

## Chapter 7

# The Role of the Personal Culture in the Management of a Multicultural Team

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The chapter reviews the clash between personal and organizational culture in multicultural settings, advancing ways to mediate between the two and to apply proper strategies in order to establish sound interpersonal relations while not losing sight of the general objectives of the business organization.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In a multicultural organization, the role of the “head” (from foreman to general manager through all hierarchical levels), is characteristic both for the smooth running of the business and, especially, for establishing interpersonal relationships based on universals of diversity that each team member represents. Geert Hofstede and Fons Trompenaars (Netherlands), Edward Thomas and Mildred Reed Hall (USA), Michael Bond (Canada) and many

other researchers, as a result of studies carried out have established the basic criteria based on which the cultural traits that distinguish human communities (people) can be determined (Hunter, 2005). But, in fact, given the unprecedented development of information systems, mergers and relocations, mobility studies and work, these differences are preserved, they tend to increase, or decrease? What role does the “head” have under “democratization” employment relationships, according to the American model?

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In order to answer these questions, and to find out the characteristics of the personal culture, that play a decisive role in biunivocal adaptation of the manager to the differences in a multicultural group and of each of the members to the manager, we turned to a company with international experience of about 30 years, Ubisoft.

## **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF UBISOFT**

Originally called UbiSoft Entertainment (Ubi the acronym for Union des Bretons Indépendants) and having as object of activity development and distribution of video games, the French company known today as Ubisoft, one of the world's leading developers and publishers of video games was founded in 1986 by the five Guillemot brothers in Rennes where it continues to have its registered office, even though, nowadays the Administrative and international headquarter is in Montreuil.

The first video game, Zomby, due to the innovative features in brought, enjoys a great commercial success. Ubisoft is experiencing a rapid development and, until 1989 when the turnover reaches \$ 10 million, it annually releases on the market a few games.

The first distribution subsidiaries of the group are open in 1991 in the UK, Germany and the U.S., countries that currently account for 40% of turnover. Next, from 1992-1996, it opens production studios in Romania and France, and the distribution extends to Japan, Italy and Australia.

During the next years many other branches were opened, so that the company currently has 24 studios in 18 countries, employing over 6,700 employees, out of which 80% in development.

Ubisoft creations present five online games, including one called Might and Magic: Heroes Kingdom is the best known. The administration of such games is very complicated, because it requires continuous communication with both players to manage any conflict arose within the community and to fix the programming errors that participants confront. It is in fact the role employees called "masters of the game". They work in teams of 10-12 people and are responsible for the operation of a server. Each team is coordinated by a team leader, manager, the only one connected to the core company. His role is to manage the group of "game masters", to assure performance and to send to the superiors all the "discoveries" of the team.

## **PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS AND METHODOLOGY**

We chose such a team in order to highlight the personal culture and validate/invalidate the cultural traits partially attributed to different populations in literature. There are many reasons for this choice. Firstly, the extremely high diversity of team composition: basically, every person is from another country (other cultures) of Europe. Secondly, the manager comes from Romania, one of the first countries that Ubisoft has opened branches, characterized by high power distance, but also by a high collectivist spirit. Becomes interesting to see to what extent such a leader can adapt to the individualistic nature of Western colleagues, or can transform them into a stronger team spirit and also what are the personal culture that helps to fulfill the mission (Johnson, 2011). Another reason is represented by the specific way of working: each team member

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