

cultural **intelligence**

Toolkit #4:

Develop your CQ Knowledge



Review the strategies provided for developing your CQ Knowledge & choose the best option for you.

before you begin

Is it cultural or not?

Culture significantly shapes the way we think and behave.
But it doesn't explain everything.

One of the biggest benefits of developing your CQ Knowledge is knowing whether a behavior stems from cultural differences, personality, or something else.

For example: if you're talking to someone from a different culture and they won't look you in the eye, is it cultural, is it a personality preference, or is something else going on? How do you know? And what difference does it make?

Here are a few questions to help you figure this out:

1. How does the 'unusual' perspective or behavior you're encountering compare with what research indicates about the norms for this culture?

Find out whether empirical evidence supports that this behavior is something often seen in individuals from this culture. Read *Expand Your Borders* by Livermore (2013) and consider if the individual has strong ties to one of the cultural clusters. Then, see what the research indicates about the dominant preference of this cultural cluster on direct vs. indirect communication.

2. What are other possible explanations for this perspective and/or behavior?

Rather than assuming culture is the only explanation, stop to consider the variables you should include when understanding any unusual encounter or situation. Go through the following categories and consider whether these might be influencing the individual:

Personality OR Circumstances OR Organizational factors OR Interpersonal Power struggle ???

3. How do others who have experience with this culture perceive the situation?

When the situation involves a culture with which you have limited experience, a cultural interpreter is essential. Find someone who has an understanding of your culture and the other cultures involved who can help shed light on what is occurring.

4. Consider whether confirmation bias has influenced your interpretation

If you're convinced that all Millennials are entitled and all white guys are sexist, you'll be predisposed to find examples that support your premise, something described as confirmation bias. Before you decide what explains the behavior, stop to consider whether you really sought to understand the situation and suspend judgement.



options for developing CQ Knowledge

OPTION**ONE:****Analyze your Cultural Values Report**

Identify which cultural values create the most frustration for you when you interact with people who have different preferences. Identify alternative ways to interact with people who differ with you on this value.

OPTION**TWO:****Make a list of idioms**

Identify idioms you regularly use in communication (e.g. "That's a game changer.") Find alternative ways of saying the same thing so that it can be understood in different cultural contexts.

OPTION**THREE:****Curate your social media feed**

and follow leading experts from 3-5 different cultures you want to learn about.

OPTION**FOUR:****For leaders/supervisors = Analyze your Leadership Style**

Identify aspects of your leadership style that may be challenging for some of your team members who have different cultural backgrounds than yours. Review resources that describe leadership preferences for this different culture. Consider ways you might modify how you lead in order to become more effective in working with your team members.



How do these help?

- Each of these strategies provide a simple next step for expanding your knowledge base. As your knowledge grows, often your motivation to interact with those who are different will grow as well.