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CULTURAL GUIDANCE FOR EXPATRIATES OF TECHNIP
OFFSHORE FINLAND OY

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Aims and objectives

The aim of this thesis is to study the main characteristics of culture and its subareas. The focus is at the corporate level and cultural focus after general level to research cultural differences between the Finnish and North American business cultures. Client company for the thesis is Technip Offshore Finland Oy, a manufacturer of Spars in offshore technology. The goal is to get comprehensive information for the Finnish expatriates from Technip to have the ability to have a successful commission in the Technip Houston office and focus on the preparations before the actual commission. It is also meant to help especially those who are going to a commission for the first time and to see the main differences between these two business cultures in leader level. The final product is to gather the research abridgment into one document where the findings are readable for the expatriates of Technip Offshore Finland Oy.

The theoretical section was collected by using various academic electronic journals, suitable books and websites. Also using cultural studies made by Hofstede and Trompenaars. In addition, information was conducted semi-structured interviews with the Technip Offshore Finland Oy's expatriates to collect real life experiences and advices.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to collect information about the cultural differences between Finland and USA in management business level. The information is for Technip Offshore Finland Oy's expatriates, who are going for a commission to the Technip Houston office. The idea is to give advices for the company's expatriates to be aware about the cultural differences between the countries and increase the awareness of the symptoms of culture shock. The information is collected into one document called Expatriate guide for Technip Offshore Finland Oy which will be given to the expatriates before the commission.

To understand the differences of other cultures one must understand their own culture first. The word culture has several different meanings. For some, it might mean good food, literature and music. Culture is a tool for survival and it is constantly changing by external forces. Each country's language, government, buildings and other manmade things are products of culture. Culture is learned behavior from previous generations. There are many studies and researches made by cultural differences. I used Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Trompenaars dimensions to clarify the differences between these specific countries.

World is getting smaller and smaller because of the globalization. It is important to be aware of the cultural differences of other countries, especially when moving to another culture. Culture shock can be frustrating and nerve-wracking phenomenon and the symptoms of culture shock are important to recognize. Some people may refuse to face it and they might come back home before the end of their commission. Experiencing the symptoms of culture shock is not a sign of weakness: no internationally effective employees are born, instead they are made. In an effort to get over the symptoms, there is value in knowing about the nature of culture and its relationships to individual. People are not born to live in certain culture and everybody has the capacity to learn it.

As references, I used literature and websites to gather the needed background information and academic knowledge about the subject. To gather the real life experiences, I used semi-structured interview method when interviewing the former and present expatriates of Technip Offshore Finland Oy.

1.1 Company info of Technip Group

1958 Technip, an engineering company, was established in Paris with a workforce of 100 people. After few years in 1960, the first series of successes abroad with the completion of projects in Africa and Asia. Almost a decade later, 1970 company established an office in Rome and made the company internationally functioning. At the same time Technip Geoproduction, a subsidiary specialized in the equipment of hydrocarbon fields, was established. During this decade, Coflexip, a firm which is specialized in design, manufacturing and supplying of flexible subsea flowlines was created by the French Petroleum Institute (IFP) and opened a flexible flowline manufacturing plant in France and offices to Houston, Aberdeen and Rio de Janeiro. It was only a beginning for Technip's global views, at the beginning of 1980's company expanded its global presence and opened operating centers in Kuala Lumpur and Abu Dhabi.

Technip's share was listed to the Paris Stock Exchange and the Coflexip share was listed to the New York Stock Exchange at 1990's. Companies become one of the

world's leading engineering groups. KTI enabled Technip to expand in North America and at the same time Coflexip continued its journey in Europe and expanded to Austria and acquired the Norwegian company Stena Offshore. After the expansions in the 90's Technip merged with Coflexip, which had just acquired Aker Maritime's deepwater Division? After all these mergers and acquires, the unified group is now one of the top five companies worldwide in engineering, technologies and services for the energy industry.



Picture 1: Technip and Coflexip offices (Source: Technip.com 2013)

At the end of 2000's many major contracts were signed, notably in the Middle East in the liquefied natural gas, ethylene and refining sectors. In 2010 three major assets come into operation: The Technip fleet expanded to 17 vessels, Asiaflex products, and the Group's third flexible pipe production plant, located in Tanjung Langsat, Malaysia was inaugurated. Next year Technip acquired Global Industries and substantially expanded its addressable market in subsea. Technip's unique vertically integrated range of products and services enabled an offer of substantial value in the execution of complex projects from deep-to-shore (Technip.com.2013).

1.2 Technip Offshore Finland Oy

Technip Pori has over 30 years of experience in project execution. The company was established in 1972 under the name Rauma-Repola Oy, Mäntyluoto Works. Rauma-Repola was mainly delivering spar platforms to Soviet Union and later on to the oilfields of the North Sea. At the year of 1974 Rauma-Repola merged Reposaaren Konepaja to the shipyard of Mäntyluoto. After the fusion of Rauma-Repola and Yhtyneet Paperitehtaat in 1991 Mäntyluoto, shipyard and its other engineering industry actions to the new company Rauma Oy. Later on Rauma Oy sold the company to a Norwegian company Aker Maritime. Mäntyluoto shipyard was now Aker Mäntyluoto Oy until the year of 1999 when the French Coflexip bought the company.

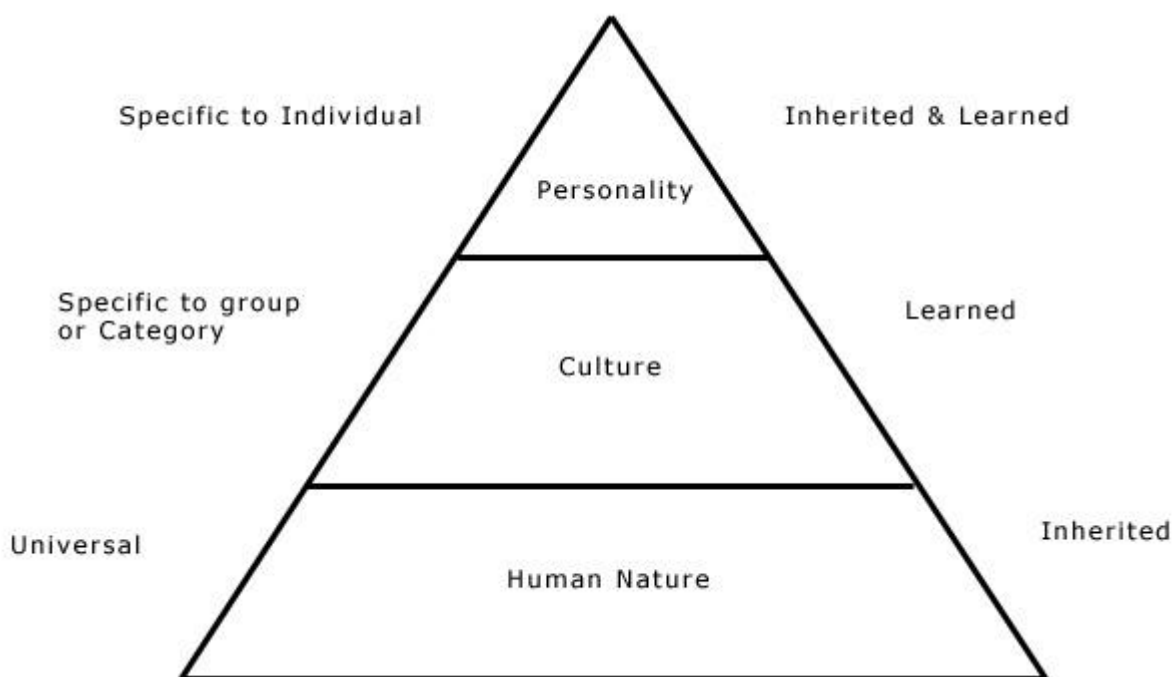
Coflex united soon with another company from France as well, Technip. After this merge company got yet again a new name called Mäntyluoto works. At the year of 2004 Mäntyluoto works merged to its parent company Technip Rauma Offshore and at the same time they both changed the name to Technip Offshore Finland Oy. Nowadays Technip Offshore Finland is one of the world's important manufacturers of the spar platforms. At 2000's it has delivered several spars mainly to the Gulf of Mexico. Few of its most important customers are world's largest oil companies such as British Petroleum, Kerr-McGee, ExxonMobil, Chevron and Shell (Technip.com 2013).

2 DEFINITION OF CULTURE

The word culture has many different meanings. For some it refers to an appreciation of good literature, music, art and food. However, for anthropologists and other behavioral scientists, culture is the full range of learned human behavior patterns. Culture as a term, was first used by the pioneer English anthropologist Edward B. Taylor in his book *Primitive Culture* (1871). Culture is a tool for survival, but it is a fragile phenomenon; it is constantly changing. Our languages, governments, buildings and other manmade things are products of culture. Because culture is

learned behavior, it is adaptive, which means that the culture changes as a response to external forces. (Griffin & Pustay 2007, pp. 80-82)

Geert Hofstede, the expert of intercultural studies, views it as a kind of mental programming - “The software of the mind”. He identifies three levels of uniqueness in mental programming (Picture 2). The middle level is learned, and also can be trained, and it applies to a certain groups, so it allows some general conclusions to be drawn. Culture covers so many things so it is easier to ask what culture is not. Culture exists on various levels, for example everyday objects, art and artifacts, norms and values and basic assumptions (Bartlett et al. 2003, pp. 10-19).



Picture 2: Levels of culture (Source: www.kon.org/urc/v11/rojas2.html 2013)

The first level is the one that everyone is able to see. It is the differences noticed on a holiday, such as clothes, buildings, art and so forth. This layer is easy to recognize and does not really cause any problems, if taste is not included. You might not like croissants, but you are unlikely to dismiss the entire France for that. The second level is a bit more difficult to get at. It consist the norms and values that underlie the behavior in all cultures. The norms will say what is right and wrong in that culture. Some, like killing people is wrong, is almost universal. Others, such as driving on the

wrong side of the road, are more culture specific. The values of a society will tell which is good, bad and appreciated, for example in some cultures individual success is valued while others value group harmony. These norms and values are the main reasons behind the differences in cultural dimensions.

The third level of culture is completely hidden. It is the level of basic assumptions. When a culture answers the same question in the same way so often that the question gets lost to consciousness that is a basic assumption. One example of this is the one with the equality of sexes. While Scandinavians basic assumption is the equality of men and women, it is different in the Middle East. This level is extremely problematic to deal with. On a business level, it is better to leave these basic assumptions alone to avoid conflicts. But, it has to be said that the human nature notices things that are different rather than things that are the same. However, the fact that different cultures have so much in common gives a base to work from. Of course, there is still a need to recognize and understand the differences in order to avoid problematic situations. In fact, it is a great thing to have these differences because the diversity is a very positive creative influence in the modern world (Bartlett & Davidsson 2003, pp. 15-21).

3 CORPORATE CULTURE

There are three levels of corporate culture. First one is the artifacts. These are all visible corporate structures and processes; these can be project logos, language like acronyms, special terms for milestones, ethical codes and guidelines and also the authority level of project managers. Espoused values are the second level of corporate culture. These are the strategies, goals and the philosophies company is using which are not necessarily based on the basic assumptions. Espoused values often contradict each other or are not suitable to explain the employee behavior. Last one is the basic underlying assumptions which are the unconscious beliefs that are taken for granted perceptions and feelings. Those are the ultimate source of action in the company. In an international project environment, basic underlying assumptions may differ between geographically dispersed corporate entities because they are

affected by national culture values. Open mindedness, parochialism and accountability are few examples of these basic underlying assumptions. Corporate culture entails visible and invisible, conscious and unconscious elements. The unconscious, visible underlying assumptions are the most difficult ones to manage and change.

There are different types of corporate culture which can be defined as the following. First is normative culture where the norms and procedures of the corporation are predefined and the set of rules and regulations is set as per the already existing guidelines. The employees are behaving in an ideal way and strictly according to the company policies, employees don't dare to break the rules. In pragmatic culture a bit more emphasis is placed on the clients and towards the external parties. At the pragmatic cultures the customer satisfaction is the main thing and the customers are treated well and not only by the roles if it does not guarantee the satisfaction. In academy cultures the companies like to hire skilled individuals. Roles are delegated according by each background: education qualifications and work experience. The main focus is on training the new and the existing employees. Management makes sincere efforts to upgrade the staff's knowledge to longer the careers. This kind of method is used in educational institutions, universities and hospitals (Köster 2009, pp. 50-55).

3.1 Why is the corporate culture important?

The certain corporate culture decides the way employees are interacting at their workplaces. In a healthy culture employees are encouraged to stay motivated and loyal towards the management and the company itself. It also promotes a healthy competition among the co workers. It will maintain the best performance from the employees and they can earn recognition and appreciation of the superiors. It is the culture of the workplace which motivates the employees to perform. The culture itself represents a certain predefined policies which will guide the employees and give the right direction. The culture will define clear roles and responsibilities and the knowledge of how to accomplish the work tasks on time.

No two corporations can have the same working culture, the work culture gives an identity to the corporation, it can be said that the corporate is known by its culture. Culture brings all the employees at the same platform which will guarantee equal treatment and it is essential to adjust well in the corporate culture for the employees to deliver their best. The work culture also unites the employees from different cultures and backgrounds, such as family attitudes and mentalities and it gives a certain unity for the employees. In the best cases the common culture at work will promote a healthy relationship among the employees (Köster 2009, pp. 50-55).

4 HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

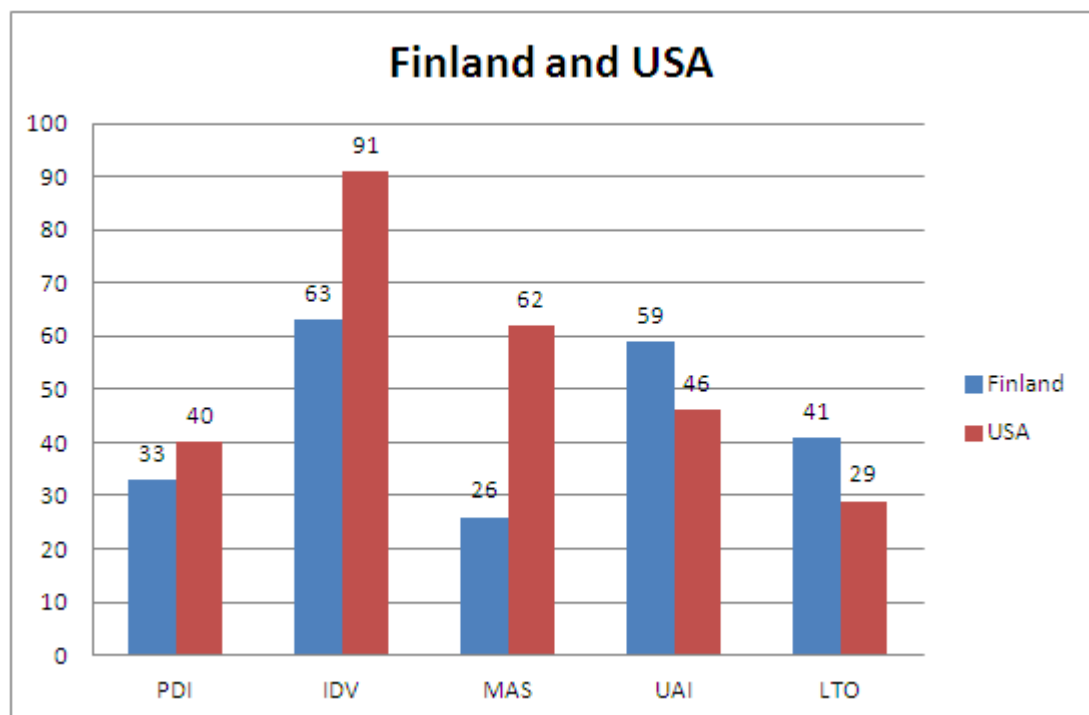
The theory of cultural dimensions by Geert Hofstede describes the effects of a society's culture on the values and beliefs of its members. Dimensions explains how these values relates to one's behavior, using a structured derive from factor analysis. The theory has been widely used as a paradigm for different researches mostly in cross-cultural psychology, international management and cross -cultural communication. Hofstede developed his original model in the 1960s and 1970s. He got his results by using factor analysis to examine the results of a worldwide survey for the employees of IBM. This theory was one of the first that could be quantified, and could be used to explain observed differences in different cultures.

The original theory has four different dimensions: individualism-collectivism; uncertainty avoidance; power distance and masculinity-femininity. Later Hofstede's independent research in Hong Kong led him add a fifth dimension, long term orientation. At the year of 2010 Hofstede added sixth paradigm to the edition of *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. Hofstede added the sixth dimension, indulgence versus self-restraint, as a result of his co-author Michael Minkov's analysis of data from the World Values Survey. Further research has refined some of the original dimensions, and introduced the difference between country-level and individual-level data in analysis. Hofstede's cultural dimensions continue to be a major resource in the cross-cultural fields. It has affected a number

of other cross cultural studies of values, as well as research on other aspects of social studies (website www.geerthofstede.nl).

4.1 FINLAND AND USA

The comparison is done with the five dimensions. The scores are presented in one figure to recognize the differences also by the numbers.



Picture 3: Comparison between Finland and USA (Source: www.geerthofstede.nl)

Power distance

PDI dimension deals with the fact that all individuals in societies are not equal. Power distance shows the attitudes of the culture towards inequalities. Power distance is defined as “The extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.” Definition means that society’s inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders.

Power distance in the United States is low on this dimension (40) which emphasizes the American premise of “liberty and justice for all”. This also proves the focus on equal rights in all areas of American society and government. America’s organizations are established for convenience, superiors are always accessible and managers rely on individual employees, teams for their expertise. In the States the information is shared regularly and both, the managers and employees, are expecting communication. Communication is shared in informal, direct and participative way.

In Finland, Power distance index is low in this dimension with the score of 33. This means that Finnish style is to be independent, hierarchy for convenience only, equal rights, superiors are easy to access by, coaching leader, management facilities and empowers. Experience among the workers is highly appreciated and managers count on the experience of their team members. Employees expect to be consulted by their supervisors and control is disliked. Attitudes towards managers and employees are informal and people are spoken by their first names. Communication is direct and participative (website www.geerthofstede.nl).

Individualism

Individualism is about the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members. This dimension explains people’s self-image defined as “I” or “We”. In Individualistic countries people are supposed to look after only themselves and their family. In collectivistic societies people has adapted an idea of grouping and an idea to belong in certain group. Groups take care of them in exchange for loyalty.

The United States, with a score of 91 on this dimension proves the fact about highly individualistic culture. People are looking after themselves and their own families. The USA is also having a high degree of geographical mobility and most Americans are accustomed to doing business and interacting with strangers. Americans are not shy about approaching someone in a need of information. In the business world, employees are expected to be independent and display initiative. It is important to show your skills in a working environment because the hiring and promotion decisions are based on merit or evidence of what one has done or can do.

Finns are an Individualistic society with a score of 63. There is a high preference for only a loosely-knit social framework where individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their families. In these individualistic societies offence might cause a loss of self-esteem and in some cases, guilt. The employee and employer relationships are a contract based on the mutual advantage. Hiring and promoting related decision are supposed to be based on success only. In both the professional and personal aspects of Finnish culture, Finns are self-sufficient and prefer to keep to themselves. Finns tend to be very private and group work is not as popular as in other western nations. Because Finns are typically introverted, Finnish communication may seem impersonal at times though Finns often become friendly once they know their colleagues better (website www.geerthofstede.nl).

Masculinity / Femininity

A society which has a high score on masculinity is driven by competition, achievement and success. Success is usually being defined by the "winner" or "best-in-field-". This kind of a value system starts in schools and continues throughout one's life. This applies both in work and leisure time. A high score on masculinity indicates that the society will be driven by. Low masculinity score is turned into femininity, this means that the dominant values in society are caring for others and life qualities. In feminine societies quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from others is not admired.

The United States is considered as masculine society with the score of 62. Behavior in school and work places is based on the shared values that people should be. In this case is the "Winner takes it all" attitude. As a result, Americans talk freely about their success and achievements they have had in their lives, like mentioned before, promotion decision is based on those. Americans tend to have the attitude of "live to work" so they can be able to earn the rewards and attain higher status based on how good one can be. Possible conflicts are resolved individually and yet again, the goal is to win.

Finland has the score of 26 on this dimension and it is considered a feminine society. In feminine societies the main focus is on "working in order to live". People in Finland values equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. Finns solve their conflicts by compromising and negotiation. Free time and flexibility is highly appreciated among

the Finns and their focus is on well-being and status is not shown (website www.geerthofstede.nl).

Uncertainty avoidance

This dimension measures the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known and attitudes towards it: should we try to control the future or just let it happen? The United States has a score of 46 what one would describe as “uncertainty accepting”. Americans are more eager to have new experiences and try new ways of doing things. They are open for new ideas and innovative products. It is usual that they are more tolerant of ideas and opinions from anyone and allow the freedom of expression; they also do not require a set of rules and are less emotionally expressive than higher scoring societies.

Finland has a score of 59 on this dimension and has a medium high preference for avoiding uncertainty. Finland's exhibiting high uncertainty avoidance maintains rigid codes of beliefs and behavior and is quite intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas. In these societies there is an emotional need for rules, time is money and people tend to have an inner urge to be busy and have busy working days. Precision and punctuality are normal and innovative ideas may face resistance that is because security plays an important role in individual motivation (website www.geerthofstede.nl).

Long-term orientation

This dimension measures the fact how the society is dealing with the fact about future; Either the country is looking to the future and being long term oriented or they are living at the moment as short term oriented. The United States can be called as a short term oriented culture with the score of 29. As a result, it is a tradition oriented society with fulfilling social obligations. Looking the society from this perspective, American businesses measure their performance on a short-term basis, profit and loss statements being issued on a quarterly basis. This short term orientation drives individuals for quick results in the workplaces.

Finland is a short term oriented culture, with the score of 45 in this dimension. Societies with a short-term orientation generally exhibit a great respect for traditions, a relatively

small propensity to save, strong social pressure, impatience for achieving quick results, and a strong concern with establishing the Truth i.e. normative. Western societies are typically found at the short-term end of this dimension, as are the countries of the Middle East (website www.geerthofstede.nl).

5 TROMPENAARS DIMENSIONS

Fons Trompenaars built on Hofstede's work by expanding the framework for stereotyping and comparing different national cultures and by focusing more on the management implications of cultural differences. Using initial research involving 15,000 employees in 50 countries, Trompenaars explored the "Cultural extremes and the incomprehension that can arise when doing business across cultures", even when people are working for the same company. Trompenaars arrived at seven distinctive dimensions of culture and used the questionnaire responses in his study to map a wide variety of countries along a continuum from one extreme to the other within each dimension.

The key to understand this mapping approach is to identify where each country or culture is positioned relative to others on one or more of these dimensions. Relative positioning gives insights into the kinds of conflicts, misunderstandings, and organizational and management problems that are likely to arise when individuals, groups, or firms from these countries interact in any of the ways described above (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 2008). The Seven Dimensions of Culture model was created by Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner, and was published in their book, "Riding the Waves of Culture." The model says that what distinguishes people from one culture compared with another is where their preferences fall on each of the following seven dimensions. Trompenaars described national cultural diversity in terms of relationships between people, a relationship to time, and a relationship to the external environment. The first five dimensions deals with an individual's relationship to other people.

- Universalism versus particularism.

- Individualism versus communitarianism.
- Specific versus diffuse.
- Neutral versus emotional.
- Achievement versus ascription.
- Sequential time versus synchronous time.
- Past, present, or Future orientation
- Internal direction versus outer direction.

You can use the model to understand people from different cultural backgrounds better, so that you can work with them more effectively, and prevent misunderstandings. Be sensible in how you apply the model. Treat people as individuals, and remember that there are many factors that will have a bearing on how you communicate and interact with other people (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2008).

5.1 Universalism versus Particularism

The main characteristics in the universalistic countries are that the people place high importance on laws, rules, values, and obligations. They try to deal fairly with people based on these rules, but the rules come before relationships. At the particularistic countries people believe that each circumstance and each relationship dictates the rules that they live by. Their response to a situation may change, based on what's happening at the moment, and who's involved. In universalistic countries, like the US-American and Scandinavian countries, including Finland, it is the ideal to govern business relationships with contracts and make clear rules which applies in any circumstance and relationships; of course, they can change when times changes. There are different strategies in the universalistic societies, such as: helping people to understand how their work ties into their values and beliefs, provides clear instructions, processes, and procedures. They also tend to keep promises and be consistent and they will give time to make decisions. Decisions is made by objective basis and, also, on individual basis and explained the decisions or suggestions if others are involved.

In particularistic countries, like China, business relationships are mostly controlled by circumstances and relationships, like in universalistic countries, these can also change over time. People will take time to build relationships and get to know people so that they can understand better their needs and expectations. People will also highlight important rules and policies that need to be followed. Typical particularistic cultures include Russia, Latin-America, and China (Köster 2009, pp. 83-88).

5.2 Individualism versus Communitarianism

This dimension is comparable to Hofstede's' individualism versus collectivism. In individualistic countries people believe in personal freedom and achievement. They believe that people can make their own decisions, and that they must take care of themselves. However, the members of individualistic society would ambitiously share his or hers ideas, for example in brainstorming sessions. In the communitarian countries, like Japan, people believe that the group is more important than the individual. The group provides help and safety, in exchange for loyalty. The group always comes before the individual. Typical individualistic cultures include the U.S., Canada, the U.K, Scandinavia, New Zealand, Australia, and Switzerland. Typical communitarian cultures include countries in Latin-America, Africa, and Japan (Köster 2009, pp. 83-88).

5.3 Specific versus Diffuse

In specific countries people keep work and personal lives separate. As a result, they believe that relationships don't have much of an impact on work objectives, and, although good relationships are important, they believe people can work together without having a good relationship. In specific societies people are direct and go straight to the point. People also focus on people's objectives before they focus on strengthening relationships. People will provide clear instructions, processes, and procedures and allows people to keep their work and home lives separate. In diffusive countries people see an overlap between their work and personal life. They believe good relationships are vital to meet business objectives, and that their relationships with others will be the same, whether they are working or meeting

socially. People spend time outside work hours with colleagues and clients. In diffuse cultures people focus on building a good relationship before focusing on business objectives. People find out as much as they can about the people that they are working with and the organizations that they do business with. Typical specific cultures include the U.S., the U.K., Switzerland, Germany, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands. Typical diffuse cultures include Argentina, Spain, Russia, India, and China (Trompenaars, & Hampden-Turner 2008).

5.4 Neutral versus Emotional

This dimension concerns the range of feelings that are expressed. In neutral countries, like Thailand, people make a great effort to control their emotions. Reason influences their actions far more than their feelings. People don't reveal what they're thinking or how they're feeling and they usually just smile as an emotional answer. In neutral societies people manage their emotions effectively and they are careful with their body language that it will not convey negative emotions. In meetings and interactions they tend to be strict to the point oriented. In the emotional countries, like Egypt, people want to find ways to express their emotions, even spontaneously, at work and in personal lives. In these cultures, it is welcome and accepted to show emotion. They open up to people to build trust and rapport and use emotion when communicating. In conversations they like to use positive body language and have positive attitude, but do not fear to show anger. Typical neutral cultures include the U.K., Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, and Germany. Typical emotional cultures include Poland, Italy, France, Spain, and countries in Latin-America (Köster 2009, pp. 83-88).

5.5 Achievement versus Ascription

This dimension tells how people in societies gain power and status. In achievement oriented countries people believe that you are what you do, and they base your worth accordingly. These cultures value performance, no matter who you are. An employee in this culture, like USA and Finland, relies on the fact that his or her own good performance will result in career advancements. People in higher positions tend to

have a special expertise and have many skills. Leaders from this equality oriented cultures usually prefers a participative leadership style with shared responsibilities. People will reward and recognize good performance and use titles only when needed.

In scripting countries, like Nepal, people believe that you should be valued for who you are. Power, title, and position matter in these cultures, and these roles define behavior (Köster 2009). In scripting societies they use always titles, especially when these clarify people's status in an organization. They show respect to people in authority, especially when challenging decisions. Typical achievement cultures include the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Scandinavia. Typical ascription cultures include France, Italy, Japan, and Saudi Arabia (Köster 2009, pp. 83-88).

5.6 Sequential time versus Synchronous time

People from sequential country, like USA and Finland, tend to be punctual, follow schedules, and do one thing at a time. Time is seen as a measurable and controllable concept and people like events to happen in order. They place a high value also on planning, and sticking to it, and staying on schedule. In this culture, "time is money," and people don't appreciate it when their schedule is thrown off. The importance of the schedules and sticking to them is paramount, as reflected in the approach to project management. People like to focus on one activity or a project at time and set clear deadlines for them.

Synchronous societies, for example Mexico, like to see the past, present, and future as interwoven periods. They often work on several projects at once, and view plans and commitments as flexible. They view the time set for appointments, or schedules as approximate. Interpersonal relations are more important to them than schedules. Typical sequential-time cultures include China, Russia, and Mexico. Typical synchronous-time cultures include Japan, Canada, Norway, the U.K., and the U.S. (Köster 2009, pp. 83-88; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2008).

5.7 Past, Present, or Future orientation

Cultures are different with their concepts of how they value the past, or if the country is more present, -future oriented. The systems of all businesses which include strategies and planning are future oriented; same also applies in project management because the project needs to be implemented in the future. Societies, like USA and Finland, are very much focused on the future and how to make it happen. Other societies, for example South- East Asians, tend to have more focus on the present. They would like to enjoy all the things happening here and now as much as they can which results in an impact on commitment towards tasks related to the future (Köster 2009, pp. 83-88).

5.8 Internal direction versus outer direction

Internal direction is also known as having an internal locus of control. People believe that they can control nature or their environment to achieve goals. This includes how they work with teams and within organizations. People will allow others to develop their skills and take control of their own learning. They will set clear goals and objectives that people agree with. They are open about conflicts and disagreements and allow people to engage in constructive conflict. The internal directed countries, like USA and Finland, they try to change their external environment by controlling the situation.

Outer direction is known as having an external locus of control. People believe that nature, or their environment controls them; they must work with their environment to achieve goals. At work or in relationships, they focus their actions on others, and they avoid conflict when possible. People often need reassurance that they're doing a good job. People will also provide other people the right resources to do their jobs effectively and give right direction and regular feedback, so that they know how their actions are affecting their environment. The feedback is balanced with the positive and negative points. Typical internal-direction cultures include Israel, USA, Australia, New Zealand, and the U.K. Typical outer-direction cultures include China,

Russia, and Saudi Arabia (Köster 2009, pp. 83-88; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2008).

6 THE COMPARISON OF HOFSTEDE AND TROMPENAARS

There are several theories and tools to analyze cultural aspects of different countries, but theories of Hofstede's and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's cultural dimensions are probably the most common ones (Griffin & Pustay 1998). Cultural dimensions have been present for a long time. Hall discussed high and low context communication already in 1959. Hofstede carried out his first studies with the dimensions which included power distance and uncertainty avoidance in the early sixties.

Trompenaars have modified these dimensions later years. Now, some people are saying those dimensions are getting outdated and they force people to think problems and differences as a terms. This might be true, if these are handled in a wrong way. Despite these problems, people still feels these dimensions useful to have some knowledge of cultural dimensions when working in international management field. Also, in modern business world multitasking and personal skills are playing an important role. Cultural dimensions have a great explanatory power and they can increase people's awareness and understanding of many ways of doing things. However, these dimensions do not have companywide actionable power and one cannot develop a strategy based on them.

When comparing these two dimensions, there are some dimensions which are relatively close to each other's definitions, such as collectivism/individualism at Hofstede's dimensions and the communitarianism/individualism from Trompenaars. Also, Trompenaars achievement/ascription value orientation is usually linked to Hofstede's power distance index. Acceptable power distance within a society is a one area which is not included at the Trompenaars' study; it is mainly focused on resulting effects of underlying value dimensions. There is also one dimension at the Trompenaars study which cannot be linked directly to Hofstede's; diffuse/specific

value orientation. Many countries appear to be more individualistic according to Trompenaars than Hofstede's research indicators.

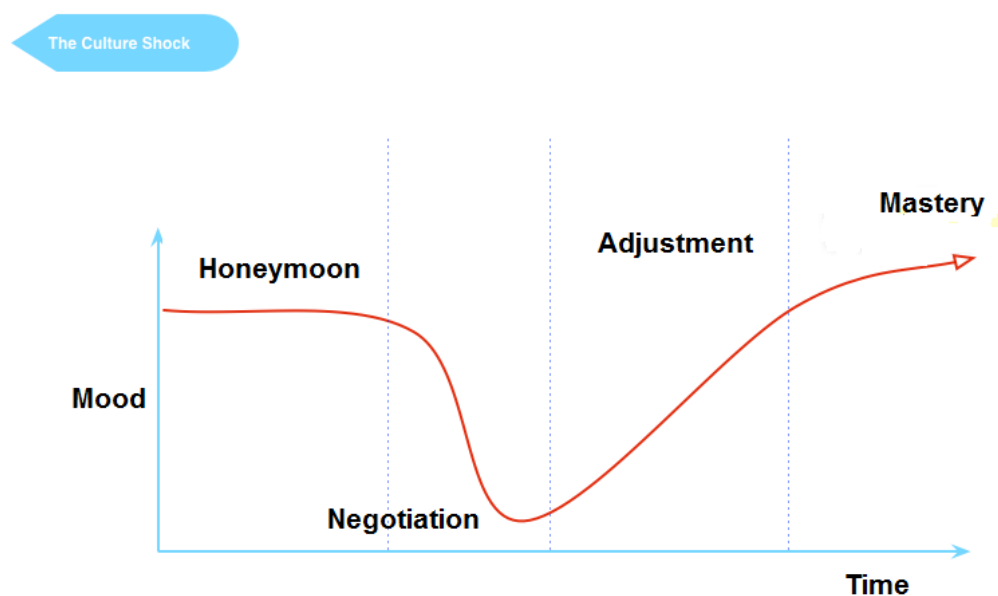
According to Bartlett and Davidsson (2003), the reason for the difference might be the different time frames used at the study. During the different times the cultural change has taken place and the findings of Hofstede are becoming out of date. One example is, according to the findings of Trompenaars, that former communist countries such as Russia, Hungary and the Czech Republic are individualistic despite their history of communist past. Trompenaars has also expanded his study field by doing research with different companies and their cultures, based on with their nationality. There are some similarities with their findings when comparing the dimension together when looking the definitions of Scandinavian countries. There are differences as well; North America is an egalitarian culture according to Trompenaars and low power distance at the Hofstede's dimension. Other reason for these differences is that scientists aim to publish their own perspectives and theories (Bartlett & Davidsson 2003, pp. 155-158).

7 CULTURE SHOCK

One of the biggest challenges when working and living abroad is learning how to function in a different cultural environment. Business might always be business in the whole world over, but the way it is conducted differs widely. Culture shock may be experienced when a person is experiencing an unfamiliar way of life when visiting to a new country, also a move between social environments or just travel to another type of life. Some people may refuse to face it and may later fail to overcome it. This may result in great disillusionment. For these people, the only logical solution is returning back home before the end of their commission. In fact, the expatriate failure rate is relatively high on all corporate levels. Between 16% and 40% of expats cannot overcome the culture shock and will return home early. The major part of these cases is among those who are on a commission in developing countries (Oberg, nodate).

How an individual will know how to approach people, how to set appointments and how to determine what various actions mean in a different culture? Before all these questions can be answered, there are many processes to go through while trying to adjust and become intercultural competent. There is a lot of stress in the adaptation process and it is not only about knowing the dos and don'ts, because the adaptation process is not only a cognitive. The reality is that most employees will go through some of the symptoms of a culture shock. It is good to keep in mind that no internationally effective employees are born, instead they are made. The term culture shock is a popular term for the disorientation, confusion and emotional based reactions that will appear when people move to another culture (Bartlett & Davidsson 2003, pp. 147-149).

Culture shock can be described as consisting of at least one of four different phases: honeymoon, negotiation, adjustment, and mastery. (Picture 4.) Still, not everyone experience all these stages, some persons might skip stages or rush through them. Other may experience certain stages more than once. Culture shock can be a nerve-wrecking phenomenon, causing feelings from anxiety to alienation. However, it is important to recognize it as a part of the transition process. The eager to work through it is the first step towards integration (Macion & Gerber 2010).



Picture 4: Stages of culture shock

7.1 Honeymoon stage

During the honeymoon phase, the differences between the own and the new culture are seen in a romantic way. For example, when moving to another country, a person might like the food and the habits of the local people. During the first few weeks, most of the people are fascinated about the new culture. They associate with nationals who speak their own language, and who are showing politeness to the foreigners. This period is filled with observations and new discoveries. Like most of the periods, this stage will eventually end: honeymoon stage may last from a few days or weeks to six months depending on circumstances (Griffin & Pustay 2007, pp. 572-574).

7.2 Negotiation stage

Person might experience a hostile and aggressive attitude towards the host country. This hostility grows out of the genuine difficulty which the visitor experiences in the process of settling in. There is language trouble, house trouble, transportation trouble, shopping trouble, and the fact that people in the host country are largely indifferent to all these trouble. People from the host country will help but they just don't seem to understand the great concern over these difficulties.

Person might become aggressive and start to criticize the host country, its ways and its people. Depending on the individual, after some time the differences between the own and the new culture becomes apparent and may cause anxiety. The excitement may give a way to unpleasant feelings of frustration and anger as one continues to experience unfavorable events which may be perceived as unfamiliar and offensive to one's cultural attitude (Griffin & Pustay 2007, pp. 572-574).

7.3 Adjustment stage

After some time, usually from six to twelve months, one grows accustomed to the new culture and creates new routines. One knows what to expect in the most common situations and the host country no longer feels unfamiliar. One becomes

concerned with typical living again, and things become more normal. One starts to develop problem solving skills for dealing the culture and accepting begins towards the culture's ways with a positive attitude. After the time the new culture starts to make sense, and the possible negative reactions and responses to the culture are reduced.

There are three outcomes of this phase: some people may find it impossible to accept the foreign culture and integrate. The threat is that they might isolate themselves from the host country's environment. These reactions also have problems when re-integrating back home after the return. Some people will manage to adapt to the aspects of the host culture and seeing the positive sides, while keeping some of their own and creating their own, unique blend. They have no bigger problems when returning back home or relocating somewhere else. This group can be thought as a cosmopolitan (Griffin & Pustay 2007, pp. 572-574).

7.4 Mastery stage

Individuals are now able to participate fully and comfortably in the new culture. Mastery does not mean total conversion; people are still keeping several traits from their own, earlier culture, such as accent and language. These are the most common attributes that pertain to existing problems, further hindrances includes: information overload, language barrier, technology gap, generation gap, skill interdependence, formulation dependency, cultural homesickness and even boredom (Griffin & Pustay 2007, pp. 572-574).

7.5 Reverse culture shock

Reverse culture shock, also known as re-entry shock or own culture shock, may take place. When returning back to home culture, after growing accustomed to a new one, can produce the same effects as described above. These are results from the psychosomatic and psychological consequences of readjusting back to the primary culture. The person might often find this reverse culture shock more surprising and difficult to deal with than the original culture shock. However, the same expatriates

often realize that reverse culture shock hits them harder than they have even expected. The reverse culture shock and possible adjustment issues depend on expatriates' various reasons for repatriation. If the expat decides to return home prematurely, with repatriation happening faster and earlier than originally planned, might worsen the effects of reverse culture shock (Griffin & Pustay 2007, pp. 572-574).

7.6 Tips on developing cross cultural adjustment skills

It is better to be aware of the symptoms of culture shock so it won't come as a surprise. It is good to expect it to happen and know its potential impacts. When arriving to the destination it is good to identify all possible opportunities for building a social support network. This social support network should include both local people and other international managers. Trying to learn the language, even a little bit, will help in everyday life and in the adjustment. If there is local people in the social network, getting involved with them is important, it might even be good to mirror their communication style with the body language and expressions, which helps it all to be more familiar.

Trying to ask advices from other international managers to learn more and their own experiences might be the same. If situations get really stressful, something has to be done. Denying it will make it worse and trying to learn some stress management techniques will help and recognize that anxiety is normal in a new environment. Trying to suspend the judgment until all the facts and evaluations is done to avoid the negative sides towards a certain issue. Emphasizing, listening and observing the cues of verbal and nonverbal actions. When negotiating or talking with other people it is good to check the meanings and repeat to make sure everyone has understood the message correctly. Rushing into several different projects may cause more stress, also making sure that the company will give the needed time to adapt.

Staying optimistic, even if the things are not the way as hoped, persevering and retaining a humor will help. According to Kolb (1984), learning is "The process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of experience". In experiential

learning, the learning is seen as a cyclic and continuous process. Becoming an intercultural communicator is a slow learning process (Bartlett & Davidsson 2003, pp. 153-154).

8 INTERVIEW METHODS

I used semi-structured interview research method when interviewing Technip's expatriates. A semi-structured interview is mostly used in the social sciences. While a structured interview has a specific number of questions which does not allow diverts by the interviewee, the semi-structured interview is open and it will allow new ideas to be brought up during the interview. I thought the semi-structured interview would be the best solution to give the interviewee a chance to share more information about his experiences from abroad. I wrote set of questions to guide the interview and set the direction to the areas where I wanted the discussion to focus (Appendix 1). The interviewee had the chance to add more topics during the interview. I sent the questions beforehand via e-mail so the interviewee can be fully prepared and think different themes and experiences around the questions. I think the freedom of semi-structured interview helped me to tailor my questions to the interview situation and I think that make the interviewee more comfortable at the situation to tell his experiences as comprehensive as possible.

The interview took approximately an hour with each one and the interviewees were chosen by the length of their commission. I had six candidates who had over six month period at the Houston office and their age is between 35-60 years, all of them are male and in leading positions. Two of them were at the commission at the time of the interview. Interviews were done in face to face meeting and the other two via e-mail conversations.

All candidates felt the moving process before going to the commission quite difficult and unclear. The entire process started with the fact that they had been chosen to go to the commission. The first step they had to take is to meet Technip's international coordinator and talk about the process they have to go through before the journey.

The process includes several different documents such as permit issues, Visa, transfer papers, flight tickets and other practical matters. Nowadays it is much easier to do all these paperwork since almost everything is online and is sent virtually to the receiver. One of the interviewees had experienced the time when everything was made by hand and sent as paper versions to the receiver, and then the process took much more time. Those practical matters are the ones that took a lot of time to get organized even nowadays. Those practices varies between people and everything depends what people own, where do they live and is the family moving too, if there is summerhouses and boats. Now it is easy to put the bills on direct debiting and insurances can be done online.

Depending on the mission and project, the needed material has to be collected before the departure, just in case. And if there is a possibility that at the commission is necessary to have visits at the factory or in a shipyard; safety boots, helmet, boiler suit and jacket has to be taken along when leaving from Finland. The interviewees felt that it is easier to take own safety gear from Finland, since those are completely different in the Houston office and are not that comfortable.

When the process is done in the Finnish office, the Houston office will take care of the rest, such as accommodation, car and other issues, such as internet connections. Interviewees were not afraid about how the things will end up with the practical matters in the United States because the Houston office has years of experience dealing with commissions. Few of the interviewees said they read few books before the journey considering the actual state and the city. Few of them did have some idea of the country which was based on the movies and series watched from TV. One of them took courses of English to improve English skills; other felt they had good English skills because they have been working with the Americans before in Finland.

The common surprise when they arrived to Houston was the heat. The heat is the one for the Finns they haven't got used to. Some of them found it difficult to get used to the heat. The other major difference faced was the traffic. There are over six million people living in Houston so there are million cars too. All the main roads and highways have several traffic lanes. The road which goes near the Technip Houston office has 12 traffic lanes, plus so called feeders which will add six lines more. One

traffic related issue is also the time spent in the traffic where the Finns had not been prepared. There is traffic from the early morning to the late hours. Also the entire concept of Technip Houston office was much more what they had expected and imagined: Everything was so big when talking about cars and buildings. There are approximately 700 employees in the Pori Mäntyluoto shipyard and there is over 3000 employees at the Houston office. The heat, traffic and buildings were the first issues causing culture shock symptoms for most of them.

Other issues from the actual business culture is the decision making process which is more difficult than they got used to in Finland. The process will take much longer time periods with long discussions about the issues on hand. This long decision making process is not seen at the working sites, where the boss is saying the instructions decided and everybody follows the instructions. I noticed similarities with my findings on Hofstede's dimensions when talking about the group work and individuality in workplaces. Interviewees thought that people in the Houston office share the idea of independent individual and everyone has their equal rights.

Another main difference between the working days in Finland and in the U.S. is the length. In Finland, it is typical to have eight hour working days, but in the U.S. it is normal to have ten hour days. Also the safety issues were organized differently; safety is carefully supervised and people pay attention that others are wearing all the needed gear. Few interviewees said that this was one of the issues which took more time to get used to. Other thing was the technology used at government based institutions. According to the interviewees, the technology at those institutions was behind what they got used in Finland. Most of them thought that the country is using high technology, but the reality was that they were using systems which were several years older than in Finland. People in the offices were using quite old computers and printers and they had to have an American bank account to pay the bills by checks.

All of them felt themselves a bit unsure at the beginning when they faced the normal routines. First the traffic and then the warm temperatures were experienced uncomfortable. After a while the temperatures was not that hot anymore and the traffic jams and time spent at the road were experienced as a part of daily routines. Three of the interviewees were at the commission along as a singles so they didn't

have anybody with them. They felt lonely sometimes, but there were a lot of activities outside the workplace which helped a lot. All of them were having sports in different teams and got new friends. Other three of them were having families with them at the commission and they felt it was the best option. Children are between five to ten years and they have learned the new language easily and adapted the new country and its culture even more easily than the adults.

Three of the interviews were added to the Expatriate guide for Technip Offshore Finland Oy (Appendix 2.) for the new expats to read through to get the idea of how the life would be in the United States. The interviews and the guide are written in English, as the official language is English in the learning tools of Technip Offshore Finland.

9 DOING BUSINESS IN FINLAND AND USA

Company culture can be defined in several different ways. Also the way people communicate and how the organization and leadership is functioning can be divided into other parts. It is important to focus on the facts which influence on people's behavior and why people are different in different countries.

A nation derives its culture from four principal sources: history, language, religion, and climate. Every country has a history which determines the basic frames for the country's culture which includes the habits and the way of acting. That is one reason why it is important to know, even a little, the history of the country to understand the whole culture and its subareas (Brodbeck et al., 2008, p. 75). In the following sections, a brief description of the Finnish and The U.S historical background is given.

9.1 History of Finland

Finland is country about 5.4 million people. It is located in Northern Europe, between Sweden and Russia and the north side of the Baltic. Finland is a land of

paradoxes. Because of its language (it is unrelated to Swedish, Norwegian or Danish) it is not a part of Scandinavia and it is actually considered one of the Nordic countries, which includes Scandinavia, Iceland, and Finland. The official languages are Finnish and Swedish, with Finnish being spoken natively by more than 90% of the population. However, a large amount of people of the country speaks English; with 90% of people under 30 years are fluent in English.

Finns might be called as a nation with notoriously limited communication skills, but, proficient foreign languages. Finns might criticize country's national flaws, but they are proud of their nation's history and achievements. It might be very difficult to get to know Finnish colleagues well. It is extremely important when doing business in Finland to have a good background understanding of the cultural background of the Finns. It is a fact that in Finland a little knowledge can go a long way. Finns are strong business persons because of their history. It has the lowest population density in Europe, and is renowned for its vast forests and forests are covering the two thirds of the country, and nearly 200,000 lakes.

Traditional industries are vital for the nation, such as pulp and paper. Finland is also known as its many hi-tech sectors, and the country is a highly developed nation, with a per-capita GDP of almost \$45,000. It is the only Nordic country to use the euro as its national currency. While taxation is quite high, Finland has one of the best-educated populations in the world, and routinely places at the top of the PISA education rankings. Although Finland is a relatively small country, it tends to "punch above its weight" in certain industries. For example, KONE is one of the world's four largest makers of elevators (Brodbeck et al., 2008, pp. 75-82).

9.2 History of USA

The United States was founded on the fundamental belief in equality, and today, it is a multicultural mosaic of over 290 million people with a different race and cultural heritage. American culture represents a strong sense of regional and ethnic identity. An important aspect of US culture is the American Dream -way of thinking. The

widespread belief is that every individual can succeed and thrive financially by working hard. This idea contributes to a strong work ethic and to a system that is merit based.

Despite the present economic difficulties in the USA, the country still remains world's largest global economy and many of its citizens enjoys a certain standard of living unimaginable to large sections of the world's population. It is still a large economic area and cannot be ignored as a marketplace or as a centre for business innovations and excellence.

Just like many other cultures are preoccupied with relationship-building, Americans are preoccupied with time. For them time is almost a tangible asset, which can be saved, spent, lost, found, invested, and wasted. If you want to have a successful time in the U.S. with the American colleagues, or other stakeholders, it is important to get a really good understanding of how the business is done in the country and its workplaces (Brodbeck et al., 2008, pp. 475-485).

USA is known of its cultural, economic, and military imprint, also its jazz, and popular music, films, TV, and magazines can be found almost anywhere of the world. Economically big brands, such as Coca-Cola, IBM, Nike and many other products of its consumer culture are well known across the world. No thoughts of leadership in the United States can be fully understood without paying attention to the country's historical, political, economic, and social contexts from which it emerged (Brodbeck et al. 2008, pp.484-485).

9.3 Leadership Styles

According to Köster, 2009, leadership can be defined as the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organizations which members they presently are (Köster 2009, p. 221). Below, is definitions and information concerning central leadership characteristics for a leader acceptance and effectiveness in Finland and USA.

Management styles are characteristic ways of decision making and relating to subordinates. Different management styles can be categorized into two main styles; autocratic and persuasive. An autocratic management style is the one where the manager conduct decisions unilaterally, and without much regard for subordinates. As a result, decisions will reflect the opinions and personality of the manager, which in turn can project an image of a confident. The persuasive management style is dealing with the manager sharing some same characteristics with that of an autocratic manager. The most important aspect of a persuasive manager is that they maintain control over all the decision making process. According to Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1958, 1973), the leadership style is dependent upon the prevailing circumstances; therefore leaders should exercise a wide range of management styles and conduct them as appropriate (Brodbeck et al., 2008, pp. 493-499).

9.3.1 Leadership in Finland

Finnish leaders value the following skills 1. Leading people, 2. Capacity to cooperate, 3. The creation of holistic vision, 4. Goal- oriented business, and 5. Delegation. According to the study, the most important factor leader has to have is to motivate and manage people. Lewis (2005) also found in his study that Finns do not lead by giving orders, but they use motivation and setting an example to subordinates. In order to commit Finnish managers, the following factors were important: tasks which correspond to the managers' own abilities and skills, participation in decision making process and loyalty between foremen and top management. He also found three different characteristics for Finnish companies: clear and simple ways of doing business, fast decision making process and fairness and responsibility in business. This research also shows that Finnish leaders have common characteristics such as integrity, energy, reliability, and straightforwardness. Finnish leaders appreciate honesty, cooperation, teamwork, and participatory decision making (Brodbeck et al., 2008, pp. 90-103).

What should a foreign leader expect and how he should behave when dealing with the Finnish leaders? Finnish leaders are hard-working if they are motivated correctly. They are also honest, reliable, punctual, and quite modest but their social competence

is at a lower level. Finns are individualistic and in most Finnish companies the culture is open and individuals are respected. The distance between the employees and leaders is short. It is common that many Finnish firms have open plan offices, which helps the direct communication model. Finns are well educated and avoids close supervision (Brodbeck et al. 2008, p. 102).

Industry and management in Finland has the tendency to be dominated by engineers. The dominance of engineers in the management corpus has led to a strong technical bent with a reliance being placed on systems and well-organized procedures. Managers place more emphasis on effectiveness and order than on flair and initiative (which are more useful in the design and R&D side of the business.)

Finns respect modesty and ironic self-deprecation. People do not like to show any coquetry and graces, nor do they like to be on the end of a sales pitch. Therefore managers mostly take a low-key approach to managing others. It is not particularly the manager's role to motivate the employees through pep-talks or positive feedback sessions. Delegation is more a matter of setting tangible tasks and defining opposites against which results can be quantifiably and non-emotionally measured. Once tasks have been delegated, the manager would not expect, or be expected, to closely examine the progress. In larger companies, major decisions would tend to be made by a team of senior executives in a collective style. This process can be slow - Finns have a history of conservatism and change happens only after very deep consideration by all involved parties involved (Brodbeck et al., 2008, pp. 90-95).

9.3.2 Leadership in USA

United States is a monochromic oriented society which is descriptive of most economically highly developed societies. Time is seen as a scarce resource and needs to be used as well as possible; "time is money" is a common phrase when describing the society. Leaders use their time efficiently as possible, which means that meetings starts on time and deadlines will be reached on time. When thinking about time concept with the Finnish and U.S. cultures it is the same: both want to start meetings on time and everybody works to get the agreed to finish the job on time. While in

Finland, people admire leaders with honesty and commitment; in the U.S. leaders are valued with clear visions.

Few key characteristics can be defined as following about the leaders in the US:

1. Standing out, get things done and succeed
2. Leader must be results driven and have a control over things
3. Hard worker, active and have a sense of urgency
4. Risk willingness, practical and pragmatic
5. to have suitable experience and informality.

While in Finland, people tend to look up for older leaders because they see the age also as an experience indicator, the age does not matter that much. Furthermore, the United States has always been described as a youth oriented society. One thing which also differs with the countries is the importance of education. Finns are proud of their highly appreciated education systems and highly educated leaders are appreciated. In the U.S. formal education is not that important and, in fact, throughout U.S. history a person's formal education has been treated as a secondary to get a job and be successful. Both countries can be seen as "second-chance" cultures where mistakes are okay if the one who has done a mistake shows genuine remorse and forgiveness (Brodbeck et al. 2008, pp.489-493).

Management style in North America can be described as individualistic in approach, so far as the managers are accountable for the decisions made inside their areas of responsibility. Important decisions and issues might be discussed in open forum, the ultimate responsibility for the consequences of the decisions the boss's liability. The other side of this accountability is the American dream that outstanding success will inevitably bring outstanding rewards. Because of this reward system, North American managers are more likely to disregard the options of subordinates than managers in other cultures with compromise or consensus oriented cultures. This system might also lead to frustrations, which can appear sometimes in meeting situations by boiling over.

North American management theories and practices are used more and more in European business culture. This is partly because the large amount of investments. In several countries and trades Americans are the biggest investor group. Besides this, the American influence is seen with the rising rates of American consultation offices, which are all functioning with American ideas and practices. Also the major part of the European business schools is using theories which are created in America (Mole 2003, pp.335-342).

Titles are important in American workplaces and they might be frustrating sometimes with a bewildering array of enormously important sounding job descriptions on offer. Titles tend to be a reflection of the relative importance of an individual within a company. Importance is usually linked to power and distinction is often made between management and leadership style. Good leadership styles are expected at the top of an organization rather than competent management but it might be difficult defining what the good leadership actually is. Americans expect to ask questions if something is not understood. They are not embarrassed to ask questions if they don't understand something, and they also expect others to ask questions as well. If somebody does not ask questions, they can assume everything is understood whatever is being discussed (Brodbeck et al., 2008, pp. 481-489).

9.4 Business practices in Finland and USA

In business life Finns and Americans have common goals and ideas. Doing business is based on punctuality, direct figures and good techniques, also pragmatic thinking and technical knowhow is a common factor between these countries. Both countries are collecting information from reliable sources and do not use oral contracts that much. Both are expecting common sense and trustworthiness from other participant, these are the values which both of the countries have. Informal and equal way of talk is present in meetings, which are also spiced up with a bit of humor. Unless the commercial sides are quite the same, the style and approach are different.

Communication can be equal, but Finns are more introvert than Americans. Time is money in the United States and Americans want to sign the contract as soon as

possible. Americans tends to be impatient, sometimes even bit aggressive. Finns are more patient by nature and they are able to curb their aggressions and even hide their emotions. Americans are more extroverted people and do not see any harm to be open and direct. Despite that the Finnish likes people who are direct and honest conversation, they are still a bit unwilling to show their inner thoughts. While Americans are talkative and persuasive, Finns are quiet and do not try to impose their suggestions to others. Americans do not like the silence in the meetings so they might talk more even if it is not their turn to speak (Mole 2003, pp.25-26).

9.5 Meetings in Finland and USA

In the United States, meetings starts on time and firm handshakes are often included at the beginning. Meetings have formal presentations by one or more participants and the presentations are probably the vital element in the demonstration of professional competence. These presentations should be relevant and well researched, and also delivered in a positive and committed attitude. As the presentations are common in meetings, it is one of the best opportunities to impress, if the person is seeking the success. It is also common that meetings are virtual with one or more participants joining from a completely separate location by either conference call or via video link. With the firm handshakes at the beginning of the meetings are a normal way to greet people, it also comes with a little of joking, a matter of fact, the small talk is an essential tool when having meetings with Americans. Small talk is usually from the topics on hand, or sports and other free time activities, but religion and politics are the topics to be avoided. People are expected to be well prepared and people are expected to speak if they have something concrete to contribute.

In Finland, the meetings also starts on time, Finns might be more punctual at the timetables than the colleagues in the US. Handshakes are also a polite way to greet each other and joking about the topic is normal, however the small talk is a part were the Finns are not that good at, but joking on ones expense is. Less is very definitely more in the Finnish culture. Presentations are also common in meetings; it is one of the best opportunities to impress, if the person is seeking the success. Meetings are mostly structured and are followed by a pre-set agenda and one person is speaking at

a time. People are expected to contribute to a meeting or conversation only when they have something to say, it might be even possible that a Finn can sit through a long meeting without making any verbal contribution. Finnish meetings can seem a bit strange to people not familiar with the Country or the Finns - Meetings tend to be long and quiet (Mole 2003, pp.25-26).

Americans comes to meetings usually with a smile on their faces and are greeting other people, even unfamiliar ones. Finns comes to meetings with their normal expressions, like the Russians and Germans. Because of this, it has been said that Finns are considering the smile of Americans and Japanese deceitful. It doesn't matter that the communication styles are different, eventually the common style is found and they can found a way to do business (Lewis 2005, pp. 283-286).

9.6 Working in teams in Finland and USA

Finns are an individualistic society and therefore the Finnish idea of team-working would tend to be a group of capable individuals being given the opportunity to complete the well defined tasks together to reach the set goals and deadlines. Finns are logical thinkers who tend to consider all decisions thoroughly. Most Finns have a very analytical viewpoint and prefer to make decisions based on facts rather than on emotions, Finns are open to new ideas but those should be presented with facts and figures. In the U.S, people are more open to try the new innovations and ideas without having a base of facts covering them (Lewis 2005, pp. 283-286).

In the USA, teams are groups of different individuals gathered together for the moment to finish a given task or a project. During the period that the group is together, everybody is expected to be committed to it with the common goals. Group members are expected to show enthusiasm for towards the project and show the belief in the ultimate achievement of the objectives. After finishing the project, the team will be divided, and the members are moved to the next task with new group. It is typical that the groups are short term oriented.

9.7 Communication in Finland and USA

Finns have an upfront and direct way to communicate. While other cultures may try to sound optimistic when delivering bad news, Finns would rather their business partners to be straightforward. This style of communication may make foreigners uncomfortable, as Finns often seem blunt and upfront. The lack of the contribution should not be confused with a lack of interest, the Finns will respond eventually when they feel appropriate. Silence is a vital part of the overall communication patterns and Finns are more comfortable in silence than some other nationalities. When the communication is as limited as it is, the body language continues the same silent way; it is usually limited and other cultures find it difficult to read. An unwillingness to lose a face by making a mistake in a foreign language might create shyness to begin within an international environment, but patience and encouraging will bring great results in this area (Lewis 2005, pp. 280-286; Brodbeck et al., 2008, pp. 481-489, 95-80; Mole 2003, pp. 75-80).

Americans are eager to debate issues directly and openly, which might seem aggressive and rude by other cultures. People can seem very friendly, polite towards other people's well being which seems to be at odd with the verbal behavior exhibited later in the meeting. This over friendliness should be taken for what it is - a part of the language and not as an attempt to make a long lasting friendship. Americans are more open in conversations about their private lives than many European cultures, including Finland, and the conversations might go to personal questions at an early stage in a relationship. People rely on technology and e-mail is a normal way to communicate. The e-mail messages are expected to be short and straight to the point. Often the message might have the greeting line and the closing line. This should not be taken as rudeness or annoyance; it is just a quick and efficient approach.

10 CONCLUSIONS

The challenge of working people is to dominate the diversity and the change at the same time. The global business is representing partnerships and joint ventures, fusions and acquisitions, which are done inside countries and also, across the borders. Because of the European Union, multinational organizations have transformed its national subsidiaries into categories which are lead multinational teams. The effectiveness of those is defined by the capacity of how the leaders are working together. Global markets require global corporate culture, which does not have to be uniform, but to develop diversity.

In a changing world people wake up every morning, goes to work and make a living to provide food and shelter for their families. My study did not concern the political geography of the world, but it focuses on the values and behavior of the people in organizations in Finland and in The United States. The first subject is the culture concept. Culture has many subareas which are important to go through to understand the whole picture. Working together is a different thing than doing business as a purchaser or buyer. It requires a deeper understanding of why people from different backgrounds are behaving in a different way. The reactions for other people's behavior are defined by each other's attitudes and values. So that a man could understand other people's culture, they must first know their own culture.

Culture is a living and constantly changing system which cover all personal and social life. On the other words, everything we say or do is an expression of culture. Corporate culture is defined by the culture and technology of the parent company. There is no "right" culture and every company is different. When people from different cultures are forming teams and gatherings, or negotiating or just working in a same company, they will bring with them different hopes and beliefs of how to interact together inside the organization and teams. Different cultures might keep out of sight until they collide with each other's differences in some point. People see things differently, such as the role of a manager, meetings, the importance of planning and teamwork, just mentioning few. It does not matter if we are talking about corporate culture or national culture; culture is a mechanism which will reunite people into common goal with the language and shared values and thoughts.

My main objective is to make clear for the expatriates of Technip to be prepared before departing to the Technip Houston office and to know the answer to the following questions: Should people be spoken by their first or last name? Is it appropriate to tell jokes in the meetings? Is the small talk and social interaction vital? Does the meeting start on time and how do I have to be prepared? These are just a few questions to be asked. To find the answer to those questions the needed background information had to be made. To fully understand the nature of the business culture of Finland and The United States is to understand the concept of cultures and its subareas.

The study of Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the other similar study made by Trompenaars were a great help to recognize the differences between these two countries. Both countries are individualistic and people appreciate commitment and talent. In both countries employees are expected to be able to do their own decisions and have the ability to work individually. Promotions are given by one's merits and success on previous work tasks. Finns prefer to do work individually and teamwork is not popular or desired situation to accomplish tasks. In Finland, people are not that status oriented which the American is more eager to get the recognition. Finns seek good quality in their careers and free time is highly appreciated. Finns are not comfortable of showing their status and talking about their succession.

Both countries are punctual and meetings start on time and people are expected to have well prepared. Presentations are a vital part of meetings and the presentations are a chance to show off talent. Meetings usually start with a little of joking and firm handshakes. One thing Finns are not that comfortable is the Small talk which is the normal way for the Americans when meeting business colleagues. The silent nature of the Finn might be a bit of scary for the small talk loving country but to be aware of the silence and its cultural reasons conflicts should be avoided.

To gather the real life experiences from the life back in Houston, the expatriates of Technip Offshore Finland conducted a semi structured interview concerning their lives in Houston and the preparations made in Finland. Interviews took place in the beginning of summer and took altogether an hour to respond to the questionnaire. Questions were sent beforehand to the interviewees so they can be fully prepared.

Expats shared several common thoughts about the life in Houston, such as the climate, which meant the heat. The heat is the one for the Finns they haven't got used to. Some people find it difficult to get used to the heat. The other major difference faced was the traffic and the amount of people living in Houston and working in the same Technip building. Other issues from the actual business culture is the decision making process which is more difficult than they got used to in Finland. The decision process will take much longer time periods with long discussions concerned about the issues on hand.

The results of the interview, and the main point of writing the thesis about this subject is the need of the Technip Offshore Finland to have a full information package for their expatriates to be mentally prepared for their commission. At present, the "Welcome package" is a paper version which will be handed to the expatriate before the commission. The booklet has several other areas already, but the cultural perspective is the one missing. In the future improvements would be a great idea to have all the information from the booklet to be ready online at the Technip's intranet.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Interview questions

What kind of preparations did you do before the journey?

- How was the process like?
- Good and bad experiences?

Did you have any extra information about USA before the commission?

- What did you expect to come? - How was the reality?
- Did you experience any symptoms of culture shock?

Main differences if you think about the business culture in Finland?

- How would you describe the U.S business culture?
- What about the similarities?

How was the out of duty time, to adjust to the U.S life?

- Groceries, habits and friends?

What about your family, how did the adjustment go?

- Did they have any support from the company to adjusting for the new culture and the new country?
- Is it important to have family members with you?

What would you like to say for those who are coming to Finland from the US to a commission?

Expatriate guide for Technip Offshore Finland Oy

Before the commission, one of the biggest challenges of working and living in a foreign country is learning how to operate in a different cultural setting. Business might be business the whole world over, but the way it is conducted differs widely. How do you know how to approach people, how to set appointments and how to determine what various actions mean in a different culture? It is good thing to remember that no internationally effective employees are born - instead they are made.

About USA



USA is known of its cultural, economic, and military imprint, also its jazz, and popular music, films, TV, and magazines can be found almost anywhere of the world. Economically big brands, such as Coca-Cola, IBM, Nike and many other products of its consumer culture are well known across the world. No thoughts of leadership in the United States of America can be fully understood without paying attention to the country's historical, political, economic, and social contexts from which it emerged.



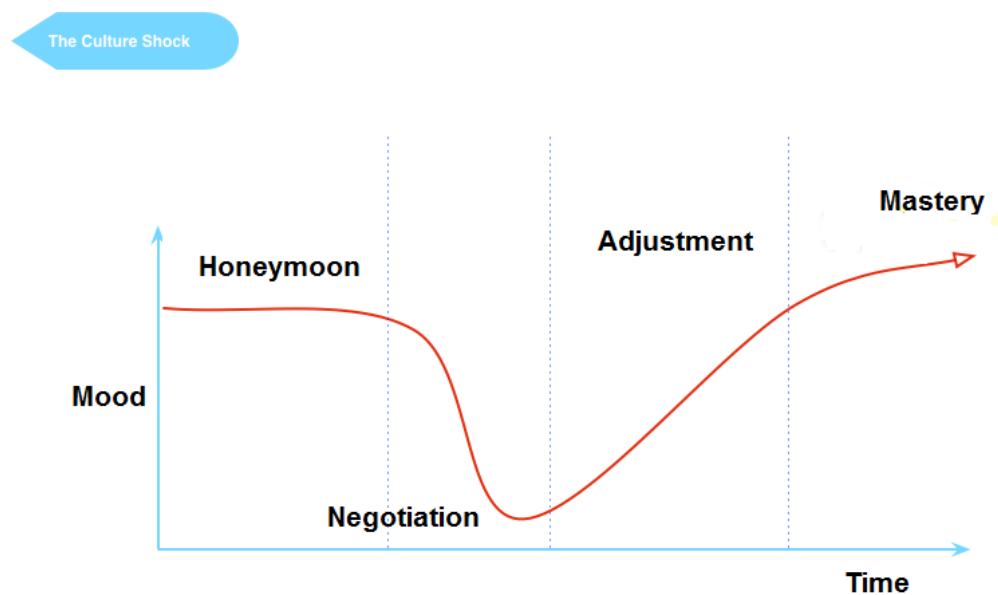
The United States was founded on the fundamental belief in equality, and today, it is a multicultural mosaic of over 290 million people with a different race and cultural heritage. American culture represents a strong sense of regional and ethnic identity. An important aspect of US culture is the American Dream -way of thinking. The widespread belief is that every individual can succeed and thrive financially by working hard. This idea contributes to a strong work ethic and to a system that is merit based. The repercussions of common belief in US business life are long work hours and frequent over hours, as well as a clear distinction between management and subordinates.

Culture shock

Culture shock may be experienced when a person is experiencing an unfamiliar way of life when visiting to a new country, also a move between social environments or just travel to another type of life. Some of the symptoms of culture shock are the excessive concern over

cleanliness and the feeling that everything new and unfamiliar is not clean. For example the drinking water, food and bedding and irritation over delays and other minor frustrations. Also a refusal to learn the language of the host country and also fear of being cheated, robbed or injured, and finally, longing to be back home to be surrounded by familiar things such as relatives, and, in general, to talk to people who are acting and sounding familiar.

Culture shock can be described as consisting of at least one of four different phases: Honeymoon, negotiation, adjustment, and mastery. Still, not everyone experience all these stages, some persons might skip stages or rush through them and at the same time other may experience certain stages more than once. Culture shock can be a nerve-wrecking phenomenon, causing feelings from anxiety to alienation.



Honeymoon stage

During the honeymoon phase, the differences between the own and the new culture are seen in a romantic way. For example, when moving to another country, a person might like the food and the habits of the local people. During the first few weeks, most of the people are fascinated about the new culture. They associate with nationals who speak their own language, and

who are showing politeness to the foreigners. This period is filled with observations and new discoveries. Like most of the periods, this stage will eventually end: honeymoon stage may last from a few days or weeks to six months depending on circumstances.

Negotiation stage

Person might experience a hostile and aggressive attitude towards the host country. This hostility grows out of the genuine difficulty which the visitor experiences in the process of settling in. There is language trouble, house trouble, transportation trouble, shopping trouble, and the fact that people in the host country are largely indifferent to all these trouble. People from the host country will help but they just don't seem to understand the great concern over these difficulties. Therefore, they must be insensitive and unsympathetic towards on the worries on hand. The result, "I just don't like them."

Adjustment stage

After some time, usually from six to twelve months, one grows accustomed to the new culture and creates new routines. One knows what to expect in the most common situations and the host country no longer feels all that unfamiliar. One becomes concerned with typical living again, and things become more normal. One starts to develop problem solving skills for dealing the culture and accepting begins towards the culture's ways with a positive attitude. After the time the new culture starts to make sense, and the possible negative reactions and responses to the culture are reduced.

Mastery stage

In the mastery phase the individuals are now able to participate fully and comfortably in the new culture. Mastery does not mean total conversion; people are still keeping several traits from their own, earlier culture, such as

accent and language. The phase is often referred to as the bicultural phase. These are the most common attributes that pertain to existing problems, further hindrances includes: information overload, language barrier, technology gap, generation gap, skill interdependence, formulation dependency, cultural homesickness and even boredom.

Reverse culture shock

Reverse culture shock, also known as re-entry shock or own culture shock, may take place. When returning back to one's home culture, after growing accustomed to a new one, can produce the same effects as described above. The person might often find this reverse culture shock more surprising and difficult to deal with than the original culture shock. However, the same expatriates then often realize that reverse culture shock hits them harder than they have even expected. The reverse culture shock and possible adjustment issues depend on expatriates' various reasons for repatriation. If the expat decides to return home prematurely, with repatriation happening faster and earlier than originally planned, might worsen the effects of reverse culture shock.

How to deal with the culture shock?

The culture is a product of history and it is built up over time through processes which are beyond people's awareness. It is by the means of culture that the children learn to adjust themselves to the physical environment and to the people with whom they associate. Once learned, culture becomes a way of everyday life, the sure, familiar and the automatic way of getting what person wants from the environment and as such it will become a value. People have their own ways of accepting their culture as both the best and the only way of doing things. This is a normal and understandable way to act. It is better to be aware of the symptoms of culture shock so it won't come as a surprise. It is a good thing to expect it to happen

and know its potential impacts. Culture shock can take its place everywhere, so it is possible that a European can suffer it in other European culture, not only in other continent. When arriving to the destination it is good to identify all possible opportunities for building a social support network. This social support network should include both local people and other international managers. Trying to learn the language, even a little bit will help in everyday life and in the adjustment. If there is local people in the social network, getting involved with them is important, it might even be good to mirror their communication style with the body language and expressions that helps it all to be more familiar.

Trying to ask advices from other international managers to learn more and their own experiences might be the same. If situations get really stressful, something has to be done. Denying it will make it worse and trying to learn some stress management techniques will help and recognizing that anxiety is normal and natural in a new environment. When negotiating or talking with other people it is good to check the meanings and repeat to make sure everyone has understood the message correctly. Rushing into several different projects may cause more stress, also making sure that the company will give the needed time to adapt.

Leadership in USA

Time is seen as a scarce resource and needs to be used as well as possible; “time is money” is a common phrase when describing this kind of society. Leaders use their time efficiently as possible, which means that meetings starts on time and deadlines will be reached on time. When thinking about time concept with the Finnish and US cultures it is the same: both wants to start meeting on time and everybody works to get the agreed to finish the job on time. Like the Finns, the US society works from the present towards the future and both prefers a shorter time frame. While in Finland, people admire leaders with honesty and commitment; in the US leaders are values with clear visions.

In Finland, people tend to look up for older leaders because they see the age also as a experience indicator, the age does not matter that much. Furthermore, the United States has always been described as a youth oriented society. One thing which also differs with the countries is the importance of education. Finns are proud of their highly appreciated education systems and highly educated leaders are appreciated. In the U.S. formal education is not that important and, in fact, throughout U.S. history a person's formal education has been treated as a secondary to get a job and be successful. Both countries can be seen as "second-chance" cultures where mistakes are okay if the one who has done a mistake shows genuine remorse and forgiveness.

Titles are important in American workplaces and they might be frustrating sometimes with a bewildering array of enormously important sounding job descriptions on offer. Titles tend to be a reflection of the relative importance of an individual within a company. Americans expect to ask questions if something is not understood. They are not embarrassed to ask questions if they don't understand something, and they also expect others to ask questions as well. If somebody does not ask questions, they can assume everything is understood whatever is being discussed.

Key characteristics about the leaders in the US

1. Standing out get things done and succeed
2. Leader must be results driven and have a control over things
3. Hard worker, active and have a sense of urgency
4. Risk willingness, practical and pragmatic and
5. To have suitable experience and informality.



In business life Finns and Americans have common goals and ideas. Doing business is based on punctuality, direct figures and good techniques, also pragmatic thinking and technical knowhow is a common factor between these countries. Both countries are collecting information from reliable sources and do not use oral contracts that much. Both are expecting common sense and trustworthiness from other participant, these are the values which both of the countries have. Informal and equal way of talk is present in meetings, which are also spiced up with a bit of humor. Unless the commercial sides are quite the same, the style and approach are different. Communication can be equal, but Finns are more introvert than Americans. Time is money in the United States and Americans wants to sign the contract as soon as possible.

Meetings in USA

In the United States, meetings starts on time and firm handshakes are often included at the beginning. Meetings have formal presentations by one or more participants and the presentations are probably the vital element in the demonstration of professional competence. These presentations should be relevant and well researched, and also delivered in a positive and committed attitude. As the presentations are common in meetings, it is one of the best

opportunities to impress, if the person is seeking the success. It is also common that meetings are virtual with one or more participants joining from a completely separate location by either conference call or via video link.



International atmosphere in Technip's office.

With the firm handshakes at the beginning of the meetings are a normal way to greet people, it also comes with a little of joking, a matter of fact, the small talk is an essential tool when having meetings with Americans. Small talk is usually from the topics on hand, or sports and other free time activities, but religion and politics are the topics to be avoided. People are expected to be well prepared and people are expected to speak if they have something concrete to contribute.

Experiences from former Technip's expatriates

- Earlier we did not have a person in Technip to help you with these things, but now there is a person who can help you, and it is not that difficult anymore when you can get the answers to your questions more quickly. I have traveled here with a bachelor contract, which means that I travel alone. If you want to bring your family with you, the process will be a bit different.

Below you can find three interviews: two with the Finnish interviewees and one person who was working in a longer commission in Pori Mäntyluoto Shipyard. It is inspiring to read other people's experiences about their own thoughts and experiences about the life in Houston.

Harri

➤ Aasta Hansteen EPC Substructure - Outfitting Engineer

Before going to the USA, he had to have the right visa. It was quite long project which took approximately one month. First step is to do the contract inside the company, contract is called Mobility contract. Contract

divines the terms, salary, the length of the commission and job description. After this the visa must be applied. TPUSA (Technip Houston) and its Human resources department and their lawyer office Barry Leideman starts to ask about passport copies and work certificates. When all the needed info is sent there, they will send the final visa material as a registered letter to Finland. With the help of this letter the visa can be applied online (US Department of State, DS 160 Visa Application). With that form, an appointment to the embassy must be made to have an interview which will help to get the work visa to the passport.

The preparations in the U.S. are easy to do. Technip Houston will book an apartment and a car for you and a driver will pick you up from the airport and

drive you to your apartment. Flights are reserved by an authorized assistant. When traveling from Pori, it takes up to 25 or 26 hours to get to the Houston apartment.

The preparations in Finland is a bit different and everything is depending on what people own, where do they live, is the family moving too, is there a summer houses, boats and such. Now it is easy to put the bills on the direct debiting, it was totally different 15 years ago when somebody had to go to your apartment to get the bills and go to the bank to pay it for you. If you have a car, which nobody will be using, the car can be driven to a carriage and get a separate insurance for that one. But it is easy to do online.

Depending on the mission and project to go to, the needed material has to be collected before going to the mission, just in case. And if you know you are going to work in a factory or in a shipyard; safety boots, helmet, boiler suit and jacket has to take with you. Of course you can get these from the Houston too, but in my taste the boiler suits in Houston are too thick and sweaty.

- Personally, I always travel with only one luggage. I think it is the easiest way. If the commission is long and if rest of the family is also moving it is possible to sent a larger container. These require different preparations beforehand. I have this bachelor contract which allows me to bring one extra 320kg bad with me, plus the regular 20kg bag which is mentioned at the flight ticket.

- During the years, I have created a great packing system which includes a list of thing I have to remember to take with me. The voltage in the US is 110V, so if you have a 220V hairdryer, for example, it will not work there. Also the plugs are different and adapters are needed. Skype is easy and cheap way to communicate with the friends and family back home. The company will organize an internet connection to your apartment. You also have at least 100 TV channels, so you will definitely find something interesting to watch.

Some people might find it difficult to get used to the heat in Houston. During the summer seasons the heat can go up to + 34-38 Celsius, in some cases, during the afternoons it can be over +40 C. Autumn is still quite warm and in March the temperature is around + 5 - 10c, but then the summer season will begin again.

One other factor which can be found different, when comparing to Finland is the traffic. There are 6 million people living in Houston so there are million cars, too. All the main roads and highways have several traffic lanes. The road which goes near Technip Houston office has 12 traffic lanes plus, so called, feeders which will add 6 lines more. The road starts from the East coast Florida and goes up to California, altogether 4000 kilometers. There is traffic from the early hours to late hours. It will need a lot of attention when sudden breakings and high speeds are common.

- You have to get a separate Texas driver's' license where you have to read a book of 200 pages, one interview and pass a driving test. You can drive with your Finnish driver's license only one month from the departure. Technip will help to organize this if needed. You will also need a social security number, American bank account and Technip HR department will help with these matters and the local bank account is needed when the company is paying daily allowances and there might be even places where they don't accept cash and you have to pay by card. Credit cards are very popular around here.

Technip has two buildings, one for 14 floors and other 17 floors. Offices are clean and tidy and the much needed air conditioner is working. There might be slight traffic at the elevators in the early hours. There are working 3000 people in these two towers and that makes it only 3000 cars at the area! Basically, everybody uses cars here and no one walks anywhere. Of course there are busses but not as much as there is in Europe, for example. Other central difference in a daily life is that prices in the products are always without tax, and the cashier is adding the tax when paying. USA is also a

country where tips have to be paid; usually it is 10 percent, and in some cases might be more. The tip is usually paid also in hairdressers, restaurants, and the hotel staff. Just to mention a few.

The biggest differences when comparing to Finland is the decision making culture. The decision making process is a bit more difficult in USA than it is in Finland. The whole process will take longer times, and the decisions is made after long discussions where is decided who is taking the responsibility of the actions. In Finland, the decisions are done faster. But, when the decision is finally done, everybody will follow it without questioning. This long decision making process is not seen as clearly at the working sites, where the boss is saying the instructions and everybody follows. Safety is a one important area which is carefully supervised. This is seen in a safety gear, for example. There is really specific way to dress up the safety equipment and there are specific people who are looking that everybody follows the safety instructions.

Another difference is the length of workdays. People are doing longer days and have shorter vacations. Nobody have that 24 day summer holidays here. There is also many Chinese, Mexicans and some Canadian workers, and I might say that the U.S. citizens are only a minority here. I could say that none of these are born and raised here in Houston. It is common to hear Chinese and Spanish around here; sometimes it is frustrating when you don't always have the same language.

Technip Houston has a strict dress code, which means that jeans are allowed only on Fridays. People are dressing on suits and ties, and the ladies are wearing proper shirts and skirts. High heels are accepted and flip-flops is banned even on those casual Fridays, usually men are wearing leather shoes from Monday to Thursday, and when the Friday comes, people can wear neat sneakers with jeans and t-shirts.

There is a possibility to have different hobbies such as football, ice hockey and golf. Some people are more excited about it than others. But there are a

lot of different activities to choose. You can find several park areas with walking, jogging and biking routes.

- *One interesting thing is the church culture, I have participated a few times and it is totally different what it is in Finland. There is one church which is renovated from an old football stadium to a church, and 5000-7000 people can fit inside. The sound system is like the ones at the Pori Jazz festival, and the lighting is like at the Eurovision song contest and there might be 50 singers in the church choir. You can feel the difference for sure.*

Would recommend going for a commission. When I went abroad for the first time, I knew it's not going to be the last time. I have heard that is a common thing. I like to spend time on my own, which is a good thing, I think. If you have a family, and your children are about 5 to 10 years, they will learn the language easily, for sure and get many new friends. Sometimes I have witnessed that for the young family fathers it might be a difficult process to go abroad if his family is not there. It is a fact that when going to abroad, you won't see your relatives, brothers and sisters and friends that much anymore. But it is a good thing that we can use Skype now to connect each other a bit easier these days.

- At first the process felt quite complicated but when it started, it became to feel clearer and well organized by Technip. The process took altogether few months.

Jaakko

- **Mooring Delivery Manager (Offshore BU) / Mooring Category Manager**

Jaakko Lehtonen, 35, started his assignment in Technip's office in Houston, January 2009. TOF and Technip took care of the work permit issues. Jaakko's responsibility was informing and to take a visit to the

U.S embassy, Technip did all the paperwork beforehand for this visit. The whole process lasted approximately two months.

He is working as a consultant for the anchoring related issues in all offshore industry projects and also developing and maintaining technical components and software listings and directives. Jaakko is also educating mooring package – engineers. One of his duties is also to participate as an expert inside Technip’s anchoring subcontractor’s expertise related matters. Working has partly been followed by the expectations but also some prejudices have been proved to be wrong along with the journey.

You will definitely get positive experiences which will help you and TOF in the future.

- I think I have learned a lot at this assignment from many different fields including technical field and management side. In Houston my working field has been expanding remarkably.

Jaakko is living in the U.S. with his wife and four children. Life in the U.S. hasn’t been that much different than it was back in Finland, they are having the same routines which make it easier to adjust; the one huge difference is the heat.

- Time has gone past really fast; the reason might be the amount of work and all the new challenges with the everyday life.

Jaakko’s wife is a full time mom, and with four children, it takes almost the whole day. To transport children to school takes more time than it took in Finland, the distances and traffic is totally different. Children are studying in the Yorkshire Academy, which is a multicultural school. English language has been easy for the children to learn and they have made good friends. From Finland, Jaakko misses his friends. He encourages going for an assignment if the possibility appears.

Before he moved to Houston, he had worked on with a Spar project in Pori, in the year of 2002. Working in Houston has been quite the same what it was in Finland and a few prejudices have been proved to be wrong. He has found many positive things to learn.

While Finns experience the life in Houston different with the different way of life, it is also different to the people from Houston to adjust into the Finnish weather and social life. To a comparison, take a look about the thoughts of Brinson Miles.

Brinson

- In Technip Offshore Finland, Pori

“Finns are intelligent people who need reasons for actions”

Brinson Miles' current commission is the second one he had in Technip. First one appeared in 2010; altogether 10 month commission and he came back at the following year. He already knew what to expect to come and how to be prepared. This first thing he mentioned was the fact about Finland's cold, dark and long winter. Long and snowy winter got him surprised at the first visit. He emphasized the importance of full preparation for that, It is necessary to adjust for it when the time of daylight is limited, otherwise it's easy to get depressed by it. But on the other hand the Finnish summer is something worth to experience: Daylight at the late hours and early awakenings are easier when the sun is up.

- You have to be prepared for the winter physically and mentally. The long winter nights came to me a bit of a shock. But on the other hand, when you got used to it, those became more tolerable.

Location matters, at the first time Brinson was living in Ulvila with his wife. The distance between Ulvila and Pori city centre was a bit too much for the family. It felt his wife was isolated from others.

- I was working long days at the shipyard and my wife was alone most of the days, the location didn't help at all.

At the second time, they moved to the Pori city centre to make sure his wife will enjoy this assignment as well. Brinson and his wife are content for living near everything. It is easy that they can walk almost everywhere which wouldn't happen in Houston where the distances are usually long when comparing to Pori. He still remembers the days back in Houston when it was possible to walk somewhere and the car was not needed.

A distance is a major factor for the working days too. If you are living a bit longer way from Technip you have to use car, but you don't have to plan extra time for that because of the lack of traffic. It is different in Houston: You get easily longer days because of the traffic. He used to go to work early in the morning to avoid the traffic and leave earlier before the traffic starts. But it is easier said than done, it is common that a meeting will last longer and you are not able to get off that early and you have to queue at the traffic and your time with your family will suffer from that. Brinson feels that he feels safer in Finland than in Houston. He and his wife haven't got any threatening situations even in the late hours. He is not missing the feeling from Houston where you have to avoid certain places and times of a day.

- One thing I enjoy the most in Finland is the feel of security. I don't have to feel unprotected even when it gets late. My wife is able to go for a walk in the evenings alone.

He was aware of the language barrier before the trip, and decided to join into a Finnish course to learn a few basic phrases to cope in daily situations. He feels it is a good thing to know a bit of Finnish during the commission, it might be helpful time to time. He noticed that young Finns talks good English because the English studies is started at the primary school. He also noticed a fact that the older generation is not as good with the English as the younger ones.

Few Finnish lines will help in some situations but one situation is still quite threatening to him: Finnish grocery shopping culture is quite different than in Texas. In Houston there is somebody doing the grocery packing for you and you just have to pay. In Finland you have to do the packing on your own and quite fast. He feels there is a pressure towards the customer to pack quickly by the cashier and the people who are waiting in line. To avoid these situations they decided with his wife that they will do their grocery shopping either Tuesdays or Wednesdays when there are not that many people. Otherwise he is comfortable with the products he could find from the supermarkets, especially the fact you don't have to buy water bottles as in Houston. It is a perfectly safe to drink tap water.

Brinson is also enjoying the nature of Finland, although he is wondering why other people don't greet each other when passing by at the recreations: He has noticed that Finnish joggers and dog walkers would rather walk pass without greeting and their face down. In Houston it is common to salute the people on the streets when passing by.

- First me and my wife were a bit of surprised with the fact that nobody won't greet you at the streets. First, we found it extremely rude, but after a while and few discussions with the Finnish co workers it became more natural thing for us and we started kind of respecting the Finnish way of having a personal space.

When he first came to work in Technip Offshore Finland he noticed that people in Finland are intelligent and highly educated. That might be a problem what comes to creating new. Finnish people are not that open into new improvements. Before suggesting a new thing, he recommends to make good arguments why it should be done. After good recommendations Finns might get convinced about the importance to change something, they are thinking it carefully through before making the final decision, and sometimes that is not a good idea. After few years he noticed that things are slowly changing, people are getting more open minded towards new improvements.

In Texas, people can get are more easily talked into new improvements and they are more open minded. Otherwise Brinson says that the work environment in Houston and Pori are not that different. He thinks that it might be the cause of the globalization: People are moving back and forth and collecting best sides of each culture, at least in Technip.

It is good to know some little tips what to do and not to do when dealing with your colleagues. Here are few tips for the Do's and the Don'ts.



- Address the American business colleague with a title, such as "Dr", "Ms", "Mr", or "Mrs", and their last name when meeting someone for the first time. You may find that, your American counterparts will insist on using first names almost immediately.

- Use "please" and "thank you" to everyone for even the smallest kindness.

- Small talk - This will often include topics such as sport or the weather and is seen as a way to lessen apprehension and create a comfortable environment before entering into business affairs.

- Keep eye contact and speak directly to the Finnish business partners.

- Accept an invitation to a sauna.

- Poke fun at yourself and your country, but never make fun of others.

- Finns enjoy irony and have a rather subtle sense of humor.



- Don't expect all companies to be the same. Business culture in the US differs from company to company on many levels, including industry, region and business structure.

- Don't be offended or surprised if your American colleagues cannot accept a gift. Gift giving is often discouraged or limited by many US companies and therefore most employees are unable to accept them.

- Don't interrupt Finnish colleagues during presentations. Save the questions until the end and keep them to a minimum. Finns tend to distrust talkative people.

- Don't show strong emotions. Finns view this as unprofessional and being too emotional will harm your relationship with your Finnish business colleagues.

(Pictures: wallpict.com and ronedmondson.com)

