



The FAERON WAY

TO BUILD TRUST
ACROSS CULTURES



WHY TRUST ACROSS CULTURES?

Culture teaches us the behaviors of trust. Through norms, values, and traditions, we learn these behaviors - and we are rewarded for them. It is only natural that we carry these behaviors with us when working across cultures.

And yet, time and again, we see business people behave in ways that they were taught were worthy of trust in their home country, only to be marginalized, ignored, reprimanded, and even cut from their team. Why? Because those behaviors were deemed untrustworthy in the cultures of their colleagues.

This travesty can be addressed by understanding what different cultures— including our own— look for when they are deciding to trust. By learning and applying business practices that honor cultural differences, business people not only improve collaboration and performance, they expand their role as cultural ambassadors—for themselves, their organization, and across cultures.

- Jacqueline Oliveira, Founder



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ABOUT FAERON

WHO WE ARE

Faeron is dedicated to expanding global citizenship, cultural awareness, and universal trust by contributing our expertise in international business. We are a consortium of seasoned businesspeople and academics from a variety of industries and professions, including international business, consulting, engineering, education, and law. Faeron partners bring a combined 125 years of personal work experiences to workshops and programs. This means that participants are being taught by people who can intimately relate to the opportunities and challenges of working across cultures.

WHAT WE DO

We teach businesspeople about culture, how it influences business practices, and what you can do to build a trusting relationship with your international counterpart.



Culture of One

Every country is a system composed of individuals demonstrating unique behaviors. This uniqueness derives from life experience, such as family, health, age, gender, education, socioeconomics, culture, and more. To suggest that all people from any country behave in a specific manner is untrue and certainly not our belief. Regardless of one's country, we are all unique beings.

We are each a “Culture of One.”



ABOUT FAERON

WHAT OUR CLIENTS RECEIVE

INTAKE SURVEY

1. Provides a forum for all respondents to share challenges, make observations, and ask questions about a culture
2. Captures what respondents want to know about the culture to work effectively and build trust with them
3. Defines the topics to be included in the playbook

CUSTOMIZED PLAYBOOK

1. Describes the behaviors that the culture is looking for when deciding to trust
2. Applies action strategies to topics from the intake survey
3. Includes cultural sensitivity tools to build trust across cultures

4 - 6 HOUR INTERACTIVE TRAINING SESSION

1. Facilitator walks through the playbook and applies strategies to topics from the intake survey
2. Participants learn how to use cultural sensitivity tools
3. Session culminates with a large group discussion about building trust across cultures, and growing your company's brand as a global ambassador



Patagonia has been working with Faeron for over a decade on cross cultural trainings to enhance trust and partnership with our global business communities and supply chain partners. The trainings have been invaluable for the product teams. They have helped us understand business practices in different countries, and how to interact with the deepest respect. The trainings are incredibly popular and folks refer to what we learn constantly. We will continue to partner with Faeron and continue to strive to be the best global ambassadors possible.

– Sarah Hayes

Director Material Development
Patagonia, Inc.

EXAMPLE FROM A PLAYBOOK

TRADITIONAL WORKPLACE TRUST BEHAVIORS OF BRAZILIANS & CHINESE



CLIENT REQUEST

We work with Chinese and Brazilians. How do these two cultures differ in the workplace?



TESTIMONIAL

“What will stick: Trust, and the Three Attributes (Competence, Integrity and Caring.) That structure is very helpful.”

BRAZIL: COMPETENCE

- Jumping into the discussion to share perspective
- Asking questions without provocation
- **Challenging protocol**
- **Brainstorming as soon as a challenge presents itself**
- Seeking ways to share
- Embracing opportunities to learn

CHINA: COMPETENCE

- Waiting for an invitation before speaking
- Downplaying accomplishments until pressed to share
- **Following protocol**
- **Creating structured processes in situations where there are no rules**
- Maintaining one's role in the team
- Doing favors to build the relationship

BRAZIL: INTEGRITY

- Promoting a personal perspective to influence leadership's decisions
- Adopting a paternalistic style to assist subordinates
- **May work around the rules to get the job done**
- **May explore informal networks to gain ideas/solutions**
- Addressing needs of coworkers in spite of effect on schedules
- Putting relationships before tasks

CHINA: INTEGRITY

- Waiting for upper management to make decisions
- Staying within organizational guidelines
- **Prudently researching prior to taking action**
- **Discussing ideas or questions with peers before presenting to higher levels**
- Working long hours to achieve goals (and demonstrate loyalty)
- Sacrificing personal needs to adhere to schedules



BRAZIL: CARING

- Starting off with titles and honorifics
- Openly deferential (but friendly) with authority
- **Transparent with information**
- **Careful to use inclusive language**
- Interrupting to show interest
- Using diplomatic but casual language

CHINA: CARING

- Using titles and honorifics until invited to do otherwise
- Publicly supporting positions of leadership (regardless of personal feelings)
- **Downplaying problematic situations**
- **Flattering to soften a message**
- Saying “yes” when meaning “no”, “maybe” or “I don’t know”
- Asserting a position with indirect language (“I’m not sure...”)



CLIENT REQUEST

We need to probe for solutions and feedback. How do we know that we are getting accurate feedback (and asking for it sensitively), when we are working with our Indian vendor?



TESTIMONIAL

In response to,
“What was helpful about this workshop?”
“Understanding the seemingly chaotic and contradictory communication/work styles of the Indian culture.”

EXAMPLE FROM A PLAYBOOK

REQUESTING, RECEIVING & DELIVERING FEEDBACK

Feedback, positive and negative, should be requested and shared on a regular basis, not just before a deadline. This is an essential aspect of trust-building with Indians as it expands the relationship and encourages consistency.

ACTION	STRATEGY
REQUESTING	
BE PATIENT	- Explain your confusion and request assistance in clarifying any misunderstanding that you may have - Acknowledge steps taken - Invite stories (versus inviting explanations for perceived wrongdoing) - Do not take a “warning” position as it creates stress and could result in a reticence to provide honest feedback - Listen carefully and paraphrase to ensure understanding and demonstrate openness
FOCUS ON THE RELATIONSHIP	Weave in comments about the importance of the relationship and benefits to the group (companies, employees, regional communities)
RECEIVING	
BE AWARE	- When trust is present, feedback will be detailed - When trust is not present, feedback will be minimal
BE SUPPORTIVE	- Respond accordingly with supportive comments and questions - Ask what you can do to assist
DELIVERING	
SUBTLE	- Deliver feedback subtly using implicit wording - Express your passion in a gentle (not passive) tone
SENSITIVE	- Provide feedback (positive and negative) in private - Be tactful; do not say, “Does that make sense?” or words to this effect

INDIAN (HINDI) PHRASES TO FOLLOW UP

Ho jaiga, “It will be done.” - Follow up to make sure you understand the time frame in which it will be done.
Kal, “Okay tomorrow” - Explore the conversation further to be sure that a favor, gift, etc., is not expected.



CLIENT REQUEST

We don't get a direct and clear response. It seems like the Sri Lankans say yes but it does not always mean affirmative. How do we 'read between the lines' to do the right thing and garner trust?



TESTIMONIAL

"I thought Ajith was a phenomenal guest speaker and so appreciated his joining us especially in the middle of the night. And I loved the expertise and context Jacqui brought to the presentation."

EXAMPLE FROM A PLAYBOOK

TRUST-BUILDING & COMMITMENT

Sri Lankans are quick to commit and rarely say "no." The response is usually, "yes". The reason for this is because a "yes" response shows a willingness to try, commitment to the relationship, and grit.

DO	DON'T	Sri Lankans look for
Utilize the services of a local advisor Have the advisor meet locally with the supplier to speak for you and share your concern	Expect your Sri Lankan counterpart to trust you before the relationship has been built	
Allow time Schedule time for Sri Lankans to consult with upper levels	Expect an immediate response to your request/demand	
Calendar Document the amount of time needed to provide a response	Assume that deadlines will always be met	
Institute a sense of urgency Tell the story of why this is important to the companies and customers	Expect your project to be put on the top of the list of priorities	- A history of good relationships - A sense that you will not cause them to lose face - Openness to change in plans - Understanding of their challenges - A future to the relationship - Caring about the people involved - Acknowledgement of their competence
Document commitments Draft minutes of meetings and distribute to all involved (including leadership, if possible)	Expect a consistent flow of work	
Question a "yes" response Ask open-ended questions and engage in discussion	Ask close-ended questions (sufficing with a "yes" answer)	
IF	THEN	
You hear "yes," right away	Check for clarification	
You sense hesitation	Follow up with positivity	
Your calls/emails/letters receive no responses in over 2 weeks	Have your local advisor follow up in person	
Time is running out for you	Escalate to higher ups after 3 weeks	
You are asked to commit to doing a favor	Strongly consider before committing (Favors are expected to be reciprocated)	

EXAMPLE FROM A PLAYBOOK



CLIENT REQUEST

Give us a tip sheet that we can access quickly that shows what our Vietnamese supplier trusts and what we can do to act appropriately.



TESTIMONIAL

“I feel prepared in understanding certain body language and communication style to best show respect and build trust in future work.”

Ten Ways to Build Trust with Vietnamese Suppliers

WHAT VIETNAMESE TRUST	WHAT YOU CAN DO	
1. Demonstrated curiosity about the Vietnamese culture	☐ Learn - take a course or read a book about the Vietnamese culture, develop a relationship with Vietnamese people, and share what you've learned with your team members	☐ Share your knowledge with your Vietnamese counterpart and ask for clarification
2. Willingness to form a close relationship	☐ Team members complete a “Team Member Identity Card” and share the contents on a regular basis with the Vietnamese team	☐ Hire a local representative to liaise between Patagonia and the supplier and its vendors
3. Respect for hierarchy and age	☐ Greet the oldest and highest rank first, then move down to youngest and lowest rank	☐ Wait for higher ranked to ask you for your input before giving it, or ask to share before sharing
4. Focus on the collective (not the individual)	☐ Involve all team members (Vietnamese, U.S., and others) in brainstorming and decision-making	☐ Do your best to send groups (not individuals, unless higher ranked) to visit Vietnamese sites
5. Obvious attempts to not embarrass others	☐ Stay calm, don't show that you are upset	☐ Bring up unpleasant subjects in private
6. Prudent attention to details	☐ Do not rush decisions; instead gain consensus from those involved in making the decision	☐ Move slowly; analyze the situation before taking action
7. Acknowledging the contributions of others (and playing down one's own contributions)	☐ When praised, play down your worthiness and play up the rest of the team	☐ Don't say thank you when praised; instead thank others involved in the success
8. Avoiding open disagreement	☐ Be indirect and talk around the issues you are conveying (don't employ logical reasoning or a debative style)	☐ Have a local representative deliver the bad news
9. Embracing problems as learning opportunities	☐ Show willingness to compromise	☐ Do not accept failure; find a way to rectify the problem
10. Keeping an eye on the future	☐ Articulate long-term benefits to the teams and organizations	☐ Frequently emphasize your, your team's, and your company's commitment to the project

EXAMPLE FROM A PLAYBOOK



CLIENT REQUEST

Communicating with our South African collaborators is our biggest challenge. We must present to them. What do they look for in a presentation?



TESTIMONIAL

"This is great!"

SOUTH AFRICA

BE SENSITIVE TO CULTURE

- Patiently listen to all commentary
 - Come with solutions to problems
 - Give full attention to anyone speaking
- DO NOT
- Present a "hard sell" approach
 - Openly criticize or confront anyone
 - Ignore suggestions or comments

CONSIDERATIONS

Know your Audience

SOUTH AFRICANS WILL LOOK FOR:

- A win-win opportunity
- Long-term solutions
- Mutual understanding

SOUTH AFRICANS ARE ACCUSTOMED TO:

- A logical, prepared, and solution-driven presentation
- Equal opportunity to share opinions and commentary
- Direct communication style

Kickoff

- Greet everyone according to rank, using titles until requested to use first names
- Clearly describe the purpose and intent of the meeting
- Define milestones and explain that each will be addressed
- Explain the mutual benefit of your position

Essential Considerations

- Pay specific attention to details and solutions and invite comments
- Focus on how success will benefit the larger communities (global, regional, and organizational)
- Give full attention to a person speaking and paraphrase to ensure understanding
- Ask open-ended questions
- If you disagree, show appreciation for the perspective and find common ground
- Use breakout sessions and assign topics to each group

Conclude

- Thank the group for their suggestions, questions and comments
- Explain that notes will be distributed soon after the meeting
- Thank everyone for their time and willingness to share

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY TOOL

A.R.C.H.S.

AWARENESS – WHAT AM I CONTRIBUTING?

- Am I communicating clearly and in a way that is culturally appropriate?
- Could my behavior be misinterpreted?
- Am I aware of the problem areas? (The obvious places where things could go wrong.)

Suggested behavior: Consider Yourself

- What am I doing that could cause discomfort?
- What am I saying that could be perceived as insensitive?
- What potentially insensitive nonverbal messages am I sending?

RESPECT – WHAT AM I JUDGING?

- Am I acknowledging each person as a “culture of one”?
- Am I mindful of the fact that what is socially desirable for me may be offensive to the other person?
- Replace “right or wrong” with “different”

Suggested behavior: Consider the Context

- Did I walk into this situation with a pre-conceived expectation? What is it?
- What are they doing that is causing a reaction in me?
- Is the venue causing me discomfort? How?

CURIOSITY – WHAT AM I MISSING?

- Why would a reasonable and decent person act this way?
- What additional information do I need?
- Have a “learning conversation”

Suggested behavior: Paraphrase and request feedback

- “May I paraphrase to ensure that I understand correctly?”
- “It is important to me that we understand each other so we meet our goals. Let’s revisit what we are trying to accomplish and ways we can do that.”
- “I have an opportunity to learn about culture from you. Please let me know if I am not being sensitive. I will do the same.”

HUMILITY – WHAT CAN I LEARN?

- Assume you don’t know
- Embrace differences as potentially enriching
- Reserve the right to become smarter and adjust your world view accordingly

Suggested behavior: Articulate a lesson learned

- Express confusion or misunderstanding as a desire to learn more
- Share personal insights or learning
- Say nothing, but journal or share insights or learning with a friend

SURPRISE – WHAT CAN I SHARE ABOUT MY CULTURE?

- Articulate the differences between the cultures
- Share proverbs, idioms, or adages from your country
- Remember that you are representing a culture

Suggested behavior: Be an ambassador

- Count to 10 before responding
- Describe two insights that you will apply in future interactions with this person
- Describe one point about this person’s culture that you will research further to be culturally-sensitive in a next encounter



All clients receive this tool to:

- Encourage mindfulness about one’s own cultural proclivities
- Develop conscious skills to address personal biases
- Lay a foundation for cultural sensitivity
- Practice building trust across cultures

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY TOOL

CULTURE OF ONE SLIDE

Template (See next page for a sample.)

Culture of One for – _____		LOGO
Personal / Background:	Time:	Work Style:
Name	Time Zone	
Birthplace/Home	Scheduling	Communication Style:
Family	Typically Unavailable	
Education	Communications Preferences:	Purpose and Mission:
Languages		
Profession		
Hobbies		

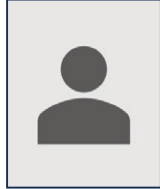
All team members present their slide in meetings because:

- Cultures that are taught to not speak about themselves share their skills, abilities, and accomplishments
- Cultures that are influenced by titles and rank learn about the speaker's status
- Audience members who are confused by accents, pronunciations, or speaking speed can read along with the presentation
- Audience members are apprised of cultural events that may impact the presenter's availability during certain times of the year

It is advised that all slides are retained in an accessible virtual rolodex.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY TOOL

CULTURE OF ONE SLIDE SAMPLE

Culture of One for Ramesh		faeron communication
<u>Personal / Background:</u> Name - Ramesh Kumar ("Ram") Birthplace/Home - New Delhi - Los Angeles, California USA Family - Wife: Aisha Education - University of Edinburgh - PhD in Mathematical Physics Languages - Tamil - Urdu - English - Python Profession - Vice President, Research & Development Hobbies - Cricket - Kalaripayattu	<u>Time:</u> Time Zone Pacific Standard Time and sometimes Indian Standard Time  Scheduling - I work weekdays from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM PT - I let people know in advance when I'm traveling, on vacation, or need time off - I believe in being prepared for meetings Typically Unavailable Most U.S. holidays, especially around Christmas (December 25) and Thanksgiving (last Thursday in November), and some Indian holidays, including Diwali, Eid-ul-Fitr	<u>Work Style:</u> - I'm willing to take extra time to make projects and presentations the best I can - I am happy to give feedback - I like walking meetings - I'm a good multi-tasker
	<u>Communications Preferences:</u> (1) Text/email, (2) In-person, (3) videoconference - Comfortable with Zoom and Microsoft Teams - I try to respond within 48-hours of receiving a communication - Don't reach out on weekends/holidays unless it is an emergency - I'll share time zones (At first: I will try to work in your time zone)	<u>Communication Style:</u> - I am an energetic speaker - I love brainstorming and asking questions - I have learned a lot from practicing kalaripayattu, including how to be agile and work as a team player
		<u>Purpose and Mission:</u> - My purpose is to spread happiness and a love of physics - My mission is showing the world that mathematical physics is fun!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Can we do this individually (1:1) or do we have to have a group?** Individuals or any small group are fine.
2. **Is the survey written or virtual?** It can be either.
3. **Is the training session in person or virtual?** It can be either, although in person is recommended.
4. **Why do all of the pages of the playbooks look different?** All playbooks are designed to meet the client's design preferences.
5. **What are “cultural sensitivity tools”?** These are surveys, declarations, and slides that can be used by team members to set a tone of openness and cultural sensitivity.
6. **Are all playbooks written in English?** Thus far, all our playbooks have been written in English because that is the preferred language of the client. We will certainly have any playbook translated to a language other than English if requested.
7. **Do you have “off the shelf” playbooks?** No, each playbook is customized to include the topics requested by the client.

If you have questions or desire additional information, please contact us.



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