



Cultural Detective® Business Case Executive Coaching and Expatriate Relocation in a Consumer Products Industry

Client Overview: A major multinational consumer products organization that operates business units worldwide.

Opportunity/Needs: *Expatriate Relocation, Executive Coaching*

A US-based Diversity & Inclusion Director was tasked with creating and leading a Global Inclusion Team. To develop her competence with global diversity issues, she decided to take an expatriate assignment in the organization's headquarters for international operations in Western Europe. In order to make the most of her assignment experience, she desired to get a feel prior to relocating for the cultural norms and values as well as the accepted business etiquette for Western European country cultures with which she would be interacting while abroad.

Solution: Executive Coaching by telephone, using journaling, e-mail assignments, and reflection and analysis of real-time interaction as well as books, movies and current events. The entire three-month process was based on the Cultural Detective® Methodology, and used the *Cultural Detective: The Netherlands, England, France, Belgium, Spain, and Italy*.

- Used through the recommendation and in conjunction with the support of an Intercultural Coach
- Focus on values – knowing ones own values and being able to begin to understand the values of others based on their cultural background, particularly the various approaches, issues and concerns around diversity and inclusiveness
- Learning to listen and observe from an intercultural perspective
- Understanding the value and high impact of open dialogue and when to ask questions versus knowing a list of “do’s and don’ts”
- Practicing intercultural skills through real-world critical incidents – learning experientially how to bridge the “culture gap” prior to relocation



Benefits and/or Measurable Results: *Ease of Adjustment, Quicker Effectiveness*

- Alleviated the typical “low” resulting from culture shock that many expats feel
- Prevented many miscommunications from occurring by avoiding taking conversations “personally” and consider them from a cultural perspective
- Strengthened business relationships by using cultural differences as assets. For example, in her role as a Diversity & Inclusion Director, she realized that “equality” within the workplace in The Netherlands revealed itself through subordinates stating, “no, that’s not my job.” She realized that she had a USA cultural tendency towards a more hierarchical and diplomatic (or worded more softly) boss-subordinate relationship. She also realized that she was used to doing whatever it takes to get the job done, while she learned to very much admire the work-life balance she observed in much of Europe. Her understanding of her own and others’ values enabled her to better view behavior in context rather than take it personally.
- Immediate increase in productivity and collaboration with multicultural colleagues by applying open communication skills learned through Cultural Detective methodology.

Client Testimonials:

“Cultural Detective helped me to gain an appreciation and understanding of my own values and how they are aligned or not aligned with other cultures.”

“When a situation occurs, I don’t automatically take it as an attack on me or at a personal level. I realize people are driven by values, which keep me open to dialogue and understanding, minimizing conflict especially at work.”

“The biggest impact was that it sped up my learning curve from a cross cultural perspective; it allowed me to become a part of the team more quickly and enabled me to move the Diversity & Inclusion agenda forward more easily. I was able to have an impact on the business from a Diversity & Inclusion perspective sooner than if I hadn’t done the coaching.”

-Director of Global Diversity and Inclusion