



How to Increase your Cultural Intelligence in the Localization Industry

Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is the ability to work effectively in culturally diverse situations. Research shows that people with a high level of CQ are more successful in multicultural environments. Localization teams from either the language service provider or buyer sides by nature tend to be very international. The ability to engage with our different multicultural stakeholders is key in maximizing results. But how can we boost our CQ levels? As leaders of localization professionals from different countries and cultures, what skills do we need to have? How do we communicate successfully with virtual international teams? How do we manage their expectations? How do we engage in healthy conflict that stems from dealing with different cultural quirks of your international localization team or client?

Highlights from LocWorld37 Warsaw (Intro)

Part I

- Why CQ is so important nowadays?
- What's IQ, CQ and EQ?
- Differences between CQ and EQ?
- Difference between IQ and CQ

Part II

- Understanding the Culture Map Model. Our compass to avoid culture minefields

Part III

- How to develop our CQ?

Conclusion

Highlights from LocWorld37 Warsaw

Between 6th-8th of June I had the opportunity to attend the LocWorld in Warsaw.



For those who do not know very well this event I would like to recommend it since it is the biggest forum in our industry and represents an excellent opportunity to continue growing professionally and to be aware of the latest advances.

The tagline of this edition of LocWorld, which is already in its 37th edition, was Digital Transformation. It was about the Internet of things, big data, machine to machine communication, block chain. Fascinating topics, however the presentation we gave was not really based on this hot topics.

My talented and lovely colleague Maria Kania-Tasak (@MariaTaniaKasak) and myself we talked about something less techie. We talked about how to develop your CQ in the Localization industry



It's true today's global business takes place in a heavily digitalized world. But it's still true that at this point it's still driven by humans! And working with humans mean complexity 😊

That was the focus of LocWorld37 in Warsaw. Digital Transformation And the reality is that the Globalization / Localization industry is fascinating. We have the opportunity to interact with people in different languages, in different countries and it is an industry where the level of technological innovation is quite high, although it may not seem so, the localization industry can be very techie!

At the beginning of my career, I interacted mainly with clients and colleagues from USA, Ireland, Spain, Canada.

I felt quite comfortable working with them, I did not have many problems to reach agreement on processes to be implemented or how to effectively manage different projects in what was involved

Whatever friction we had was resolved (usually) quickly ... in a way, I assumed that working in a multicultural environment was simply a matter of mastering 2-3 languages well and that's it, that was the recipe for success! ... and when I was congratulating myself on having discovered the key to decoding human relationships, my first project in Finland arrived.

At that time, everything I thought I knew about how to handle relationships in the work environment collapsed. At that time I was working for the almighty (in another era) Nokia. I remember my trip to Tampere where Nokia had its headquarters and I was in a meeting room where I lived a situation, which in my way of understanding life at that time, did not make any sense!

The meetings to implement processes were endless; if someone proposed an idea, there were 3-4 people who challenge/pushback the idea, and if the team leader proposed a new process, that also did not matter! he challenged his idea in the same way!

That seemed very strange to me, but apparently, I was the only one in that meeting room who felt uncomfortable.

To the rest of the people in that meeting they seemed quite comfortable. It seems it was totally ok the boss might be challenged publicly and that every little detail was discussed until exhaustion seemed very strange, I was not used to it ☺

After this incident, I returned to my "normal" environment and there I was feeling comfortable interacting again with my colleagues from Seattle, Dublin, Madrid ... what happened in Finland? Why were the meetings there so different from what I was used to? Why the role of the manager was not "respected"?

Years later I returned to Finland, to Helsinki this time, at that time I was working for Sulake, the company behind the Habbo Hotel, a mix of video games and social network.

I had a meeting with different members of the development team there, all of them Finns. My idea was to present myself a tool to improve the translation turnaround time and to integrate it in a more effective way to process the linguistic content of the game. A mix of CMS + TMS to control the Localization cycle.

When I was explaining the process flows ... I had a deja-vu, to each proposal I introduced there was a counterproposal or simply an endless discussion, and again the same pattern of behavior from years ago, the team manager was just "one of the guys of the team"; and his ideas were discussed and worth as much as the others It did not seem so strange to me as the first time but I did not know very well what happened in Finland! Why meetings

structure were like that, why decisions making was so time consuming, why little hierarchy did not matter.

I thought it was weird.

Years later, I took again a plan with destiny north Europe. I was back on my way to a Scandinavian country, this time not Finland, but Sweden. Therein Stockholm, the house of our beloved Candy Crush, I had a meeting to define a series of objectives for the team ... And again the same thing happened as I lived in Finland! Each proposal was debated, analyzed, and everything was decided by consensus ... at that moment I had a kind of Aha-moment ... there was a cultural difference when it came to understanding how we made decisions, how we worked, how we should focus on leading ... I did not know very well how to solve the problem ... but I started to have something growing in me, an interest to understand how these countries worked. Something was growing in me, something, which I later learned had a name.


CQ Drive was growing in me, I'll talk about this later, for now let's just know that there was a cultural component but I did not know exactly what happened, why it was so different my way of working and the meetings when I interacted with teams from USA or Canada? Especially when I compared them about what I experienced in my interactions in Finland or Sweden.

I got down to work, and started to investigate, nowadays it's amazing what the Google search engine puts at our fingertips ...

thereafter days of searching I found the first clue to diagnosing the "problem to my Scandinavian disease".

I discovered what it's call as Law of Jante. That was the key to understand why Scandinavian cultures are so egalitarian. Which eventually made me understand why my meetings pattern was like that

The Law of Jante



1. You're not to think you are anything special
2. You're not to think you are as good as we are
3. You're not to think you are smarter than we are
4. You're not to convince yourself that you are better than we are
5. You're not to think you know more than we do
6. You're not to think you are more important than we are
7. You're not to think you are good at anything
8. You're not to laugh at us
9. You're not to think anyone cares about you
10. You're not to think you can teach us anything



#LocWorld37

I learned that Scandinavian culture was deeply influence by what it's called the he so-called of "Law of Jante". This law was developed by Danish author Aksel Sandemose. And he formulated some rules with the belief that individuals should be considered equal and the individual achievement should be downplayed.

It's based on the idea that "WE ARE ALL EQUAL" and it's interesting to see the impact this has on people, because Denmark usually is the first places in the surveys of the World Happiness report. So, despite the weather and darkness for most of the day during winter, the Danes seem to be happy. So maybe this law of Jante works :)

The Law of Jante (Swedish: Jantelagen)

A sociological term to describe a condescending attitude towards individuality and success, the term refers to a mentality that de-emphasises individual effort and places all emphasis on the collective, while simultaneously denigrating those who try to stand out as individual achievers.

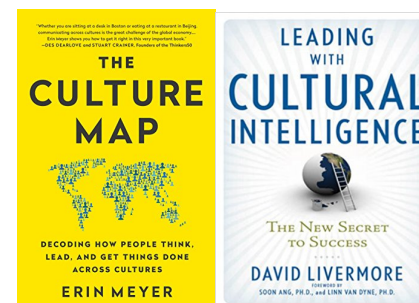
That was the moment of self-awareness. Which it's the very first step to improve a situation. In terms of self-awareness I like this quote from Thomas Fuller

I understood the impact that this philosophy has on their lives ... and I kept reading and browsing and finally, I found the solution... The problem that I was suffering was that my degree of cultural intelligence was low, oooooops!!

This video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2C7Mfft9OY>) was the diagnosis of "my sickness", there was a world behind the interactions with the culture that I had somehow overlooked. Interacting with people, teams, and countries relatively similar to my own culture, I had overlooked how working with teams from Scandinavian countries was different.

In that video, I "met" David Livermore. David Livermore is a researcher, speaker & author. He's a social scientist, devoted to the topics of cultural intelligence (CQ) and global leadership and the author of ten award-winning books. His book, [Leading with Cultural Intelligence](http://www.amazon.com/dp/0814414877/?tag=wwwdavidliver-20), (<http://www.amazon.com/dp/0814414877/?tag=wwwdavidliver-20>) was a best-seller in business and his newest book. I talk about that book below so keep reading

By reading his books and his blog I learned there was something called Cultural Intelligence and that was the key to leading multicultural teams, wow!



A whole world opened in front of me and I started to read all I could about Culture Intelligence, books like Leading with Cultural Intelligence or The Culture Map that became my bedside books, Books about Cultural Intelligence became part of my shopping routines.



Little by little I understood more and better what was cultural intelligence, little by little I understood that Cultural Intelligence is not the same as Emotional Intelligence and little by little I was able to adapt my leadership style depending on the environment in which I moved.

Leading with cultural intelligence is a complex process that requires a lot of self-awareness. It is a process in which we must be willing to assume that we are going to make a mistake; sometimes we will

adapt too much to a culture and we will look unauthentic, fake ... at other times we will not adapt enough and we can seem rude and insensitive ... well, that's life, it is part of the trip, to increase our CQ we must assume that we will make mistakes, and we will have to learn from them!

I have taken as a habit to be continuously reading about this topic and learning and analyzing the different countries I visit ... it is hard work, but it is a fascinating job ... once we understand how to adapt to each situation we are able to bring out the best in each person ... We are able to lead in an effective way, or at least more effective than on my first trips to Finland ☺

Let's start this trip for the intelligence culture that I have prepared in this eBook I hope you like it ☺

Part I

Why Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is so important nowadays?
What's IQ, EQ and CQ?
Differences between CQ and EQ
Differences between IQ and CQ

Let's honor Simon Sinek and his famous Start with Why? theory/approach to know more about CQ

https://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

Why CQ is important?

Today we live in a hyperconnected world, high-speed WIFI, powerful mobile phones, Skype, and many other collaborative tools, airplane low cost tickets, cable TV etc. etc.

With all these tools the dream of making barriers disappear almost is a reality!

Nowadays we might be working with people from all over the world!

For example, some days I might start the day having a call with a Localization vendor partner in Seoul and finish my day talking to a

game team in Seattle. And of course in the middle I might have interactions with people in our offices in London, Stockholm or Bucharest.

Most of us we are all working across cultures, we have more technologies than ever that help us work without boundaries. However although technology is bringing us closer there's still a big gap in how we behave across cultures, how we interact with clients, with service providers with multicultural teams.

To lead teams effectively we must be able to navigate through cultures and adapt our style when necessary to achieve the desired results; and that's done by developing and working to improve our own CQ.

Cultural Intelligence is so powerful that it's one of the predictors used to measure if professionals will thrive in the business market.

What's CQ? EQ? And IQ?

Now that we honored Simon Sinek and we learned why CQ is important let's go with a round of definitions!

- IQ definition. In the Wikipedia we can find the following definition about IQ. An intelligence quotient (IQ) is a total score derived from several standardized tests designed to assess human intelligence. IQ scores are used for educational placement, assessment of intellectual disability, and evaluating job applicants. The biggest difference between IQ, EQ and CQ is that in IQ actually we get a

number (see picture) that it measures our Intelligence level! I have never done an IQ test in my life ... well, I think I will leave it like that, sometimes it's wiser to live happily in the ignorance :)

- EQ is the ability to identify and manage our own emotions and the motions of others. It's all about understand persons at a human level. We build empathy.
- CQ is the ability to relate to and communicate effectively with people from other countries. It is all about having the ability to cross boundaries so we can thrive in multiple cultures.

EQ, CQ is not the same?

Quite often EQ and CQ have been confused and used interchangeably, but it is not the same. A person can have a high level of EQ and yet suffer to adapt or work effectively in different cultural.

To understand this, let's look at the example of the Harvard Review article in which it is explained in a clear and simple way.

“Cultural intelligence is related to emotional intelligence, but it picks up where emotional intelligence leaves off. A person with high emotional intelligence grasps what makes us human and at the same time what makes each of us different from one another. A person with high cultural intelligence can somehow tease out of a person's or group's behavior those features that would be true of all people and all groups, those peculiar to this person or this group,

and those that are neither universal nor idiosyncratic. The vast realm that lies between those two poles is culture”

Somehow CQ is the alter ego of Emotional Intelligence!

While EQ involves looking inward, Cultural Intelligence (CQ) is the vision to see the global environment and interpret both its particulars and patterns quickly and accurately.

Cultural Intelligence focuses in the ability to read the map of expectations, customs, body language, relational dynamics, and power structures inherent in a cross cultural environment

So that's why CQ and EQ is different!

How is IQ different from CQ?

Let's look now why IQ and CQ is different, this is easier to understand, I think



CQ differs from IQ in the fact that it cannot be quantified by a score. IQ is more like an exam of those that I did at the school, in the end you have a number testing your competences, for CQ there's not test, it's all about There is no simple Cultural Intelligence scale by which to measure ourselves against, and indeed it is unhelpful to think of CQ as a number. Instead we should think of Cultural Intelligence as being something which we can continuously improve and develop over the duration of our lives.

The problem comes when we cross cultures and venture into a completely different world of emotional expression. Emotions vary tremendously across cultures — both in terms of their expression and their meaning.

Take, for example, the expression of enthusiasm. In the United States, it's not weird to see meetings and presentations very energetic and full of enthusiasm! it's culturally acceptable to show enthusiasm in a business environment. However in other cultures In Japan, there are strict boundaries about when and where people are allowed to display emotion.

Part 2

Understanding the Culture Map model
Our compass to avoid culture minefields

Leadership today in the Globalization / Localization industry is a multicultural challenge. That's something I already knew but a little more than 2 years ago I was able to apply a tested, proven and effective model to the complex world of cross-cultural human relations.

The culture map book by Erin Mayer seemed like a great discovery! It is something like applying a scientific model and tested to human relationships! For me it's working quite nicely to lead teams much better than before. Let me review the different categories that Erin Meyer explained brilliantly in her book.

The model is based on 8 scales. And it's a scale moving from right to left to left to right ... this means that in a specific culture you are not getting an 8 if you are coming from a low context culture or a 6 if you are coming from a high context culture. What is interesting is to

understand the pattern, analyze the potential gap, and once you see the gap, then develop a CQ strategy to close the gap
In this model it's studied how we can approach multicultural relations in 8 dimensions, and those dimensions are very important to work effectively in our beloved localization industry.
Let's review the model, I hope you find it as useful as it seemed to me at the time!

Communicating

When we say that someone is a good communicator, what do we actually mean? The responses are quite different depending the culture we are immersed. When I compare cultures along the Communicating scale by paying attention to the communication pattern is fascinating how different my North Americans stakeholders communicate when I compared that to some colleagues I have in Asia. By understanding if we are in a low-context culture or high-context culture we can develop an strategy to interact with them. The concept of high- or low-context was developed by the American anthropologist Edward Hall. He explained that in low-context cultures, good communication is precise, simple, explicit, and clear. Messages are understood at face value. Repetition is appreciated for purposes of clarification, as is putting messages in writing. In high-context cultures, communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Messages are often implied but not plainly stated. Less is put in writing, more is left open to interpretation, and understanding may depend on reading between the lines.

Speaking of "reading between lines" I love the Japanese approach toward this concept. The concept of "reading the air" is one key crucial skill of their communication style in their culture. Even they have a word! Kuuki Yomenai is a Japanese term that can be literally translated "can't read the air." It's applied to someone who has difficulty reading social situations. And this Kuuki Yomenai can be breakdown in 2 parts

1. Inability to Read Body Language
2. Can't Take a Hint (If we can't read subtle hints we are at risk of being kuuki yomenai)



The Culture Map – Erin Meyer

The more we are interacting with cultures or with people from the left side of the scale the more explicit it has to be our message; when interacting with high-context teams more effort in reading the air needs to be put in place.

The more years of history a country has, the more high-context is its communication style.

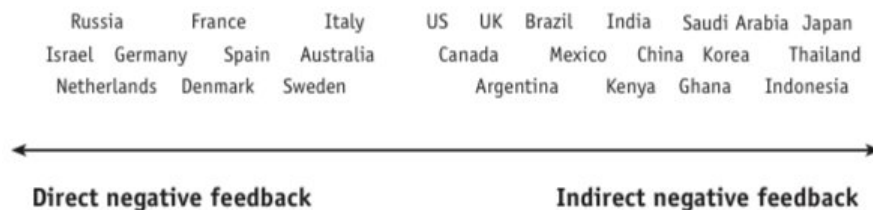
China, Japan for example are countries with a much wider history than Canada or USA, for that reason, when there is not so much common social background it is necessary to specify everything in a detailed manner. However when we know each other from "many years ago" communication can be less explicit ... deep down this

reminds me of the relationship with my wife Now that we have been together for many years I am able to "read the air" and I know when I am in "danger" without the communication being low-context 😊

Evaluating

We all agree criticism should be given constructively, but the definition of “constructive” might be quite different depending on our own cultures or the culture in which we are operating. In some cultures it will be totally fine to address feedback in a direct way, while in others the feedback is done less explicitly.

FIGURE 2.2. EVALUATING



The Culture Map – Erin Meyer

In Spain for example we tend to give feedback quite directly without “too much wrapping paper”, direct to the point ... when I compare that strategy with the American way that’s quite different.

Americans can use the sandwich technique, good, bad, good to give feedback. I can see this even in my Toastmasters meetings as a pattern of evaluation! Clearly I can tell is an American organization. In the US, managers are taught to give 3 positives with every negative and to catch people doing things right. When negative messages are wrapped in positives, the American knows to pay attention to the message in the middle., but for a Spanish manager that is not nearly so obvious. If I'm given 5 good comments in feedback and 1 "not so good", my impression is that I'm doing great! From the other perspective clearly I have serious problems 1 area that I need to improve quickly. Oooops!

Persuading.

The ways in which we persuade people are deeply rooted in our culture's educational assumptions and attitudes.

Do you prefer to hear specific cases and examples, or prefer holistic detailed explanations?

Why is it so important to understand the persuasion scale?

It's all about adapting the way we approach the implementation of a process or idea depending whom we're interacting. Some people will approach a process through patterns.

FIGURE 3.1. PERSUADING



| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Concept-first | Individuals have been trained to first develop the theory or complex concept before presenting a fact, statement, or opinion. The preference is to begin a message or report by building up a theoretical argument before moving on to a conclusion. The conceptual principles underlying each situation are valued. |
| Application-first | Individuals are trained to begin with a fact, statement, or opinion and later add concepts to back up or explain the conclusion as necessary. The preference is to begin a message or report with an executive summary or bullet points. Discussions are approached in a practical, concrete manner. Theoretical or philosophical discussions are avoided in a business environment. |

The Culture Map – Erin Meyer

Typically, a western executive will break an argument down into a sequence of distinct components (specific thinking), while Asian managers tend to show how each component fits with all the others (holistic thinking).

On top of that as Erin Meyer explain in her book people from southern European and Germanic cultures tend to find deductive arguments (concept first arguments) most persuasive, whereas American managers are more likely influenced by inductive logic (applications-first logic).

Leading.

This dimension measures the degree of respect and deference shown to authority figures.

Leadership is an important aspects to consider when working in multicultural teams. And the tricky part here is that there's not a clear answer to an easy question.

What does a good boss look like?



The question is easy but the answer is difficult because the definition of how a good boss looks like is quite different depending on the culture we are operating.

Leading scale is all about understanding if we are in an environment of: egalitarian vs. hierarchical

FIGURE 4.1. LEADING



| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Egalitarian | The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low. The best boss is a facilitator among equals. Organizational structures are flat. Communication often skips hierarchical lines. |
| Hierarchical | The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high. The best boss is a strong director who leads from the front. Status is important. Organizational structures are multi-layered and fixed. Communication follows set hierarchical lines. |

The Culture Map – Erin Meyer

The leading scale is very useful to consider when managing an international team (or being managed), especially in terms of what is considered as an authority in a given culture and what kinds of behavior gain respect. The goal as with everything else is to get the best out of the team we're working with!

The last 7-8 years of my career I've been working with Scandinavians companies, Finnish first, Swedish now ... and it's fascinating to see how egalitarian these cultures are. This is done even at a school level. The other day talking to a Norwegian friend she told me that kids are encourage to challenge the teacher from their very early days. I found funny when she explained that teachers even for little kids act as facilitator's. I found that funny

because I imagined them like little scrum teams of 4 years old doing a stand up meeting in the morning to decide what they'll do during the day 😊

Decoding and understanding how to operate under these cultures is ley.

Deciding.

This is an interesting scale, again working with teams in Scandinavian countries, immersed in Latin European countries and with stakeholders in USA or Asia is quite fascinating to analyze and take the time to study how the process of decision making is done

The two ends of the scale are Consensual and Top-down. Consensual means that the decisions are made by groups as a result of a discussion and inclusiveness of opinions of all the team members. Top-down on the other hand means that the decisions are made by individuals, usually the bosses, who are trusted to make the best opinions and have the knowledge to effectively lead the team on their own.

FIGURE 5.3. DECIDING



The Culture Map – Erin Meyer

Something that surprised me is the case of Japan. Japan once again is one of the most fascinating cultures I've exposed to. Japan is a very hierarchical culture. In the above paragraph we saw Japan was at the end of the scale when it comes to Leading.

So how can it be this mix of hierarchical and at the same time consensus.

Quite an unusual combination!

How do they make it work? How do they manage to ideally blend the hierarchical and consensual into their work?

The ringi system seems to be what makes it happen. It is based on the principle that major decisions are discussed and essentially approved by a large group of people. The ringi system is a formalized process where someone at the middle-management level prepares a document called a ringi-sho. It explicitly describes pertinent facts, lays out accumulated knowledge and provides a recommendation.

Then this document is discussed in the different layers of the organization until an agreement is reached.

It's a slow process but definitely is following a consensus approach. So that's why we have Japan at one side of the scale when it comes to Deciding while it's at the other side when it comes to Leading

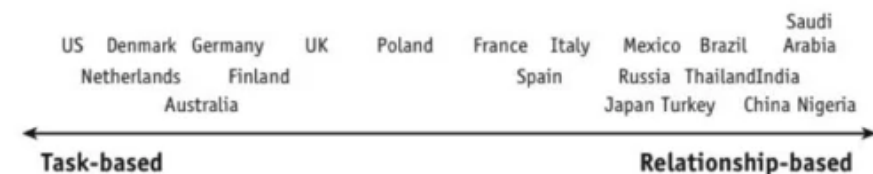
Trusting.

Another scale that it made me think ☺

Some countries they base the culture in cognitive trust (from the head) while in others is affective trust (from the heart).

In some countries trust is built by delivering. I trust you because you said you will do this and you have done it, therefore I trust you. In other countries trust is built by building the relationship at a human level.

FIGURE 6.1. TRUSTING



Task-based

Trust is built through business-related activities. Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation. You do good work consistently, you are reliable, I enjoy working with you, I trust you.

Relationship-based

Trust is built through sharing meals, evening drinks, and visits at coffee machine. Work relationships build up slowly over the long term. I've seen who you are at a deep level, I've shared personal time with you, I know others well who trust you, I trust you.

The Culture Map – Erin Meyer

For example in China trust is faster built at social event, i.e. When I met once with some members of our Chinese office, they like to have dinner together and then a few drinks. They were interested in knowing me better at a human level, without the filter of work, they want to know who I am as a person ... then once they know me better as I person I'll have the opportunity to work with them and delivery the task. But approaching all cultures under the assumption that they will trust me by delivering a tasks it might be a shortcut to fail! Be aware of this :)

Disagreeing.

Disagreeing might be a great strategy at work, right? We know that great ideas might appear if we challenge a little bit each other. But how much we can disagree? And how?

In some cultures disagreeing publicly, i.e. in a meeting might be perceived as rude and disrespectful, especially if we are disagreeing with our boss and we are operating under a hierarchical culture While in other cultures a little open disagreement will be seen as healthy.

We as human being are so complex creatures!!

Hopefully the Disagreeing scale might be help to navigate through this complex topic

FIGURE 7.1. DISAGREEING



The Culture Map – Erin Meyer

Scheduling.

In Spain we have a certain reputation of being late for appointments, meetings ... if we are to have dinner at 9pm, practically no one will throw their hands to the head if we arrive at 9:07 pm However, acting like this in other countries will be seen as disrespectful.

The tolerance to delays and the perception of time is very different depending on the country with which we interact.

Different cultures treat time differently. This scale might help us to understand how late is late :)

FIGURE 8.1. SCHEDULING



The Culture Map – Erin Meyer

There we go! Those are the 8 scale that they can help us to navigate across cultures.

I think this model might be very useful for all of those working with multicultural teams, and I find this model specially relevant for 3 reasons

1. It's not a list about the do and don'ts about how to interact in the different cultures, that would not work. There would be so many things to remember that virtually will be almost impossible to think that we can remember how to act when having lunch in Israel in terms of not being perceived rude or how is the business card

culture to exchange business card in Singapore. That would be extremely difficult to approach every human interaction trying to remember the list of yes, yes vs no - no ... however these 8 scales they really give us a compass that we can have a look and adjust as necessary

2. The scales aren't graded from 0 to 10. You don't get a 2 if you are coming from a high context culture or a 8 if you are coming from a low-context culture. No, it's not like that, it's not about getting a rate, it's not about being at one side or another of the axis, neither culture is necessary superior to the other, that's not the scope of the CQ approach, the scope is to understand where's our gap as individual, as team and then have the tools and develop a strategy to fill those gaps.

3. It's not about putting people in boxes! We as human being we love to put labels in people. Humans have always loved and hated labels. Labeling is simplifying, straightforward, and fast. But it's not effective. The beauty of the culture map is that we are not labeling people or countries. We are just understating how a culture tends to behave, the pattern of behaviors. We cannot deny that the culture in which we grow up has a deep impact in how we see and perceive the world. In the culture map model this is done through thousands of survey and eventually a pattern in the bell curve will shape about what's expected in that specific culture.... Sure there will be people from that culture falling actually outside the average ... but to be honest even that people might be consider as outliers in their own culture ... for example let's take the Scheduling scale for example I'm Spanish, I'm coming from a flexible-time culture, however it's quite weird that arrive late to an appointment. When we meet with my friends to have dinner, usually I'm the first one,

and they joke that I became Swiss be2.-ing so punctual!! So in that sense I cannot be labeled and put in a box as individual ... however for any foreigner interacting with Spanish companies they would have more chances to succeed if they considered Spain as a country with a tendency to “approach time as a suggestion” rather than considering that Spanish people is like me, with a focus on punctuality ...

Putting all together

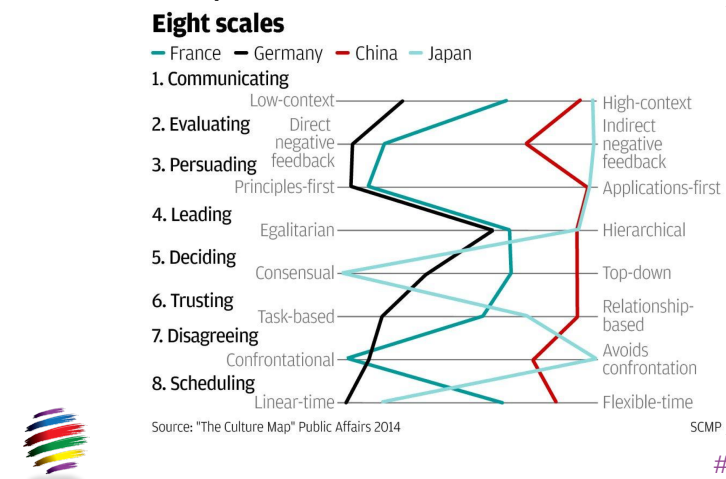
The best of the culture map model is that it is a very practical one, if we analyze the 8 dimensions of this model in our relationships with multicultural team either internal or with our partners and we take the time to study the holes that exist, that can give us a very good idea of the gaps that in our CQ. Once we know the gaps that we have, we can execute a strategy to minimize them.

Let's develop the strategy step by step

- 1.- As explained at the beginning of this eBook, the first step is self-awareness. I like how [Derek Sivers explains it in his article A fish do not know they are in water](https://sivers.org/fish). <https://sivers.org/fish> The best way to increase our self-awareness is to make a test that measures our culture awareness. This questionnaire is a good start <https://www.erinmeyer.com/tools/self-assessment-questionnaire/>
- 2.- The second step would be to do the test with the different people or the different teams / countries with which we interact
- 3.- And the third step is to draw the culture map in which I get a pretty accurate information of the gaps we can have with the cultures / teams that we are analyzing

In the end we will end with a model like this

Culture Map



In this example for example we can see that the biggest gap between China and Japan is in the scale Deciding and Scheduling. In Japan the culture to decide is more consensual (thanks to the ringi system I explained earlier) while in China the approach is more towards Hierarchy. Scheduling might be also a source of problems interacting with Chinese and Japaneses teams as in Japan time mindset is more linear while Chinese mentality are ok operating under a framework of flexible time. That's how we can use the culture map to know potential areas of conflict. It's all about self-awareness and plan. For this reason in order to operate successfully and lead efficiently in these environments a CQ strategy needs to

be put in pace to close the gap. How to do this? Keep reading and let's move to the last part of this eBook

Part 3

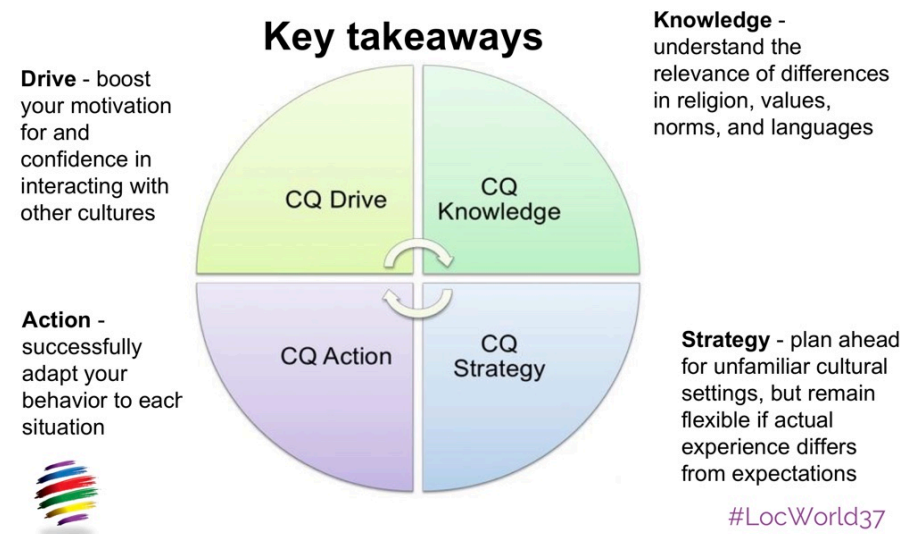
How to develop our CQ?

Leveling UP our CQ!

Ok, at this point of the eBook we already know what the CQ is and why it is important, we also know what CQ is different from emotional intelligence or IQ. We have also reviewed the 8 scales of Erin Meyer's Culture Map model that should become our compass to navigate the invisible barriers that appear when interacting with multi-unit equipment.

The next piece of the CQ puzzle, and perhaps the most important one, is how ... How can we develop our CQ?

Because as we said before, the CQ can be developed. Of the different books that I have read related to the topic of Cultural Intelligence, my favorite model is that of David Livermore. In his book *Leading with Cultural Intelligence* he explains that our CQ grows if we approach the process as a 4-part process. Next I attach the slide with which we closed our talk in the LocWorld. I think this graphic is easy to grab and it can help us to enter how to develop our CQ



There are 4 steps to increase our CQ level

1. **CQ Drive** is one of the key components to CQ. It is our interest, motivation and confidence to adapt to a multicultural situation. It consists of intrinsic and extrinsic interests and the drive to learn and understand different cultures, their norms and behaviours.

Strategies for Improving CQ Drive for self:

Take some unconscious bias tests, seek feedback

Be prepared to make mistakes, learn from them and then move on
Identify your passions, what they are and why do you care about them?

Reflect on what guides and influences your behaviours and attitudes toward culturally diverse groups

Welcome opportunities to mentor others as a 'cultural broker.'

2. **CQ knowledge** refers to our understanding of cultural similarities and differences; it includes knowledge of the values, norms and practices in different cultures setting

Strategies for Improving CQ Knowledge:

- a. Choose a culture that interests you.
- b. Read a novel, magazine or local newspaper from an overseas site; or an author native to that country
- c. Listen to overseas radio programs
- d. Visit culturally significant places to learn more about them i.e. a mosque, synagogue or sporting venue
- e. Visit art galleries or museums that display stories and artworks from other countries. These help you to gain a deeper understanding of why and how they were created and their cultural significance

- f. Continuously observe body language, facial expressions, gestures when you are interacting with people of different cultural backgrounds

Don't be afraid to ask questions, people love to talk about their culture. This can also be a great way to build relationships.

3. **CQ Strategy** is your ability to flex mentally. With high CQ Strategy, you are not confined to a single worldview, but are open to new or integrative ideas.
4. **CQ Action** Finally, CQ Action is your ability to adapt appropriately in a range of cross-cultural situations. Can you effectively accomplish your goals in different cultural situations? When working in a different culture, it may seem like a good idea to mimic what you see; however, locals often perceive this as humorous or worse yet, insulting. On the flip side, not adhering to any cultural norms or behaviors may come across as disrespectful and impede your success. Developing CQ Action will help you decide when to adjust your behavior to fit a cross-cultural setting and by how much.

Conclusions

The most important thing to consider in this model is the CQ Action part, no matter how much we learn about certain cultures (CQ Knowledge) and no matter how much we plan our interactions with each culture (CQ strategy) we are going to make mistakes. As explained before the trip to increase our CQ has no end, and in that trip we will make mistakes. Sometimes we can offend our hosts for

not eating a typical food that for them is a delicacy and for us it does not stop being a viscous mass, other times we can adapt our style so much to our culture that we seem flashy and irreverent. As if we were laughing at their traditions! Well, all this is normal, it's part of the CQ Action process. CQ Action is like a project following the Agile philosophy, we do something, we deliver something and we improve in each iteration as we know more things and as we learn more things. Nothing happens for making mistakes as we work to increase our CQ level!, the error is simply something that will help us grow. No big drama

Well this is all for now, I plan to write more content in the coming weeks about CQ as I consider it a very exciting and an interesting topic!

Nobody ever leads across cultures perfectly. But by developing these four capabilities, we can improve the way we lead and relate across national, ethnic, and organizational cultures.

Let's enjoy the journey of increasing our CQ without being obsessed with the destination.

