

The Global Dimensions
of Diversity and Inclusion

Innovations International, Inc.

The Power to Transform Your World



The Global Dimensions of Diversity and Inclusion

Uniquely designed for

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The Global Dimensions of Diversity and Inclusion

In 1989 Innovations designed a three-part model for characterizing the global dimensions of culture—including its impact on how organizations and businesses function. This model is shown below:

Figure 1. The Global Dimensions of Culture



The three-part model consists of the fundamental level of culture, high/low context; the more visibly practiced level of societal culture; polychronic/monochronic orientation; and the translation of these levels into how organizations function; Eurocentric/Non-Eurocentric orientation. The original descriptions of the two lower dimensions were defined by the pioneering work of Edward T. Hall and Mildred Hall.^{1,2}

I. High/Low Context Cultures

High and low context refers to how information is communicated (or transmitted) in human transactions. A high context communication (culture) is one in which there is less information—written or spoken—in a transmitted message. High context communications include “a look of

disapproval,” “a hand inflection to communicate an instruction,” “folded arms to communicate resistance,” or “silence when nothing needs to be spoken.” These communications are often done in such subtle ways that they are usually not detectable by someone from a low context culture, without exposure through learning experiences.

High context refers to rules which are known by everyone (implicit) and rarely stated. High context values are so fundamental to a culture that they are considered to be truths. (Contrasting examples of high and low context values are shown in Table 1 below.)

High context cultures include:

- South American
- Asian
- East European
- Middle Eastern
- African
- Hawaiian

For example, in high context cultures, it is often rude (and a reflection of poor manners) to begin meetings by discussing business transactions. It is appropriate to establish a “context of business relationship” first. With the proper context established, it is assumed that the business discussion will be highly successful. In essence, it is assumed that the context of a transaction will determine the success of content procedures, processes, and agreements. The same expectation applies in terms of long lead times for establishing long-term business relationships in high context cultures.

In contrast, a *low context* culture is one where most of the information is in the verbal or written message—to make up for the missing context assumptions. For example, fairness in a contract negotiation may be viewed differently by two negotiators. Hence, law or contract negotiations are low context professions. Low context cultures require extensive, detailed explanation and information.

It is vital to understand that culture and communication are inseparable. In fact, Edward T. Hall asserts that communication is an expression of one’s (personal) culture. Although, one may have personal values, they are often a subset of those espoused by one’s culture. Such values, which drive the expectations of others, are unquestioned and virtually invisible.

Low context cultures include:

- North European
- Australian/New Zealand
- North American (excluding Mexico)
- Switzerland/Germany

In low context cultures, information is equivalent to value. Therefore, low context organizations devote a great deal of time, energy, and money on acquiring and interpreting information.

High and Low Context values allow us to understand better the contrasting differences in the two orientations. These differences provide the basis for expectations of employees as well as the design of workplace structures and ways of organizing work processes. Table 1 below defines ten of the most important values that determine workplace functioning.

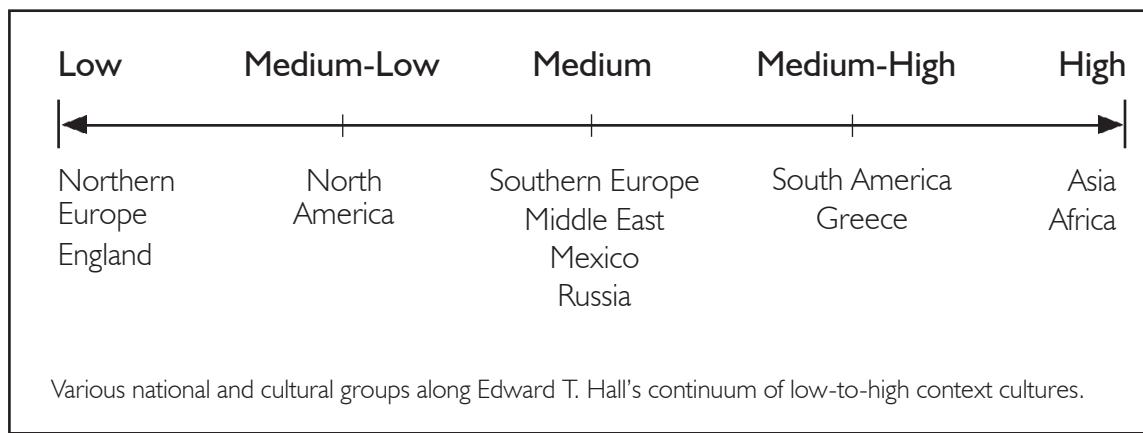
The following cultural values impact performance, productivity, and profitability. Choose your ***dominant*** cultural orientation.

Table I. Fundamental Core Values of Non-Western and Western Cultures*

Non-Western Cultural Values	Western Cultural Values
<input type="checkbox"/> Success, over time, is best achieved through the major emphasis on collaboration. (Group Orientation)	<input type="checkbox"/> Success, over time, is best achieved through the major emphasis on individual performance. (Individual Orientation)
<input type="checkbox"/> Excelling within the framework of one's status is sufficient for personal success. (Individual Dignity)	<input type="checkbox"/> Equity of opportunity without limitations is necessary for one's personal success. (Equality)
<input type="checkbox"/> Team consensus, integrating the minority opinion, is an essential part of decision making. (Consensus)	<input type="checkbox"/> The majority (or expert) opinion is ultimately the best way to make workplace decisions. (Democracy)
<input type="checkbox"/> Compromising one's personal aspirations in commitment to family or others is a natural human expression. (Obligation to Others)	<input type="checkbox"/> Following one's personal aspirations in spite of obligations to others is a natural human expression. (Personal Freedom)
<input type="checkbox"/> Some things are beyond a person's control. (Fate)	<input type="checkbox"/> The individual determines the results that occur. (Self-Determination)
<input type="checkbox"/> Quality human interaction in the workplace is equally important as a successful outcome. (Process)	<input type="checkbox"/> Achieving a successful outcome justifies the human interaction in getting there. (Achievement)
<input type="checkbox"/> Continuous quality improvement will best sustain our success over time. (Continuous Improvement)	<input type="checkbox"/> The "breakthrough" idea, concept, or innovation will best sustain our success over time. (Innovation)
<input type="checkbox"/> Commitment to family or the group in preference to self is more important than one's personal dream. (Communal)	<input type="checkbox"/> Commitment to one's own personal dream is more important than sacrificing one's personal dream. (Entrepreneurship)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation is essential, even at the expense of personal credit or recognition. (Cooperation)	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal recognition, even on a team, is essential for exceptional performance. (Competition)
<input type="checkbox"/> Spirituality is the "inner source" that drives exceptional performance. (Spirituality)	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious (or moral) beliefs and practices are the sources that drive exceptional performance. (Religion)
Total _____	Total _____

The results of performing the selections from Table 1 show that an individual (or a culture) is rarely totally high or low context. An individual, like a culture, is usually an integration of the two orientations as illustrated by Figure 2 below for various regions of the world. The ten values on each side of the Table 1 can be considered as ends of a spectrum from low to high context.

Figure 2: Low Context/High Context Continuum



In general, Western (Low Context) core values are based upon *individualism*. In essence:

- Identification of self as a separate and distinct part of a group
- Fulfillment (or success) is synonymous with achievement.

A group or a society is made up of a collection of individuals.

In a similar fashion, Non-Western (High Context) core values are based upon the group or the collective. In essence:

- Identification of self and the group are synonymous
- Fulfillment is the process of self-actualization (as defined by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs)³

There is no such thing as an individual separate and apart from the group—the two are inseparable. *Self-actualization* is becoming fully human or reaching one's full potential. According to Maslow, these can only be attained after one's basic needs are achieved—*physiological* (food, shelter, clothing); *safety* (security, the group, resources); *love/belonging* (friendship, family, intimacy); and *self-esteem* (confidence, achievement, respect).

Examples of how low context and high context values are reflected in business practices are shown as Appendix I on page 15.

When we focus more closely on cultural differences, we notice that even countries (or regions) described as high or low context have significant cultural (and correspondingly workplace) differences. These differences are typically defined by the more visible level of culture; polychronic (relationship-oriented) and monochronic (task-oriented) cultures.

II. Polychronic (Relationship-Oriented) and Monochronic (Task-Oriented) Cultures

Polychronic and monochronic cultural differences are closely related to the role *time* plays in relationships, communication, and the performance of tasks in a given culture.^{4, 5}

Polychronic cultures are strongly relationship oriented, flexible with respect to time, and perform several tasks simultaneously. This way of operating gives rise to polychronic-time (P-time), which is dependent upon priorities and unexpected occurrences.

Monochronic cultures are dominantly task-oriented, precise with respect to time, and tend to do one task at a time, typically to completion. This way of operating gives rise to monochronic-time (M-time), which involves religiously adhering to schedules and commitments.

An example of this contrast is the Latin-derived Southern countries of Western Europe—Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France, in contrast to Northern Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark. Specific cultural differences are shown in Table 2.

The description in Table 2 should be viewed as the ends of a continuum, rather than an either or situation as we discussed for the Low Context/High Context continuum. In a similar fashion, individuals, countries, regions, and organizations tend to be distributed across a continuum. However it is vital to recognize that each of these collectives do have propensities for one of the other orientation.

Table 2: Contrasting Polychronic and Monochronic Cultural Styles⁵

Relationship Orientation (Polychronic Culture)	Task Orientation (Monochronic Cultures)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do many things at one time • Are highly distractible due to interruptions • Consider the objective to be achieved, if possible • Are committed to people and human relationships • Change plans often and easily • Less concerned about privacy • Time is unstructured • People's well-being is of prime importance • Profit and productivity are the result of the well-being of employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do one thing at a time • Concentrate fully on one job to completion • Take deadlines and schedules seriously • Committed to the task to be achieved • Adhere religiously to plans • Respects the privacy of others • Time is linear and structured • People's well-being is a personal matter • Profit and productivity are the results of efficiency of operation
Relationship-oriented cultures tend to be high context.	Task-oriented cultures tend to be low context.

Examples of polychronic cultures include:

- Saudi Arabia
- Egypt
- China
- Mexico
- Philippines
- Pakistan
- India
- Most of Africa

Examples of monochronic cultures include:

- Germany
- England
- United States
- Netherlands
- Turkey
- Canada
- Switzerland
- Australia

Business Transactions between Polychronic and Monochronic Cultures

The major focus in this discussion is not to argue about the absolute nature or necessity of time as defined by Newtonian-Cartesian mechanics, but to view time in terms of culture—and begin to view the two as inseparable.

For example, time is important to organizational productivity with respect to cycle-time—the time for accomplishing the production of a product. Time can also be regarded as the interval it takes to produce a product that is satisfactory to a customer. The latter may be less time-dependent as defined by Western thinking—particularly, in a culture with a non-western value system. In this sense, time is defined more by the culture and the expectations of a customer. What's most vital to a customer in this situation is determined by upfront customer involvement rather than assuming a quick turnaround time is most valued.

In the evaluation of organizational performance over a 20-year period, we (Innovations) have repeatedly observed that organizations that unilaterally focus on performance processes and products—at the expense of people—tend to peak at a level less than high performance. Implementing processes for greater performance usually reverses the evaluation to an even lower score. The point here is the necessity for an *authentic* focus on the well-being and support of people. This support also involves consideration of a diverse, multicultural work force. The objective is to leverage such differences by the process of cultural transformation to achieve inclusion. When both *People* and *Performance* are equally and authentically practiced, an exceptional evaluation is the result. This result is additionally confirmed by a correspondingly high level of performance, productivity, and profitability. This example illustrates an ideal *integration* of polychronic and monochronic functioning.

The final point with respect to global business functioning is the necessity to understand, influence, and work together in a mutually beneficial way. This is perhaps the most important aspect of a successful global operation—as contrasted to simply doing business internationally. There are three back-pocket tips one might master for global success:

1. ***Humility***—be more interested in learning rather than teaching.
2. ***Transformation***—be willing to change one-dimensional ways of viewing of culture.
3. ***Integration***—adopt a flexible style of operation that spans a spectrum of choices, depending on the situation.

III. Eurocentric and Non-Eurocentric Cultural Values in the Workplace—An Organizational Perspective

Eurocentrism, as practiced historically, is viewing and judging non-European cultures and people from a European (or Western) perspective.⁶ When compared to non-European cultures, Eurocentrism has been considered to be superior and suggested as a model for the world as a whole; primarily based upon of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions.

Cultural bias involving interpreting and judging other cultures by one's own standards to be inferior is called ethnocentrism.⁷ In today's global business world, the historical practices of Eurocentrism and ethnocentrism are outmoded business practices. These suggestions provide the basis for the achievement of inclusion and globalization.

The Eurocentric worldview is based on Western values and characteristics which include:

- Individualism
- Competitiveness
- Dualistic Thinking
- Rigid Time Orientation
- Patriarchy
- Future Orientation
- Nuclear Family
- Standard English
- Judeo-Christian Beliefs
- Protestant Work Ethic
- Task-Oriented
- Objective/Rational Thinking
- Control of Feelings/Emotions
- Hierarchical Thinking/
Operation

When cultures and individuals have operated in contrast to these values and characteristics they have historically experienced exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination.

With the present emergence of “developing and underdeveloped” countries into the mainstream of the global economy, the primary question being considered today is will the historical unilateral Eurocentric approach work for success in the 21st century? The answer to this question creates two major discussions. The first involves the fact that more than 90% of the world’s population is polychronic and high context with respect to their fundamental values. Will such values be a necessary part of workplace functioning?

The second question is whether high performance in business is truly sustainable in high context/polychronic societies where the Western values above prevail? The answers to these questions are beyond the scope of this paper, but are at the heart of the essence of globalization and the business strategy for organizations *expanding* into these parts of the world—both in terms of resources (human and tangible) and new markets. And finally there is the question: What will employees *demand* in terms of *workplace* practices?

If the strategy of globalization includes diversity and inclusion, then these initiatives require not only *change* in management practices but also a fundamental *transformation* of the business culture. The major difference is that change is reversible and transformation is permanent and irreversible.

From a global perspective, what does cultural transformation mean? It means the systematic process of *integrating* the cultural values *and* practices of non-Western cultures with those of Western cultures that *ensures* both equitable opportunities for all employees to be successful and business success on a long-term basis. The most obvious implication of cultural transformation is the creation of a workplace that *values* and *practices, equally*, People and Performance. An example of such a model is the Workstyle Cultural Orientation Instrument created by Innovations International in 1989.^{8,9}

Table 3: Personnel Workstyle Cultural Orientation

Workstyle Cultural Orientations* — The contents of the table below describes the two ends of a cultural spectrum of Non-Eurocentric and Eurocentric organizational cultural values.

	Most people of color, globally, many European-derived females, and some European-derived males. (Non-Eurocentric)	Most European-derived individuals and some people of color, globally, with a high degree of acculturation (Eurocentric)
1	Prefers interdependence in relationship to others.	Prefers independence, often expressed as “rugged individualism.”
2	Group achievement.	Individual achievement.
3	Team — Trust, sharing, communication, and mutual respect.	Team — Task accomplishment through structure, strategy, and systems.
4	Open expression of feelings and emotions.	Limited expression of feelings and emotions.
5	People are more important than systems; tends to be inclusive of all points of view.	Systems are more important than people; tends to have fewer points of view.
6	Multidimensional, holistic, and nonlinear thinking; context-oriented.	Dualistic, linear, and logical thinking; content-oriented.
7	Power — Ability to accomplish tasks through the empowerment of people.	Power — Control, authority, and position over others.
8	Relationship-oriented.	Task-oriented.
9	Learn best by doing.	Learn best through description.
10	Accepts the viewpoints of very different cultures.	Accepts the viewpoints of similar cultures.

* Created by Innovations and adapted from J.A. Anderson, Journal of Teacher Education, Jan.-Feb., 1988.

The descriptions in Table 3 are the two ends of a spectrum from Non-Eurocentric to Highly Eurocentric. Just as we illustrated for high and low context, no organization is totally one-dimensional, but all organizations have strong propensities. These propensities are most evident in difficult (often financially challenging) situations. The left side descriptors favor people, the right-side descriptors favor performance measures, and a central propensity indicates a balance of the two. These contrasting differences are defined in Appendix III on page 17.

A global organization that has developed a comprehensive leadership model which spans this spectrum is Sandvik of Sweden. The four major descriptors, proceeding from Non-Eurocentric to Eurocentric orientation, are *Demonstrates Self-Awareness; Develops People; Drive Improvements; and Deliver Results*. The most powerful aspect of this model is that leadership skills are developed from the “inside out;” beginning with self-awareness. The first two descriptors are an emphasis on people and the latter two descriptors are an emphasis on performance. The context (or umbrella) that encompasses these content descriptors is “Drive One Sandvik.” My interpretation of this phrase is that it is synonymous with Globalization.

IV. The Globalization of Diversity and Inclusion—A Business Imperative

Globalization of Diversity and Inclusion begins with the recognition that people, regionally and globally, are different. They have different languages (and dialects), cultures, communication styles, business norms, customs, and different perceptions of success.¹⁰ In essence, individually and collectively, they have vastly different worldviews. So, the people dimension we described in the previous discussion is more involved than just applying the descriptions of the left-side of Table 3. In other words, “one size does not fit all.” Recognition of the vast array of differences in people (and their corresponding expectations as a prerequisite for performance) provides the basis for defining globalization of organizational culture.¹¹

Globalization is the establishment of a business culture that is *committed* to:

- the *integration* of the unique cultural values and workplace practices of its constituents worldwide;
- the *creation* of self-actualized, high-performing employees, globally; and
- the *achievement* of exceptional business performance.

These objectives cannot be accomplished without leveraging the performance capacity of differences supported by a global culture that expects and supports the highest expression of human potential. The former is the essence of diversity and the latter is the essence of inclusion. These are *necessities* for sustainable business success in the 21st century. So, globalization begins with revisiting one's global core values to ensure they are truly a representation of its global business constituents.

Globalization applies to most, if not all, organizations implementing expanded growth into non-Eurocentric regions of the planet as well as those serving a global marketplace (in person or online). An important *fact* to realize in these two capacities is that 90% of Planet Earth's population is non-Eurocentric as a natural cultural propensity.

In practice, globalization involves two major components: the role of leadership and the role of employees. Both play essential roles in the creation of globalization. The major role of leadership is to ensure supportive workplace practices and equitable opportunities for everyone's success. The major role of employees is to actively participate in creating an inclusive workplace through *Small Acts of Inclusion*.® This is achieved by the viral dissemination of inclusive relationships—relationships that are characterized by acceptance, respect, and support of each other's success. An organization that has implemented this strategy with overwhelming success is the United States Department Agriculture led by Secretary Thomas Vilsack and the Head of Diversity, Dr. Alma Hobbs.

The achievement of globalization will not only transform the nature of business performance, but also the nature of global cooperation—which is the ultimate contribution an organization can make to global compatibility.

Appendix I

Context Differences in Business*

The following table lists comparable *high context* and *low context* business styles:

High Context	Low Context
Executive offices shared and open to all.	Executive offices separated and access controlled.
Do not expect or want detailed information and feel irritated when pressed for it.	Heavy reliance on detailed background information in written or verbal form.
Information shared with everyone.	Information highly centralized and distribution controlled by few people.
Relationships more important than objective data.	Objective data more important than relationships.
Overlap between business and social relationships.	Business and social relationships compartmentalized.
Authority and status more important than technical skills.	Competence given equal or more weight than position and status.
Invitations to functions based on person's status, not competence.	Business meeting invitation based on competence.
Meetings often announced on short notice; key people always accept.	Meetings with fixed agendas and plenty of advance notice.
Each new factor and item cautiously evaluated to be sure of implications.	Reluctance to act without a great deal of current information.
Comfortable in a sea of information.	Overload if information flows in a fast, disorganized manner.

* Reference 4, Bibliography

Appendix II

Workplace Cultural Differences*

The following table lists comparable *monochronic* and *polychronic* business styles:

Monochronic	Polychronic
Work sequentially, one thing at a time.	Work simultaneously on several things.
Seldom interaction and interruptions by co-workers.	Constant interaction and interruptions with co-workers.
Specific plans with established deadlines.	Flexible plan with rough deadline.
Communication through detailed memos and systems.	Communications by informal verbal and relationship networks.
Strive for goals and accomplish objectives.	Develop employees and establish quality relationships.
Detailed plans and executed to design.	Informal plan, adjusted as project proceeds.
Don't interrupt others behind closed doors.	Interrupts others behind closed doors.
Almost never lends valued possessions.	Always lends others valued possessions.
Apologizes when late.	Doesn't apologize when late.
Loses contact with valued clients.	Stays in communication with valued clients.
Uses executive decision making (with input).	Extensively involves colleagues in decision making.
Orderly, sequential, logical.	Flexible, spontaneous, and adaptable.
Jobs fixed, adapted to employees.	Jobs changing, overlapping between employees.

* Reference 5, Bibliography

Appendix III

Workstyle Cultural Orientation

The following table compares workstyle cultural orientations:

1. Style: Independence — Interdependence	Indicates an individual's preferred mode of operation (alone or with others) anywhere in life.
2. Achievement: Group — Individual	Characterizes an individual's source of motivation for rewards and/or acknowledgment.
3. Team Functioning: Interpersonal Team Values — Structured Process	Once a task is identified, indicates preferred process of team operation (i.e., focus on relationships or focus on strategy/systems) to accomplish it.
4. Expression of Feelings and Emotions: Open — Limited	Measures the extent to which an individual displays feelings and emotions in the workplace.
5. Organizational Operations: People More Important — Systems More Important	Indicates whether an individual focuses on systems or people more in organizational operations.

Continued

6. Operation:
Context — Content

Indicates whether an individual's preferred mode of thinking/conceptualizing is context-oriented (big picture) or content-oriented (details).

7. Power:
Through Personal Empowerment — Through Authority

Reveals whether an individual associates power with performance or position.

8. Goal Achievement:
Relationship Oriented — Task Oriented

Characterizes the process (relationships or tasks) which an individual emphasizes in goal achievement.

9. Learn:
By Doing — By Description

Establishes an individual's preference in learning: experiential or mental/cognitive.

10. Cultural Acceptance:
Accepts Total Spectrum of Cultures — Accepts Similar Cultures

Measures an individual's degree of ethnocentrism.

Appendix IV

A Diversity and Inclusion Scorecard

- 1. I make clear statements (orally or in writing) to each group which I lead indicating my full support of diversity and inclusion. I tell them what I intend to do as a personal role model and group leader to help create diversity and inclusion.
- 2. I establish mechanisms within each of my areas of responsibility for the various individuals and groups to identify what they should be doing to create an inclusive environment.
- 3. I examine processes or procedures for which I have responsibility to determine their equity or inequity with respect to cultural differences. I make plans for revising those that are inequitable. (If checked, give an example).
- 4. I catch myself when I make subtle or overt comments which do not reflect respect for any individual or group in the organization.
- 5. I am aware when others make observations which do not reflect respect for an individual or group in the organization. In a non-threatening way, I call attention to the fact with the individual making the comments.

- 6. As I plan for improving the work of the group for which I am responsible, I consciously include diversity and inclusion considerations as part of the process. (If checked, give an example)

- 7. I deliberately reach out for new experiences which broaden my cultural competence and intelligence, globally. (If checked, give an example).

- 8. I actively seek diverse candidates when job opportunities occur, both locally and globally.

- 9. I am clear about the business necessity for diversity and inclusion. (List two)

- 10. I am actively implementing relevant policies, practices, and behaviors to support diversity and inclusion.

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