

# OVER 50 WAYS CULTURE INFLUENCES US

## ETIQUETTE AND BEHAVIOR

- How we greet each other.
- What is considered common courtesy.
- What is considered impolite.
- How we show respect and disrespect.
- What is embarrassing.
- What makes us feel good.
- What we eat and how we eat.
- What we wear.
- What we buy and how we behave in stores.
- How often we touch each other and how we touch each other.
- How closely we stand next to each other.
- The holidays we celebrate and the way we celebrate.
- How we use money, credit, and bartering.
- What is risqué.
- How we seek and use health services.
- What we find humorous.
- How we use mass transit.
- Seating placement in a room.

## BELIEFS AND VALUES

- What is beautiful or ugly.
- What are worthwhile goals in life.
- The nature of God and other religious beliefs.
- Whether a person is in control of his or her own life or whether fate determines one's life.
- Common sense.
- Our perceived needs.
- Whether privacy is desirable or undesirable.
- Appropriate health care.
- Appropriate personal hygiene.
- What is "right"; what is "wrong".
- The role of trust.

## TIME

- How time is scheduled and used.
- Whether schedules are important or unimportant.
- The importance of maintaining tradition.
- The importance of preparing for the future.

- Whether old age is valuable or undesirable.
- The importance of understanding one's history and passing it on.

## COMMUNICATION

- The language we speak.
- What should be said; what should be left unsaid.
- What is appropriate "small talk".
- Whom we speak to; to whom we should not speak.
- Whether conversation should be formal or informal.
- The meaning of hand gestures, facial expressions, and other nonverbal communication.
- How often we smile, whom we smile at, and the meaning of a smile.
- In which environments it is "safe" to speak one's mind; in which environments we must censor identity.
- Our tone of voice, use of emotion, use of stories.

## HUMAN RELATIONS

- The role of the individual.
- The role and structure of the family.
- The roles of men and how men should behave.
- The roles of women and how women behave.
- The importance of individual competition.
- Social class system.
- Hierarchy in business relationships.
- Interactions between strangers.
- How to interact with a person in authority (e.g., boss, police officer, teacher).
- How to interact with a person who is serving us.
- Relationships and obligations between parents and children and other family members.
- Crowd or audience behavior.

Adapted from Aguilar, Leslie and Stokes, Linda. Multicultural Customer Services: Providing Outstanding Service Across Cultures. Chicago: Irwin Professional Publishing. (1996)