



Welcome to the first edition of **Crosswalks**, a monthly interactive on talent management practices for our valued customers and friends. 2009 has left us with the acute awareness of the magnitude and irreversibility of global integration and its effects on human capital practices. As we welcome 2010 and embark on a new global order, we hope that **Crosswalks** will serve as a value added resource for your success in business transactions across national and cultural boundaries.

Cultures provide people with ways of thinking--ways of seeing, hearing, and interpreting the world. The same words can mean different things to people from different cultures, even when they talk the "same" language. When the languages are different, and translation has to be used to communicate, the potential for misunderstandings increases.

Stella Ting-Toomey describes three ways in which culture interferes with effective cross-cultural understanding. First is what she calls "cognitive constraints." These are the frames of reference or world views that provide a backdrop that all new information is compared to or inserted into.

Second are "behavior constraints." Each culture has its own rules about proper behavior which affect verbal and nonverbal communication. Whether one looks the other person in the eye-or not; whether one says what one means overtly or talks around the issue; how close the people stand to each other when they are talking--all of these and many more are rules of politeness which differ from culture to culture.

Ting-Toomey's third factor is "emotional constraints." Different cultures regulate the display of emotion differently. Some cultures get very emotional when they are debating an issue. They yell, they cry, they exhibit their anger, fear, frustration, and other feelings openly. Other cultures try to keep their emotions hidden, exhibiting or sharing only the "rational" or factual aspects of the situation.

In the global context of our businesses, all of these differences tend to create the perfect storm as we manage teams across cultures. It takes more than awareness to overcome these problems and communicate effectively across cultures.

I trust you will find the topics and features of **Crosswalks** both interesting and informative. We invite you to contribute your ideas and enhance the value of this resource. Best wishes for a happy, healthy and purposeful new year.

Radha N Nath, President & CEO

Share your thoughts:

Complete a [Quick Survey](#) to tell us what you would like to see in **Crosswalks**

Visit Think Tank: <http://globalmindset.wordpress.com> to post topics for discussion.



Upcoming Events/ Save the Date

Cultural Competence & Diversity Strategies Workshop, March 22nd, 2010 Chicago

Breakfast Briefing, April 20th , 2010 Bangalore

Cross Cultural Leadership Workshop, April 23rd,2010 Bangalore

HR Competencies for Global Economy Workshop, May, 2010 New York

New Year in a Cultural Context

- Australia celebrates New year with a grand fire work display over the Sydney Harbor
- In Belgium New Year is called "Sint Sylvester vooravond" . They kiss their loved ones with the onset of the new year and the farmers wish each and every one of their animals.
- In Brazil people party on the Copacabana beach and light millions of candles to wash out to sea.
- In UK people welcome the new Year with a lot of drinking, gifts and resolutions
- In Japan New year is "Oshogastu". People eat rice cakes and stew. People gift money to children.
- In Korea, they welcome the new year with rice cakes. All Koreans turn a year older on Jan 1st. A Korean has two birthdays.
- In US, people celebrate New years with fire work and the famous Crystal ball drop in Times square New York. In the southern part though, people eat black eyed peas (365 of them) signifying green (\$\$\$) in the new year.

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