



A Beginner's Guide to Intercultural Competence

Intercultural competence is the skill to successfully communicate with people of other cultures. In this document, our Intercultural Communications' team has put together a brief guide that will help you get the most out of a new culture. We hope that you will find it useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you are interested in more information on how we can help you or your company to get the most out of moving to a new culture.

Getting started:

1. Learn about the cultures of people that you work and interact with. Start from scratch and forget your assumptions and stereotypes. Learn about a culture's history, geography, religion, political situation and have a go at learning the language.
2. Submerge yourself in another culture. Try to attend events or occasions where you can experience other cultures and interact with culturally diverse people. There is nothing better than real-life practice when learning a skill.
3. Start listening and paying more attention when dealing with someone from another culture. You will be surprised how much you pick up by slowing down and concentrating on the other. Become more perceptive of your surroundings.
4. Follow the "Golden Rule," but only when appropriate. Don't assume that others want to be treated in the same way as you do. Treating someone equally does not always mean to treat them the same. Treat others how they prefer to be treated.
5. Self-reflection – pay attention to how your own behavior and communication may come across to others. Do others perceive you in the same way as you see yourself?
6. Learn to tolerate uncertainty. There will be a great deal of unknowns when interaction with people from other cultures. Definitive, concrete answers may not always be given and you may not always understand everything in the beginning.
7. Be patient with others and yourself. Don't give up. Intercultural Competence only comes with time and experience.
8. Take some formal training from intercultural experts. Attending a course and learning from the experts can go a long way in helping you understand how culture impacts you and others.

Welcome to Sweden!

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