

Cross Cultural Management In France - Christian Herbst

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The recent 20 years have been the era of globalization with enormous growth in international trade and foreign direct investment (FDI). In former times, most Western companies did not engage in international business. On the hand their domestic market seemed to be attractive enough and there were sufficient opportunities for growth. On the other hand, companies did not have to take into consideration the specific features of foreign markets, such as foreign languages and 'strange' cultural behaviour. Nowadays, however, the changing business environment has forced most companies to seek opportunities in foreign markets as well. (Compare: Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, Wong; Page 166) This development has led to the existence of so - called MNCs - multinational companies, which conduct business globally. Nowadays, there is no economy in which foreign companies are not active. In those companies, employees, suppliers and customers come from many different cultures, which has led to an increasing awareness about questions related to Cross Cultural Management (Compare: Bergemann, Sourisseaux; Page 9) In my essay, I will concentrate on this topic and I will try to describe cross cultural management in France. Concerning the structure of this essay, I want to start off by trying to give an explanation of the term 'culture'. Afterwards, I will explain one of the best known models to describe cultural dimensions -Hofstede's 5-D-Model- and point out French and German cultural elements. But my main goal is to show how culture influences the management process and the business behaviour of the French company leaders and to compare these elements to the German business people. I will explain some differences between German and French business people, as far as management and leadership are concerned, by the help of an investigation of small and medium - sized companies. By describing three important features - values and objectives, internal leadership and external leadership I will point out the main differences between German and French company leaders, as far as leading and representing the firm, but also behaviour in daily business life and the relationship to business partners is concerned. Finally, I will point out, what German business people have to consider when they do business with French companies, how they can avoid mistakes in business decisions, how Germans should behave in a French company and draw a conclusion of this essay. Author: Herbst, Christian

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