



# Quick E-Tips



INTERNATIONAL  
ADVANTAGE

August – September 2004

*WELCOME! Bienvenue! ¡Bienvenido!*  
*Enjoy some tips on **global business culture and language learning**...*

## **Business Culture Tip: Facilitative Leadership**

Last month, I had the opportunity to present a half-day workshop in Guadalajara, Mexico on the topic of consensus building. The consensus-building method is a tool that reflects a gradual leadership shift in our world from a top-down approach to a facilitative approach to leadership. Instead of relying on the ability, charisma and expertise of a sole individual, the facilitative approach relies on the power of the group's diversity.

When it comes to hierarchical business environments, such as Mexico and France tend to have – as does the U.S., to a lesser degree – you may see the cultural difficulty with the idea of “consensus”.

Much of the problem lies in the philosophy of the leader...

**How does a hierarchical leader let go of his/her individual power when he/she feels the most qualified to make important decisions?**

### Philosophy check for hierarchical leaders:

- A. Research shows that diverse groups make more creative, ingenious decisions
- B. Your decision does not equal implementation! Individuals and groups are more likely to own and implement decisions when they have participated in making those decisions.
- C. Anyone can adopt a style of facilitation without losing authority, respect, and integrity regardless of one's role as leader, manager, supervisor, or employee. Culturally, this can be more difficult in some countries than in others, but the tips below can be applied to hierarchical leaders anywhere.

### **Tips for adopting a facilitative leadership style:**

1. Reflect on whether the most successful projects/initiatives in your organization (or in your family) were initially decided by an individual or as a group. Did the power of the group's diversity trump the expertise of the individual leader?
2. Begin to focus more on knowing “how to do”, instead of “what to do”.
3. Speak second. Encourage participation by avoiding giving your opinion until you hear others' opinions.
4. A hierarchical leader traditionally builds his/her power and influence through relationships: one individual at a time. Think about the facilitative approach as building relationships with groups of people.
5. Initiate participative methods such as consensus-building, group action planning and quality circles, and track results relative to past progress.
6. Adopt your evaluation and metrics systems to reward a facilitative approach.

To summarize:  
**Better results and more respect.**

Leadership can be defined as the ability to effectively enable others to reach their potential.  
The results and respect you garner will be greater than that which can be achieved alone.

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**Language Tip: “Learn a second language by total immersion, right?”**

Contrary to popular belief, and according to research, the fastest, most effective way for an adult to begin to learn a second language is NOT in immersing him/herself in the target culture to attempt to “pick it up”. As adult language learners, it is almost always more effective to learn the patterns of the target language (i.e. grammar) before going on that language immersion program abroad.

In my efforts to learn and perfect the three languages I speak, I have found that the equivalent of two years/four college semesters of a language gave me the right amount of structure before I launched into an immersion program. I was able to quickly make progress in my speaking ability based on the patterns I had learned and focus on intermediate and advanced concepts and nuances. If you don't have that amount of time, get as many patterns down as you can!

Children, of course, should be immersed as young as possible, before a gradual physical separation (no kidding) of the left and right side of the brain limits the speed at which the brain can integrate the new information.

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**Recent Recognition**

- Lisa Koss was interviewed on the cross-cultural elements of negotiation by Mural, a highly respected Guadalupe newspaper. View entire article (in Spanish) at [www.intladvantage.com](http://www.intladvantage.com) (See “news”)

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*Lisa*

Lisa Koss

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