development: Manipulating the environment to improve human comfort

Risk: evaluated hazard, mostly based on perception

Culture: Common set of beliefs, values, objects and experiences to interact with psycho-social and physical environment

Holistic: Looking at the whole picture

System: A permutation of components or sub systems which act and interact to accomplish a mission under given restraints or environment

SHEEP Relationship

Both safety and health connote freedom from unexpected and/or unacceptable harm. Unit of harm in safety is an accidental injury while and the unit of harm in health is disease. Accidental injuries and diseases both involve damage to bodily tissues or the impairment of their normal functions or status.

Most diseases are accidental. One does not plan on contracting diseases, except some sailors and some of my students on the day of an examination. Many diseases are cumulative mini-injuries or traumas. One cell deteriorates at a time and by the time it is detected it has become a disease. Symptoms of diseases normally take longer to appear of be detected.

Accidents are generally traumatic, such as severed limbs and blood and guts all over. The basic difference between accidental injuries and disease is *time*. The time is generally arbitrary.

Protection involves prevention of harm. Immediately, the following questions arise: who gets rewards, who is being harmed, and so on. You have all heard of the following dilemma: Rain as a blessing or a bane for a farmer or a potter. Other examples include the development of a beach into a resort, or the location of a hazardous waste site and its economic, social, cultural and ethnic implications; saving the spotted owl **and** (not or) jobs; small businesses versus large corporations—economics of mass production

Cultural Variations of SHEEP Risks

Risk, Hazard and Culture

A SHEEP risk is perceived differently by people with different cultural background, socio-economic status and other differences. Hazards of frost bites, heat strokes, and environmental diseases may not be of any special significance of individuals not accustomed to such exposures.

Two basic components of SHEEP risk or evaluated hazard are: hazard and evaluation. *Hazard* has two facets: actual or physical and perceptual.

Evaluation's two major aspects are perceptual and statistical. *Perception* of a hazard is based upon one's experience and culture. *Experience* is dependent upon culture and statistical accumulation of events (see Figure 1).

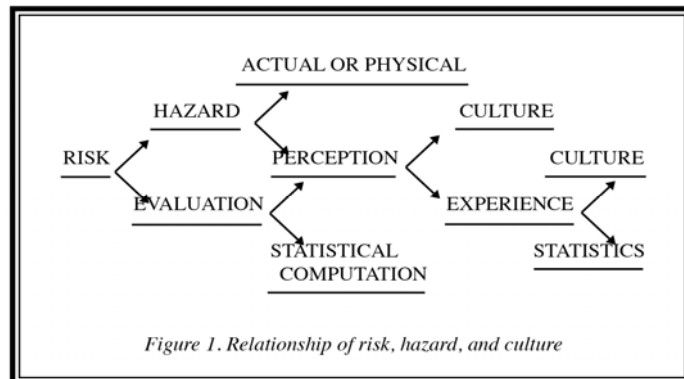
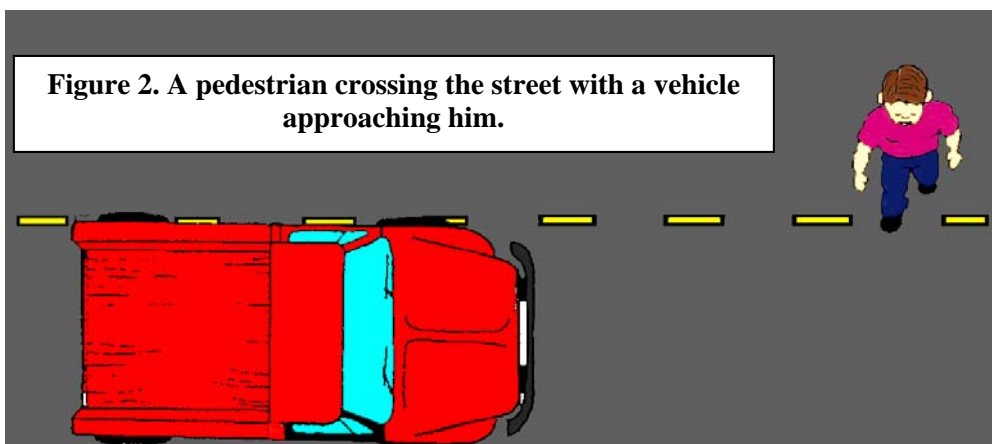


Figure 1. Relationship of risk, hazard, and culture

In pedestrian, vehicle, road interaction: The same hazard may be perceived differently by individuals with different cultural background, experiences, and goals. The risk of crossing the street in the presence of a vehicle approaching the pedestrian will be perceived differently by different pedestrians or the same pedestrian under different circumstances.



Physical or actual dimensions of hazard include: actual speed of the vehicle, actual distance between vehicle and the pedestrian,

weight and braking characteristics of the vehicle, half road width, road conditions, and physical capabilities of the pedestrian (see Figure 2).

Perception of the hazard involves: (1) perception of speed, distances, weight, braking characteristics, road width, road conditions, and physical capabilities of the pedestrian, and (2) motivation



Hazard Perception

Different cultures perceive hazards differently. Individuals in different age groups would perceive the same hazard differently respond to different motivations (i.e., an attractive girl on the other side seen by a teenager or myself; Los Angelian and Amazon Indian pedestrians; male and female drivers; or young and old pedestrians, would perceive the same hazard differently.

Hazard Evaluation (Risk)

Evaluation of a hazard or the risk is a function of:

- **perception**
- **physical characteristics** of the hazards, including the agent, host and the environment
- **probability** of occurrence of various consequences
- **severity/reward** of the consequences
- **value** of the reward to the individual or society
- techniques for the **detection** of hazards and consequences—technological and socio-economic **limitations**
- credibility and reliability of hazard/consequences **association**
- credibility, reliability, and technological limitations for hazard **controls**
- public/individual **sensitivity**
- individual and societal **experiences**

Reward, Risk, and Action

Different cultures will have different perception of the same hazards, depending upon the reward. Hence, there will be different courses of action. Some parameters for actions by different cultures are:

- Reward of complying with SHEEP regulators, politicians, workers or general public, younger or older workers, upper management and stock holders, different countries
- Hazards of deforestation, species extinction to Brazilian ranchers, Amazon Indians, loggers, and the rest of the world
- Hazards of ozone layer depletion to gas-guzzling world and the environmentalists
- Does the smoker have faith in the credibility and reliability of the association between smoking and lung cancer? George Burns smoked and lived to be 100
- Value of hazardous waste dumps to various states in this country, developing world, and New Jersey
- Enforcement of SHEEP standards in this country and Western Europe

Cultural Aspects of Hazard Perception

Figure 3 illustrates the influence of experience and culture in the decision making process:

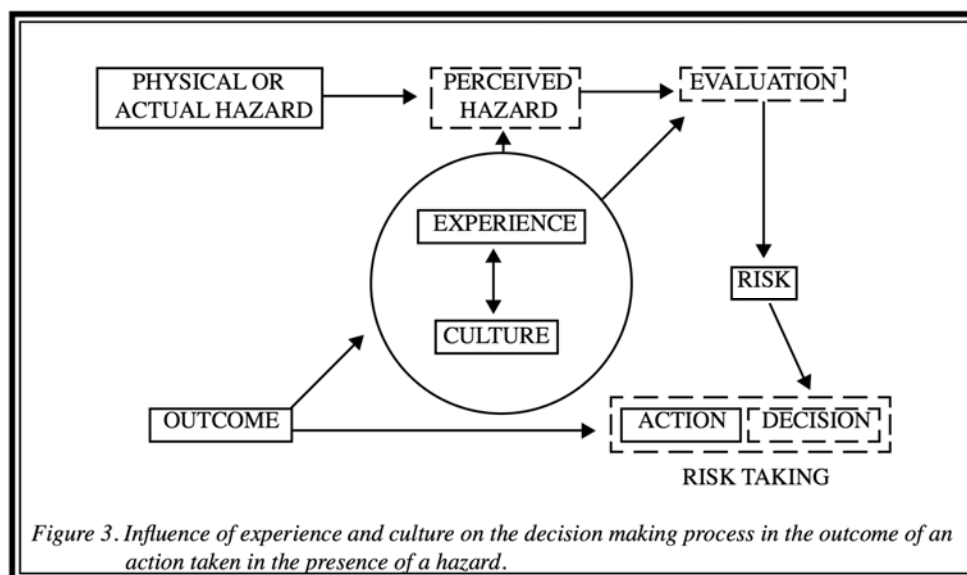


Figure 3. Influence of experience and culture on the decision making process in the outcome of an action taken in the presence of a hazard.

INTERNATIONAL SHEEP CHALLENGES

One example of an international SHEEP challenge is the export of toxic waste to developing countries. We do not want the hazardous waste, nor do we want to pay to clean it up. We balance the cleanup cost with our pocket books. We dump our waste on economically challenged neighborhoods or communities. It may be toxic discrimination.

You are familiar with our life style of driving 20 miles to jog 5 miles and then grab a cone of ice cream on our way home. In other countries undernourishment is a common lifestyle. Maybe we can strive for a balance. The cost of one doll may feed a starving person for a week.

Now I would like you to share your overseas experiences with us. What were the most significant personal, family, societal, or systematic challenges you faced.

Challenges Facing Multinationals

- U.S. managers are more adaptable than those of many other countries because of the diversity of this country of immigrants.
- Effective transnational managers do not always inspire workers but are best at negotiating with government bureaucrats.
- In a Russian firm, you sit around more, drink tea and wait to be told what to do. In an American company, you know what your responsibilities are. Dutch find motivational gimmicks such as balloons, or casual Fridays silly. West Europeans cannot comprehend how the U.S. can have 40 million people without health insurance.
- Feng Shui: Chinese practice of harnessing natural forces to bring good luck to the boss implies good luck of the subordinates—trickle down good luck
- Largest and remotest corner office for the boss with mahogany desk and other perks
- Philip Morris and Intel operate in 200 countries and use over 100 languages
- Phillips Petroleum places its best people in 15 countries. They adapt to cultural differences and get local workers to adopt American corporate values. These are coveted assignments.

Challenges/Terms

- Bribery: Commission of fee, cost of doing business, tax deductible, dining and wining
- Cultural Variables: Religion, customs, socio-economic status, occupation, race, gender, age
- Human Rights: Women's rights of pedestal (food, shelter, clothes) versus child/women labor; freedom of speech/ starvation; private property; pay U.S. wages and European benefits to workers across the globe
- Nepotism: Hiring relatives, grooming kin to take over the business
- Value System: Good/bad, black/white, God/devil; flirting, complimenting, evil eye; fossil fuel consumption, ozone layer depletion, rain forest burning, 5% of the world consuming 30% of the world resources
- Work ethics work/rest regimen, climate adaptation

Cultural Shock

Factors that contribute to cultural shock and reverse cultural shock are listed in Figure 4 below.

Cultural shock may result from encountering	Reverse cultural shock may result from encountering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Different management philosophies ✚ An unfamiliar language ✚ New foods, styles of dress, driving patterns, and the like ✚ An unfamiliar currency system ✚ Reduced availability of goods ✚ Different attitudes toward work and productivity ✚ Separation from friends and co-workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A loss of decision-making authority ❖ A loss of responsibility ❖ Changes in one's level or status in the organization ❖ Changes in one's personal lifestyle ❖ Technological and organizational changes

Figure 4. Cultural shock and reverse cultural shock factors

Definitions

- **Culture:** Common set of beliefs, values, objects and experiences to interact with psycho-social and physical environment
- **Cultures, high context:** Use situational cues to assess visitors, emphasize personal relationships, value trust, focus on non-verbal cues, social needs before business matters—China, Korea, Japan
- **Cultures, low context:** Interpret cues literally, rely on written and legal documents, conduct business first, value expertise and performance—Germany, U.S., Scandinavia
- **Cultural distance:** Amount of difference between any two social systems. A citizen of one country accurately expressed the contrast. We are only one day (geographically) but many years distant (technologically and socially) from Washington, DC.
- **Cultural shock:** Feeling of confusion, insecurity, and anxiety caused by a strange new environment
- **Cultural shock, 4 phases:** (1) Excitement, stimulation; (2) Disillusionment; (3) Insecurity and disorientation; and (4) Adaptation
- **Ethnocentrism:** Predisposition to use oneself and one's own culture as the criteria for judging others
- **Orientation, long term:** Value preparing for future, thrift and savings, persistence—China, Japan, and older civilizations
- **Orientation, short term:** Value past, accent present, respect tradition, fulfill historical/social obligations—France, Russia, West Africa, and younger civilizations
- **Parochialism:** Seeing the situation around oneself from one's own perspective only
- **Societies, masculine:** Define gender in stereotypical ways, value assertive behavior and acquisition of wealth—Japan, most masculine; U.S., moderately masculine
- **Societies, feminine:** Broader gender roles, value relationships, caring for others and greater balance between family and work—Scandinavia

Some Cultural Traits:

- Americans demand responses, fill voids of silence with conversation, and use direct eye contact.

- Other nationals may show respect by avoiding eye contact, and use silence to think and evaluate.
- Americans are driven by time, deadlines, promptness, and schedules.
- Other nationals arrive late and devote hours to developing social rapport before business.

Translations/Transliterations

International market: According to Diane Smith, cracking an international market is a goal of most growing corporations. It shouldn't be that hard, yet even the big multinationals run into trouble because of language and cultural differences. For example:

- Scandinavian vacuum manufacturer Electrolux used the following in an American ad campaign: "Nothing sucks like an Electrolux."
- The name Coca-Cola in China was first rendered as Ke-kou-ke-la. Unfortunately, the Coke company did not discover until after thousands of signs had been printed that the phrase means "bite the wax tadpole" or "female horse stuffed with wax," depending on the dialect. Coke then researched 40,000 Chinese characters and found a close phonetic equivalent, "ko-kou-ko-le," which can be loosely translated as "happiness in the mouth."
- In Taiwan, the translation of the Pepsi slogan "Come alive with the Pepsi Generation" came out as "Pepsi will bring your ancestors back from the dead."
- Also in Chinese, the Kentucky Fried Chicken slogan "finger-lickin' good" came out as "eat your fingers off."
- The American slogan for Salem cigarettes, "Salem—Feeling Free," got translated in the Japanese market into "When smoking Salem, you feel so refreshed that your mind seems to be free and empty."
- When General Motors introduced the Chevy Nova in South America, it was apparently unaware that "no va" means "it won't go." After the company figured out why it wasn't selling any cars, it renamed the car in its Spanish markets to the Caribe.
- Ford had a similar problem in Brazil when the Pinto flopped. The company found out that Pinto was Brazilian slang for "tiny male genitals." Ford pried all the nameplates off and substituted Corcel, which means horse.
- When Parker Pen marketed a ballpoint pen in Mexico, its ads were supposed to say "It won't leak in your pocket and embarrass you." However, the company's mistakenly thought the Spanish word "embarazar" meant embarrass. Instead the ads said that "It won't leak in your pocket and make you pregnant."
- An American T-shirt maker in Miami printed shirts for the Spanish market that promoted the Pope's visit. Instead of the desired "I Saw the Pope" in Spanish, the shirts proclaimed "I Saw the Potato."
- Chicken-man Frank Perdue's slogan, "It takes a tough man to make a tender chicken," got terribly mangled in another Spanish translation. A photo of Perdue with one of his birds appeared on billboards all over Mexico with a caption that explained "It takes a hard man to make a chicken aroused."
- Hunt-Wesson introduced its Big John products in French Canada as "Gros Jos" before finding out that the phrase, in slang, means "big breasts." In this case, however, the name problem did not have a noticeable effect on sales.
- Colgate introduced a toothpaste in France called Cue, the name of a notorious porno magazine.
- In Italy, a campaign for Schweppes Tonic Water translated the name into Schweppes Toilet Water.
- Japan's second-largest tourist agency was mystified when it entered English-speaking markets and began receiving requests for unusual sex tours. Upon finding out why, the owners of Kinki Nippon Tourist Company changed its name.

Exercises

Speaking in Tongues

English has imported many words from other languages. Can you match each “foreign” word (1-16) to the language (a-p) from which English got it? (Adopted from Sky, October 1998)

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| 01. bagel | 01. _____ | a. Aztek (via Spanish) |
| 02. chocolate | 02. _____ | b. Chinese |
| 03. galleon | 03. _____ | c. Dutch |
| 04. gymnasium | 04. _____ | d. Finnish |
| 05. gung-ho | 05. _____ | e. French |
| 06. guru | 06. _____ | f. German |
| 07. jelly | 07. _____ | g. Greek |
| 08. maelstrom | 08. _____ | h. Latin |
| 09. martial | 09. _____ | i. Norwegian |
| 10. pariah | 10. _____ | j. Russian |
| 11. ombudsman | 11. _____ | k. Sanskrit (via Hindi) |
| 12. samovar | 12. _____ | l. Spanish |
| 13. sauna | 13. _____ | m. Swedish |
| 14. ski | 14. _____ | n. Tahitian (via Marquesan) |
| 15. tattoo | 15. _____ | o. Tamil |
| 16. wanderlust | 16. _____ | p. Yiddish |

Test Your Knowledge Of Noted U S Women:

Check your knowledge of noted but often little-known women in this quiz adapted from the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, N.Y. U.S.

1. She was the first woman inducted into the Inventor's Hall of Fame. She is known for her work in developing drugs to fight leukemia, AIDS, septic shock and tissue rejection.
2. She is the first woman and the first Hispanic to be named surgeon general of the United States.
3. She was the first American woman doctor.
4. She was the first female athlete to earn more than \$100,000 in a single year.
5. Physically challenged by polio, she made intravenous therapy safe and was the first to isolate the tuberculin agent, helping to develop the first tuberculosis screening test used worldwide. She was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1990 for her achievements in the sciences.
6. She jointly developed the cotton gin, although the credit for this invention is given solely to Eli Whitney.
7. A British scientist, she discovered DNA, the basic building block of life, in 1952. But credit is usually given to biophysicists Maurice Wilkins, James Watson and Francis Crick for the work, for which they were awarded the Nobel Prize in 1962.
8. She was arrested for trying to vote in the November 1872 general election.
9. She was the first female member of the President's Cabinet, becoming secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor in 1932.
10. A Quaker, she helped Elizabeth Cady Stanton organize the first women's rights convention in 1848, held in Seneca Falls, N.Y.
11. She personally led more than 300 slaves to freedom.
12. She was the first American-born Roman Catholic saint.
13. The first female attorney to present a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, she was the first woman to run for president - in 1884 - with the backing of a political party.
14. She was the first American woman to win a Nobel Prize in medicine.
15. She discovered penicillin, although Alexander Fleming is credited with the discovery.
16. First woman justice of the U S Supreme Court
17. First woman U S Attorney General

- 18. First African American Female to run for the U S Presidency
- 19. First Female Astronaut

Adaptability to a Multicultural Assignment

Assume that you have been hired by a firm with extensive operations in many different countries around the world. Your first job assignment will take you out of the United States for approximately three years, and you will depart about thirty days from now.

Review the definitions of parochialism, ethnocentrism, and cultural shock in previous sections. Think about the degree to which you would be likely to exhibit each of these barriers to cultural adaptation, and record your responses on the top portion of the following chart. Then on the bottom portion of the chart indicate the degree to which you would honestly expect to experience difficulty adapting to the culture in each of the six socio cultural clusters.

	LOW DEGREE			HIGH DEGREE			
Barrier							
Parochialism	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Ethnocentrism	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cultural shock	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Socio cultural cluster							
Anglo-American	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Latin American	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Latin European	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nordic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Central European	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pacific Rim	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Share your personal assessments with other participants. (Create a frequency distribution of the responses.) Explore why differences exist among participants, and what the overall pattern implies regarding the capacity of participants to become transcultural employees. What could you, or your employer, do to improve the likelihood of your success in view of your assessments?

Exercise Gambia

Your company/organization has decided to establish a state-of-the-technology plant in Birkama, Gambia. You are the corporate Director of SHEP. The company has also decided to move you and your family to Birkama on a 2-year assignment. The company views it as an important career move for you and an important business decision for the company in the global market

What actions would you take to:

- help the company compete in the global market?
- feel welcome by the locals—people and the government?
- provide the best possible SHEEP for your plant and Birkama?

How would you and your family minimize:

- the cultural shock (feeling of confusion, insecurity, and anxiety caused by a strange new environment)?
- ethnocentrism (a predisposition to use oneself as the criteria for judging others)?
- parochialism (the act of seeing the situation around you from your own perspective)?

How would you prepare for reentry into the United States?

Exercise Value System

Discussion Words:

- Dichotomy: Good/bad, black/white, god/devil, yes/no
- Interpretations: Flirting, complimenting, evil eye, having an affair
- Environmental concerns: Fossil fuel consumption, ozone layer depletion, rain forest

- burning
- 5% of the world consuming 30% of the world's resources

Exercise:

I Individual Activity:

IA Distribute 1000 monetary units (MU) for various necessities of life and justify

IB Assume that food clothing and shelter require about 90% of your disposable income. How would you distribute the rest?

G Group Activity: Get together in groups of 3-4 people, share your distributions and arrive at a consensus for IA and IB above

GA Group's distribution of 1000 monetary units (MU) for various necessities of life and justify

GB Assume that food clothing and shelter require about 90% of your disposable income. How would the group distribute the rest?

Expense distribution:

1. Food, shelter, clothing: IA _____, IB _____, GA _____, GB _____

1. Justification:

2. Family planning IA _____, IB _____, GA _____, GB _____

2. Justification:

3. Safety and health IA _____, IB _____, GA _____, GB _____

3. Justification:

4. Environmental protection IA _____, IB _____, GA _____, GB _____

4. Justification:

5. Recreation/travel IA _____, IB _____, GA _____, GB _____

5. Justification:

6. Recreation/travel IA _____, IB _____, GA _____, GB _____

6. Justification:

7. Recreation/travel IA _____, IB _____, GA _____, GB _____

7. Justification:

Exercise: A Miami Case Study: Bridging Worker/Management Safety Divide

The Case:

Plant Safety Person (PSP): Does anybody in this news group want to talk about safety in the workplace and how to build safety and environmental awareness among resistant employees? I work at a manufacturing plant in Miami. The company that owns us has a number of plants in the U.S. and abroad. Last year our plant had the worst safety record throughout the whole company and management is under fire. We have a considerably good training program, but our employees act like the information went in one ear and out the other. Any suggestions? Please e-mail, thanks!

Respondent (R) 1: You obviously have a safety program on paper and it has no relevance to the workers. Were the workers involved in the development of the program? If so, in what manner? Is the top management serious about it? Any concrete steps they have taken? Provide more details. What is the union's attitude? Let us communicate.

R2: FR and others, I'm not aware of the connection you draw between your dilemma and ecofeminism. However, I'll take a stab at it and outline an approach that I feel is compatible with ecofeminism to see if it helps you find a favorable outcome.

Why would workers want to ignore safety and environmental precautions that on the face of the problem seem to preserve their well-being through continued employment and personal survival?

The first question I have is: Assuming your safety training presents information in a way the workers understand, what are the specific practices that the workers persist in performing or ignoring to make the workplace hazardous?

Secondly, with a list of those practices, I would suggest examining each one carefully from multiple perspectives: What are the workers' incentives to behave in acceptable or unacceptable ways? What are the supervisors' and high-level managers' incentives for the workers to have certain types of behavior? What may appear to be individual ignorance or stubbornness may suddenly appear to be a conflict between organizational incentives.

Another obvious consideration may be cultural barriers between workers and the people who are trying to bring the plant into compliance. There seems to be a strong disparity between your plant and the others that the company runs. Talking to a manager who is sensitive to these differences or a worker who understands the incentives of management may shed some light on this problematic situation. Keeping an eye out for authority issues about what is being imposed on whom may uncover a power struggle that may have nothing to do with the immediate issue at hand.

I feel a bit like a fortune teller providing this perspective, but I am interested in whether others on this list find resonance with my interpretation and whether Robert finds this helpful at all.

R3: Have you thought about becoming a union organizer for your plant? Sounds like exactly what your plant needs, a strong woman leading. You can, with some assistance and organization, work towards unionizing even if there is not one currently set up.

PSP: Personally I am not a great endorser of labor unions. I believe that in this country unions have gone too far, and have caused many people to lose their jobs. My plant does not need a union, it needs employees that care about their jobs, and the company they work for.

R4: R: We really need to know more about your workplace before we can discuss this. Normally, most people do **not** want to be injured—unless they have a "problem" in their lives... It could be that there is a communication problem here, it could be bad morale in the group, or maybe production requirements are too stringent. I can see the group thinking that maybe production/profit was more valuable than their safety.

R1: R: Does the company care about their workers? Have they conveyed this to the workers? Do the workers believe the company's caring? Does the company convey the message "my 20 widgets, hell or high water?" One needs to look into the workers' concerns. One needs to look more deeply with an open mind, not with an attitude "those _____ workers." Ask the CEO to talk to the workers with a genuine interest in their concerns. Your talking will not be of much help. It is obviously a communication problem with mistrust on both sides.

R3: I know many people involved with labour unions and have done a great deal of study about them. I am interested in the statement you made that "unions have gone too far, and have caused many people to lose their jobs." I would appreciate your sources for this information so I can do some further research, since this is contrary to my research so far. Feel free to email me personally, since I don't want to clog up the list with bibliographies.

R4: The key is a basic human principle called respect. It can be cultivated as part of the culture, but there is no way to teach or demand respect. Generally, when a person is treated with respect, they respond with respect as well.

PSP: Thank you, you are so right. That is one of the problems that we face there. Many of our supervisors were promoted from within so everybody on the plant knows their story and have already formed their ideas as to whether or not they respect the person(s). Once again thanks! Let's keep in touch.

Now to the company that I work for: The CEO is a very warm and genuine person and has conveyed to the workers his concerns for their own safety.

One of the problems is the attitude that people have in this city (Miami). This is a very transient city, and at one time it was very easy to get an OK paying job right away. Today the climate has changed, just as it has changed in other cities but employees still have the attitude that you (as the employer) better cater to my wants. Also the Hispanics that are here, but are not safety or environmentally aware, are very hard to motivate to observe rules and regulations that they do not see value in.

I don't know how familiar you are with Latin American countries, but there safety and environmental issues are not very high on the priority list, if at all.

R1: I am glad to note that the CEO is a warm and genuine man. It does not mean that he can communicate with the workers. There is obviously a cultural barrier to communication. Nobody wants to get hurt unless the rewards outweigh the hurt, as is the case in some sports. Your comments about Hispanics indicate an attitude of Archie Bunker.

One suggestion may be to communicate to the workers in Spanish and try to find out what motivates them. Another may be to make the reward unworthy of hurt. Engineer the sources of harm out of the system. Different cultures perceive the same risks differently. The cultures could be based on gender, race, national origin, education level, age, economy security, types of jobs, etc. The objective is to sensitize the CEOs and other managers to this cultural difference. The workers also have to be sensitized to the goals and objectives of the company. The workers have to see their goals accomplished through the accomplishment of company goals. If you need further discussion write to me directly.

Exercise:

Rank the following statements on a scale of 1(full agreement) to 5 (complete disagreement):

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Such challenges are daily occurrences in every plant: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Require that the workers learn English | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Hire bi-lingual supervisors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Hire bilingual consultants to train workers and improve | | | | | |
| a. their attitude towards safety, health, and environmental | | | | | |
| b. protection (SHEP), productivity, and profits | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. EO, PSP, and other management/supervisory personnel | | | | | |
| a. should be sent to ethnic/cultural sensitivity training and | | | | | |
| b. morale building retreats | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Your Solutions:

Exercise: Your Organization/Plant

Name: _____

Step 1: Identify 3 specific barriers to productivity, morale, and SHEP in your plant/organization

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Step 2: List 3 specific activities which will bridge the management/worker divide, improve productivity, morale, and SHEP

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Group Activities:

Step 3: Get together in groups of 4-5 people. Avoid same organization or industry groups. Introduce yourselves and exchange business cards.

Step 4: Each group member will have 5 minutes to:

- introduce his/her plant's/organization's products, services, and organizational culture to the group,
- explain the 3 specific barriers identified in Step 1 above (Do NOT give away your solutions to Step 2),
- seek solutions to overcome your barriers and note them down on the back of this sheet

Conclusion

The understanding of SHEEP risks is crucial to successful implementation of SHEEP policies and standards with sustainable development. Basic premise behind both development and SHEEP is minimization of drudgery and discomfort. The role of profits and productivity in improving the worker's/community's well-being must be communicated to the workers. The role of safer and healthier working and living environment is essential to a happier workforce which in turn leads to productivity. For these communications to be effective barriers to cross cultural communication should be broken and bridges built.