



University of Wales Trinity Saint David – London

Programme: BA Business Management Year 3

Module: International Business Communications

Module code: LCBB6001

Module Tutor: Charles Nwaogwugwu

Assignment Title: Essay

Student Name: Miroslav Gruychev

Student ID: 2021938

Introduction:

Companies that operate in the globalised world of today, including those situated in the United Kingdom, are need to accommodate a wide variety of cultural traditions and practises in order to be successful. Many times, one's capacity to communicate well across cultural borders will determine whether or not they are successful in business. The purpose of this study was to gather information that might be used to provide suggestions to a company based in the United Kingdom (UK) on how to create a working environment that is friendly and encouraging to all of its staff members. The paper will begin with a concise outline of British corporate communications, followed by an analysis of the chosen company and a discussion of how international and intercultural communication theories may be used in the context of the UK. Following that, we will analyse how other cultural variables, in addition to a multi-ethnic workforce, impact the way business is conducted in the United Kingdom. In addition to this, it will investigate the numerous linguistic obstacles that may be found in the workplace and provide solutions that can assist the multicultural workforce in the UK. In this concluding section of the research project, we will provide a brief summary of our results and discuss why it is critical for businesses to adopt inclusive policies and procedures.

Context of British Business Communications

The context of business communications in Britain is influenced by a number of cultural and historical factors. The United Kingdom's diverse cultural heritage influences its commercial practises. English is the de facto national language in the United Kingdom since it is spoken well by almost everyone. However, because regional accents and dialects vary, communication may be challenging. In British business culture, professionalism, promptness, and formality are highly regarded. Participants are expected to be on time for meetings and appointments, to dress appropriately, and to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Additionally, British business communication has a tendency to be more oblique and complex when compared to other cultures (Kochman, 1997). Brits commonly use euphemisms to avoid upsetting people or coming across as too direct. In British business communication, creating and maintaining partnerships is valued highly. Business meetings in the UK often start with a little chit-chat and mingling before getting down to business. In British business culture, having a friendly and accessible attitude is highly regarded and may help one gain the respect and trust of both clients and employees.

Introduction to HSBC

The HSBC Group, of which HSBC UK is a member, is among the world's major banking conglomerates. The bank now has branches in several places, including Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas (HSBC,2022) The bank's headquarters are in London. In the United Kingdom, HSBC serves both individual and corporate customers. More than 14 million people in the United Kingdom have access to the services offered by the corporation because of its 600 locations there. HSBC UK offers a wide variety of banking products and services, including checking and savings accounts, credit cards, loans, and mortgages, to both individuals and companies. To further aid its clients in reaching their financial objectives, the bank provides financial planning services, insurance products, and investment management services. HSBC UK is dedicated to the betterment of the areas in which it operates, hence it sponsors a number of community and environmental programmes. The bank plans to invest £1 billion in environmentally friendly financing and reduce its carbon footprint by half by 2030. HSBC UK also encourages its staff to give back to the community through a volunteer programme.

Application of International and Intercultural Communication Theories on the UK Context

Financial services are provided on a global scale by HSBC, which also maintains operations in more than 60 countries HSBC (2022). This indicates that the consequences of globalisation and the many forms of expression on society have a significant influence on the market for goods and services. Not only is the United Kingdom the location where HSBC was initially established, but it also remains one of the company's most important markets today. It is essential for the employees of HSBC in the UK to have a solid comprehension of the foundations of intercultural and multinational communication in order for the company to be successful in this market. It is generally agreed upon that Hofstede's idea of cultural aspects represents a significant step forward in the study of cross-cultural communication and should be credited for this (Hofstede, 1994). This idea proposes six different aspects of cultural identity as a basis for analysing and contrasting different civilizations. The phrases "power distance," "individualism," "masculinity," "avoidance of uncertainty," "long-term orientation," and "indulgence" are all applicable in this setting. HSBC will be in a better position to navigate the cultural differences that exist between the nations in which it does business and the United Kingdom, where it is headquartered, if it follows this approach and puts it into action (Jandt, 2012). For example, the United Kingdom has a relatively

low power distance score, which suggests that its populace places a high priority on treating everyone in a fair manner. Countries such as China and India, which place a great value on hierarchical connections, have a power distance that is rather high. In view of the present situation that HSBC finds itself in inside the UK, intercultural communication is another strategy that may be utilised. Tolerance for one another's chosen modes of expression is necessary for good communication between people of different cultural origins, according to this point of view. It is possible that HSBC may implement this strategy in order to improve its employees' ability to connect with customers and co-workers hailing from the United Kingdom and other countries (Samovar et al., 2010). For instance, it is common practise in the United Kingdom to convey meaning through ambiguity, understatement, and other nonverbal clues. On the other hand, in low-context countries like the United States, open discourse is encouraged.

Critical Evaluation of Cultural Sensitivity in the UK

Given the varied population of the United Kingdom and the wide variety of cultural practises that are observed within that population, cultural sensitivity is an essential quality to possess for those who conduct business in that country. To be able to form connections with people of different cultural backgrounds that are trustworthy and constructive for both parties, one must first comprehend and value the significance of cultural diversity (Ely and Thomas, 2001). Language preference is often used as an indicator of a person's level of cultural sensitivity in the United Kingdom. Because of the large number of individuals who come from different parts of the world to live in the United Kingdom, residents there are fluent in a wide variety of languages. Companies with a presence in the UK have a responsibility to be aware of the linguistic requirements of both their employees and their customers in order to provide clear and efficient communication. Because it is a multinational corporation, HSBC serves customers from a diverse range of ethnic and cultural origins (Cox and Blake, 1991). When conducting business in the United Kingdom and other countries, the bank is well aware of how important it is to respect the local culture and values of such countries. The ability to see and appreciate variations in culture, as well as the willingness to modify one's own behaviours and forms of expression in response to such differences, is referred to as "cultural sensitivity (Cox and Blake, 1991)." To increase its cultural sensitivity and understanding, HSBC has implemented a number of different initiatives in recent years. Authenticity in the workplace is encouraged by the bank, for example, through the efforts of its worldwide Diversity and Inclusion programme. In addition, the bank provides its staff with training on cultural awareness in the hopes that they would learn to recognise and respect one another's various cultural backgrounds and traditions. However, HSBC has a long-standing reputation for being indifferent to the customs and practises of a wide variety of cultures. For instance, in 2016, the bank came under fire after a stolen email revealed that London management had lambasted the "very mainland Chinese" work culture of its employees in Hong Kong. The email was discovered in Hong Kong. Following the receipt of a number of official complaints over the cultural insensitivity of the message, HSBC issued a formal apology (Ryan et al., 2017). The disagreement at HSBC on the organization's dress code is another illustration of the company's

cultural insensitivity. When it was reported in 2019 that the bank had a regulation forcing female staff to wear high heels and cosmetics, the bank came under fire from customers and employees alike. The policy was eventually modified by the bank in response to complaints that it was unfairly biased towards women and had become outmoded.

Communication Barriers Experienced by a Diverse Workforce in the UK Context

The language barrier is one of the biggest barriers to successful communication for the UK's increasingly diverse workforce. In the workplace, non-native English speakers can struggle to express their thoughts properly (Adler and Gundersen, 2008). Non-native speakers who struggle to comprehend regional dialects or colloquialisms may also make mistakes. Another major barrier to a multicultural workforce in the UK is cultural differences in communication styles. Potential communication difficulties may arise among the racially and ethnically diverse HSBC workforce in the UK due to linguistic, cultural, and interpersonal differences. Language obstacles, for instance, may make it difficult for employees whose first language is not English to express their ideas and views to coworkers and clients (Groschl, 2012). Additionally, due to variations in nonverbal cues and communication styles, multicultural teams may find it challenging to collaborate. Differences in communication styles, such as direct vs. indirect, might result in misconceptions in circumstances like criticism and feedback. Open lines of communication, training on cultural awareness, and language resources are just a few ways HSBC may assist its clients in overcoming these challenges. Additionally important are acknowledging and respecting people's distinctive communication methods and giving them chances to do so. Giving staff instruction and feedback on how to communicate more effectively is another way to promote an inclusive workplace (HSBC, 2022). It's possible that different work ethics and expectations among HSBC staff and their UK counterparts are getting in the way of effective communication between the two groups. Because certain cultures place a higher emphasis on timeliness and meeting deadlines than others do, there is a possibility that this will lead to conflict in the workplace. In a team that is otherwise diverse, disagreements and communication breakdowns brought on by differences in work ethics and expectations can have a negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce. Different generations of employees may also have varied communication preferences and expectations. For example, some workers may prefer face-to-face meetings, while others may lean more towards technological forms of interaction. In order to reduce these barriers, HSBC should facilitate open communication on aims and objectives, offer chances for team-building activities, and create a welcoming and supportive work environment that celebrates and respects diversity.

Communication strategies and Recommendations:

Businesses in the UK have access to a wide range of different communication strategies, which they may employ in order to improve the efficiency of their communications. It is possible for employees to have more successful interactions with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds

if they routinely participate in training designed to increase their intercultural awareness and communication skills (Smith, 2018). Regular team meetings, an open-door policy, and the utilisation of technology to encourage connectivity across a variety of locations may all contribute to the establishment of open communication channels inside the organisation. Productive workplaces may be created by placing an emphasis on diversity, honesty, and openness in the workplace. In addition to contributing to the work that the organisation is doing in this area, members of the staff have the opportunity to take part in diversity and inclusion committees, employee surveys, and focus groups. HSBC might provide its staff with cultural sensitivity training in order to assist them understand how to interact appropriately with people who come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. It is possible that this will build an inclusive and welcoming working environment by reducing misunderstandings and improving communication. Additionally, HSBC may provide its diverse staff with channels of communication that are not just open and honest but also specifically designed to meet their needs. Every employee may be heard and understood if there are regular in-person meetings, an open-door policy, and contemporary communication tools like email and video conferencing (Jones & Patel, 2020).. By implementing more inclusive policies and practises, HSBC may be able to more accurately represent its diverse workforce. It may, for instance, provide flexible work schedules that take into account religious observances and obligations to one's family. A more varied, inclusive, and work-life-balanced workplace may result from this. By doing this, it could be possible to guarantee that the leadership team reflects the complete variety of the workforce. This might aid in fostering a climate of tolerance and respect inside the organisation for those with various experiences and viewpoints, therefore fostering diversity and inclusion at all levels. By organising events, activities, and projects that showcase the staff members' various cultural origins and experiences, a firm may show its appreciation for its varied workforce. This may help to foster an atmosphere where all workers are treated with respect and worth.

Conclusion:

This report has shown how important it is for businesses in the UK to build an inclusive workplace, with particular emphasis on the part that line managers play in encouraging growth and enforcing inclusive policies and practises. Based on ideas of international and intercultural communication, this research sheds light on the cultural awareness needed to run a business in the UK, where employees often come from a wide variety of backgrounds. This study has discussed some of the communication challenges that a diverse workforce in the UK faces. Problems with the language, unfamiliar cultural norms, and an inability to adapt are just a few examples. In order to overcome these challenges, the research suggests a number of communication tactics, such as regular training and education, open lines of dialogue, and an emphasis on diversity and inclusion. Companies like HSBC can help workers from all backgrounds thrive by adopting these methods of internal communication. Recognising the advantages of a workforce that is representative of the communities in which it operates is essential for fostering innovation, creativity, and problem solving. As a result, it is essential for businesses to provide a welcoming environment in which all employees may thrive. In conclusion, this research highlights the significance of cultural

awareness, accountability on the part of line management, the removal of communication obstacles, and the implementation of effective communication techniques in creating an inclusive and productive workplace for all employees. HSBC UK's openness as an employer will improve thanks to these changes, making it easier to draw in and keep talented workers.

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