

Chapter 3 Additional Resources

Values

What do we mean by cultural values and why are they important?

Values are the principles and ideals shared within cultures. They underlie our beliefs as to what is right, wrong, acceptable or unacceptable.

Since they are unseen, they are more likely to trip us up or to cause challenges within cross-cultural situations.

They are the unseen factors that drive our visible behaviours. These behaviours might be within the workplace, home or social settings.

Understanding that values are driving both our behaviours and the behaviours of others is essential to cultural awareness.

Why not explore your own values?

The scales below show some of the values people from different cultures have towards certain aspects of work.

Use the descriptions on each side of the scale to help decide your preference.

Where do you sit on the scale? Are you at an extreme end - i.e. is this value very important to you, or are you sat somewhere in the middle?

Strict Rules

Flexible Rules



-You see rules as important and applicable to all situations
-You try to follow rules, and feel uncomfortable when they are broken

-You use the situation to judge when a rule counts
-You are willing to bend or ignore rules for certain people

Change

Tradition



-You like to think about new possibilities
- You are more focused on the future than on the past

-You like to think about how things have been done before
-Tradition and established standards are important to you

Openness

Privacy



-You don't keep a clear division between your work and your personal life
-You like to share personal details with others

-You like to keep your personal life separate from your work life
-You prefer not to reveal so much about yourself to your colleagues

Structured Time

Flexible Time

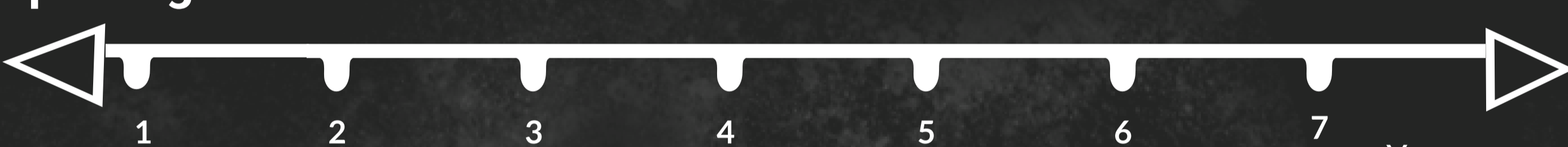


-You like agendas, tasks, lists and anything else that helps you organise your time
-You see structure as helpful and clarifying

-You see time as fluid and not something to be divided up and constantly organised
- You don't like too much structure and order

Equal Rights

Different Rights



-You think everyone should have equal rights and opportunities
-You try to treat people equally, regardless of age, position and experience
-You prefer a workplace in which people are quite equal in position

-You recognise that everyone is not equal, that is the way of the world
-You treat people differently based on age, position and experience
-You prefer a workplace where there's a clear division between the boss and others

Individual Focus

Group Focus



-You see yourself as primarily an individual who is part of a workforce
-Your focus in the workplace is on getting tasks done

-You see yourself primarily as a team member in the workforce
-Your focus in the workplace is on building strong relationships

Full Responsibility

Limited Responsibility



-You are responsible for your own success and failure
-You believe things happen because you make them happen

-You believe many factors contribute to your own success and failure
-You believe things happen because of particular circumstances, greater forces or powers and sometimes pure luck

So how do your values influence you in the workplace?

Look at the values you have expressed as particularly important to you.

Why do you think they might be important?

Are they important in your broader national culture or within your corporate culture?

Alternatively, do you hold these values in high esteem despite any broader cultural influences?

When it comes to the values you consider important, what impact do you feel they might have on the way you behave in the workplace or when working with other cultures?

What impact might they have on your colleagues?

How might these values influence the expectations you have of others?

When people placing a different emphasis on these values work together, what kind of challenges or tensions might occur if the difference isn't recognised?

How might differences be resolved?

Learn More about Specific Countries and their Cultures



If you would like to learn more about the values of a particular country, then why not start with our free country guides?

They are packed full of information about the local culture including tips on etiquette and doing business.

 [Click here to have a look](#)