Tool: Mapping Cultural Values

People demonstrate a wide range of preferences and values across a variety of cultural dimensions. Map your personal values by placing an X on the spot that most closely reflects your preferences on each continuum line. There are an infinite number of possibilities represented between each opposing end. Feel free to add additional notes about your unique values in the blank spaces.

Being

IDENTITY

Doing

I derive more of my identity from who I am and who my family is. When I meet new people, I usually ask about who their family is and where they are from.

I derive more of my identity from what I do for work, my hobbies, and my accomplishments. When I meet new people, I usually ask about their job and activities.

Internal

CONTROL

External

What I do in life will shape my destiny. I can control my future. I don't understand why some people have a fatalistic attitude about their lives.

My destiny is beyond my control. My fate is in the hands of others, such as my family, government, or a higher being. I don't understand why some people behave as if they can control destiny.

Private

EMOTIONS

Expressive

It's better to restrain strong emotions.

It's better to express emotions openly.

Low context

COMMUNICATION

High Context

Good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. Some expectations are understood by everyone, so it's not necessary to spell everything out or put it in writing.

Good communication is precise, simple, and explicit. All expectations should be clear, detailed, and put in writing.

Direct

CONFLICT

Indirect

I bring up issues directly so problems can be solved quickly.

I prefer to address differences indirectly to avoid upsetting anyone.

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Flexible

TIME

Linear

Time is an unlimited resource. Life doesn't follow a clock. What actually happens is way more important than what time events start and stop.

Time is a limited resource and shouldn't be wasted.

I prefer to be on time and expect the same of others.

Individual

WORK STYLE

Collective

I prefer to work independently and be recognized independently for my accomplishments.

I prefer to work as part of a group. I think it's better to acknowledge the group; rather, than single out individuals.

Relationship-Focused

TEAMWORK

Task-Focused

I value time spent on building relationships, and work better with people when I get to know them.

I prefer to focus on getting the job done and become impatient with socializing.

Top-Down

DECISION-MAKING

Consensus

Decisions should be made by the person with the highest title, position, or rank.

Important decisions should be made with input and consensus from everyone involved, regardless of their position.

Progress

CHANGE

Tradition

Change usually brings good things into my life. Change leads to progress. Because of this belief, I'm often willing to take risks and try new things. Stability gives meaning to life. Change often disrupts rhythms, traditions, and relationships. Because of this belief, I prefer to avoid risks that might disrupt important parts of my life.

Adapted from:

Meyer, E. (2014). The culture map: breaking through the invisible boundaries of global business. First edition. New York: PublicAffairs. University of Washington Bothell. (n.d.). Mapping your cultural orientation. In Intercultural competence toolkit. Retrieved from http://www.uwb.edu/getattachment/globalinitiatives/resources/intercultural-competency-tool-kit-(1)/mapping-your-cultural-orientation.pdf