



Quick E-Tips



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Thank you for subscribing to this newsletter brought to you by International Advantage® - *Leading Across Cultures*SM. Every month we bring you tips to help your team and organization, especially those operating in culturally diverse environments, reach their business goals.

Topic of the month: **When Your Assets Become Liabilities...Moving Toward the Executive Office**

Last month I wrote about how a standard city park anywhere in the world often reflects the people who live there. Parks – and people – tend to be either “action” or “being” oriented. (See last month’s article on my website.)

To define terms, a person tends to be **“action” oriented** as a result of living within a social context that stresses the importance of task and achievement-oriented behaviors.

A person tends to have a **“being” orientation** as a result of living within a social context that stresses the importance of relationships, contemplation, reflection and analysis.

All cultures do both, but it is well documented that certain orientations manifest themselves more prominently in some cultures than in others. (See last month’s article on my website).

And while your preference is cultural and not likely to change, from a global perspective, increasing your “range” to achieve both styles as the context dictates becomes even more important.

How does an “action” or “being” orientation correlate with success?

Studies done by Lominger¹ show that orientations within a corporate setting correlate to success in particular roles in the company.

Being “action oriented” is highly desirable, especially in an individual contributor role and managerial role. Without it, there may be a performance problem.

But, as the manager moves toward further promotion as an executive, s/he usually does best leaning toward a “being orientation” – a more ideal state of mind to foster strategic agility, motivate others, manage through systems, manage purpose and vision, and foster innovation management.

In a Harvard Business School (HBS) article published April 2, 2007, entitled “Making the Move to General Manager,” Martha Lagace cites Benjamin C. Esty, head of the general management program at HBS as saying, “A lot of people aren’t comfortable letting go; they want to do.” This is one of two big challenges that promoted managers face, Esty says, along with learning to see linkages and interconnections across the organization.

Therefore, if this transition away from an “action” orientation does not happen, a new executive can go from being perceived as highly competent to one who is seen as a poor administrator, a non-strategic thinker or an over-manager.

So...as the job changes, so does the required level of competency, as it relates to action.

To summarize:

Tip #1: Avoid being effective in just one culture. Particularly in a global context, you may need to practice both in order to increase your ability to work with people whatever the cultural tendency.

Tip #2: In addition to being conscious of what orientation your role requires so that you can meet current expectations, scope out expectations of the role you are wanting next so you can be preparing yourself for success in that role, as well.

¹ Lombardo, Michael M, Eichinger, Robert, *For Your Improvement*. 4th ed. Lominger International, 2006

On the Personal Side

Last month, I was in Guadalajara to deliver a public workshop in Spanish entitled, “Building Employee Commitment for Organizational Change.” We talked how to create change and how to make effective and impactful interventions to other individuals. Boy, was it fun. It was fun because the participants had an uncanny ability to continuously ask questions that led exactly in the direction I was going to next. So, they made all the transitions for me and I had the insights they were looking for.

While in Guadalajara, I did something that is unusual for me...I rented a car to learn the city. See, I am a BIG fan of public transportation – especially the subway and train -- when I travel internationally. In addition to letting someone else worry about traffic, I prefer to use travel time to observe. It also lets someone else “do”, which allows me some time to “be”!

But in this case, my needs were different. I have been driven around for years in Guadalajara and I was just not learning my way around fast enough. So I got a car and a map and took to the streets. On each outing, I got a number of honks from other drivers, which at first I thought meant that I had made a mistake. And while I admit to learning some of the different traffic rules by making incorrect assumptions, I later realized that honks also happened when I was doing perfectly normal things like waiting for someone to drive past before turning across traffic! So now I understand the assumptions at work in Guadalajara: Don't slow anyone down for any reason or expect a reminder that you are doing so!

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To your success around the globe,

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