



**PMI EMEA LIM – 18 May 2008, 10:30hrs-12:00hrs - Cross-Cultural Workshop
facilitated by Petra Goltz PMP, Vice Chair IT & Telecom SIG**

Supporting materials

1. slides - 2008LIM_EMEA_PresentationPGoltz_final.ppt
2. email_case_study.doc
3. proverbs_matching.doc

Workshop output (this document)

4. introduction and summary of findings
5. group letters

Introduction

Attendees' guesses as to the number of languages spoken collectively by the attendees, varied from 10-50. We tested these hypotheses, and found that the following 22 languages were spoken:

1. Arabic
2. Bulgarian
3. Croatian
4. Danish
5. Dutch + Flemish
6. English + OK-lahomian
7. French
8. German + Swiss-German
9. Greek
10. Hebrew
11. Hungarian
12. Italian
13. Malay
14. Filipino
15. Portuguese
16. Romanian
17. Russian
18. Serbian
19. Slovak
20. Spanish
21. Tamil
22. Urdu

Letter 1 – Belgium, France, Switzerland

Dear Susan,

We are surprised to see how your performance has recently dropped, knowing how valuable your contribution used to be in the past.

Specifically, the 3 unresolved conflicts the last weeks have resulted in 2-3 days delay for each conflict, not counting the accumulated negative effects of the conflicts.

We need to organize a face-to-face meeting within the next 2 days to perform a root cause analysis and get back on track of the action plan.

Please call me during the day to setup the meeting.

xxx

Reactions

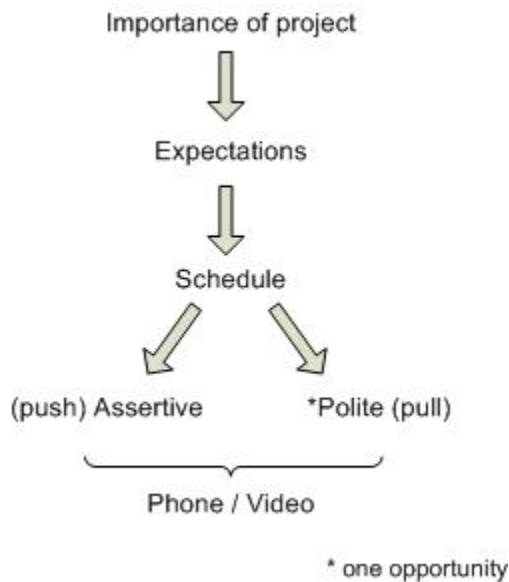
US: fears that the email might cause a libel case

Asia: too harsh

Serbia: too soft

UK: fine, factual message

Framework for approach of ‘letter’ 2 – Asia (India, Israel, Malaysia, Philippines) + UK



Assumptions: first time

Format: Preference for phone or video conference call over sending an e-mail

Reactions: would translate to a polite mail, setting/confirming expectations



Letter 3 – US

Susan, I will be in your area next Tuesday and Wednesday and would like to meet with you for about an hour to discuss the progress and plans of the project. Perhaps if it works with your schedule, we could have lunch or another time that is suitable to you.

Please confirm by COB tomorrow.

Thanks,

xxx

Remarks: email approach is based on deliverables, would be sent to entire project team, phone and F2F would be alternatives

Reactions: not specific enough

Letter 4 – Brazil, Italy, Portugal, Spain

Dear (Susan),

I would really appreciate if you could join me for an informal teleconference about your work in the project.

We believe in everything you have already done for the company and in our conversation we will discuss issues that we could deal with together, to solve any problems that may have arisen.

Thanks and best regards

xxx

Remarks: in Chile especially, the telephone would be the preferred medium, or a lunch meeting

Reactions: polite mail, stating some facts. Gender of addressee may influence the way the mail is written

Greece indicated that they would place a telephone call, rather than writing an email

Letter 5 – Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia

Dear Anna,

I'm your colleague from VT project and I've just realized that some of the deliverables of our projects have been already delayed.

I would like to check if you're fine, and if there is any way I can support you in order to speed up the process.

Please answer and let me know how I can help.

Kind regards

xxx

Reactions

Supportive, states problem 'softly', not seeking to blame

US and Israel: not direct enough, no timetable

Letter 6 – Sweden

Dear Danielle,

At our latest group meeting it became evident that we were not in agreement regarding the goals that need fulfillment.

This is jeopardizing the project short and long term deliverables.

Considering that the rest of the project group is dependent on your personal deliverables I would like to know when you are ready to submit.

If your results do not meet the requirements and timeline I will need to take immediate further action.

Best regards

xxx

Reactions: targeted, stating facts, asking for deliverable

Letter 7 - Egypt

Dear Nina,

I hope this email finds you well.

As you understand Project Cobra is on a very tight deadline for delivery. Our client has minimal tolerance for delays, and expects us to deliver on-time, if not ahead. Your role on Cobra is very important. The workstream you are managing is within the core value proposition of the project.

I am concerned that you may be facing obstacles to delivery. Item B was delayed for 3 days and the deadline for item A constantly slipped.

I am sure you would agree with me that such delays may lead to project failure. I would be more than happy to assist you in tackling such issues, so as to avoid any overruns.

Thank you.

xxx

Remarks: might use a phone call, but would not meet over lunch (such as in Chile)

Reactions

Voted best effort. Well balanced (factual/supportive) e-mail, that would not offend any culture



Letters 8a and 8b – Germany (participants from Cologne and Berlin)

Hallo xxx,

We are in a very exciting period in our project. We have just reached a point that should be discussed between us.

Could we meet for a nice informal lunch today?

Best wishes

xxx

Ms xxx,

In the past weeks I came to realise that our perception of what has to be done in this project may be different.

Therefore I would like to open the floor for a discussion amongst us and would like to conduct a meeting.

My suggestion is to meet asap in person. A good occasion would be on the 18th of May, when the monthly department meeting is conducted.

Best regards

xxx

Reactions

Factual approach, trying to understand motivation

Voted second best effort with regards to application across cultures

<http://www.wikihow.com/Say-Hello-in-Different-Languages>

btw, looking at various internet resources, there seem to be up to 8000 (!) languages spoken in the world today, if we include dialects.