Memorandum

To: Don Nelson

CC: Jeoffrey Buekert, Michael Bundy, Aaron Glen Faustino, Dontay Glover

From: Matt Ferry

Date:

Re: Report on cross culture communication in Egypt for a new Kelly Services office

# Analytical Report

Enclosed is the requested research report on communicating in Egypt for a branch office of Kelly Services.

Below is a breakdown of group participation for this project.

Sources

Michael Bundy:

* Intelligence, O.o. (2006). *Arab cultural awareness: 58 factsheets.* Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: US Army Training Doctrine Command.

Matt Ferry:

* *Egypt – Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette Guide.* (n.d.).  Retrieved on March 22, 2011, from Kwintessential: reference http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/egypt-country-profile.html
* Safadi, M., & Valentine, C. (1985). Contrastive Analysis of American and Arab Nonverbal and Paralinguistic Communication. Retrieved on March 22, 2011 from EBSCOhost.
* Veenstra, C. (2004). Listening Between Arabs and Americans. Listening Professional, *3*(1), pp.  5-30. Retrieved on March 22, 2011 from EBSCOhost.

Common Source for everyone:

* Bovee, C.L., and Thill, J.V. (2008). Business communication today. (9th ed). Upper Saddle     River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall

Report Writing

Matt Ferry:

* Initial starting file of the project
* Introduction
* 2nd paragraph, and information on communication imagery

Jeoffrey Buekert:

* Introduction
* 3rd and 4th paragraph
* Closing

Michael Bundy:

* Minor revisions to introduction and 2nd paragraph
* Suggestion for limiting some of the information supplied on communication Imagery

Dontay Glover and Aaron Glen Faustino:

* Non participants outside of general approval, and apologies for not participating

This project was particularly interesting in that locating the requested information was not the easiest of tasks to accomplish, but when located it was very intriguing as to some of the differences between the Arab culture and that of the United States. The actual writing of the report was also enjoyable. While Jeoffrey and I wrote the report we used Google doc sharing for on the fly editing and bouncing ideas off each other, and I believe successfully pulled useful information into a cohesive report.

Confidential

Date: March 25, 2011  
To:  Don Nelson  
From: Aaron Glen Faustino, Dontay Glover, Jeoffrey Bueckert, Matthew Ferry and Michael Bundy  
Memo: Communicating in Arab Countries (Egypt)

In preparation for the opening of the Egypt branch office we have researched the communication information that you requested in our last meeting.  This office has the potential of being extremely profitable as the population of Egypt was reported to be approximately 76 million back in 2004 (Egypt - Language, n.d.), with possible market openings to the rest of the Arab world, which consists of approximately 200 million people (Intelligence, O.o, 2006, p.3).  In order to make sure that this office is successful, several vital communication areas need to be addressed due to the cultural differences between Arab and Western culture. Our company needs to be careful not only with what is said, but they need to understand differences in body language and dress as well.

According to Business Communication Today (2008, p.69), Arab countries are considered to be high context countries and as such they focus on building relationships instead of exchanging information.

“The culture of the Arab peoples developed largely separate from Western civilization. Arab civilization progressed in mathematics, science, and art. While European civilization struggled through the Middle Ages. This separate development led to a lack of understanding between the two cultures.” (Veenstra, C. 2004, p.25)   
 This building of relationships process means that it is more important how information is delivered compared to the information itself. In order to be successful, a better understanding of the differences with the Arab audience is required. Below are some information charts on common, different, and confusing imagery that should be kept in mind when composing letters, billboards, or other marketing designs for the Egypt office.

Common Imagery

* Fingers hold forehead or head = headache or problems
* Hand-cup ear = I can't hear you
* Thumbs-up = OK
* Thumb between forefinger and middle finger = obscenity
* Closed Fist, Thumb up, Forefinger extended = Gun
* Upward turn of wrists holding palms open = I don't know
* Palm down held horizontally = wait
* Fingers hold forehead or head = headache or problems

Different Imagery

* Rub Head  = Maybe
* Stare = Contact with the Others Soul (not rude or threat)
* Avoiding gaze = Rude in conversation (not hiding something)
* Hand covers eye = Swearing by one’s eyes (not Headache)
* Hand covers face = Fool
* Forearm grasp = Strength
* Arm Exposure = improper for women
* Left hand = unclean
* Closed fist, forefinger extended horizontally = indicator / gun (not just indicator)
* Fist with fore and middle finger vertically extended  Arab "mild go to hell"
* Above gesture enclosing the Nose  = obscenity
* Downward turn of palm = secret; "Follow me"
* Hand to genitals in Public (Males)  = irrelevant, scratching
* Flat Fingers together = Indicator, pointer.
* Hiding (Dark glasses) = Rude during Conversation

Confusing Imagery

* Scratching Head:  American = Thinking or Scratching an Itch ; Arab = Scratching an Itch
* Gazing:  American = Between Strangers Sexual Interest ;  Arab = Intimacy, Sexual and nonsexual
* Lowering gaze:  American =Submission , expected between strangers in a crowd ; Arab = Submission expected of religious person with strangers of opposite sex;  politeness in children being chastised
* Holding ones nose: American = It Stinks ; Arab = Go to hell or It stinks
* Mouth to Mouth Kiss (same sex):  American =  homosexual ;  Arab = Alright for friends and Family
* Mouth to Mouth Kiss (opposite sex): American = sexual, family ; Arab = Sexual, alright for close family
* Mouth to Cheek (male - male): American = close family , some friends ; Arab = family and friends for Arabs
* Mouth to Cheek (female -  female): American and Arab = family friends for both
* Mouth to Cheek(male - female): American = family some friends ; Arab = Close family some friends
* Horizontal curved palm up, fingers together = give, come, prayer indication

\*It should be noted that the above lists are the most common examples, and more research should be conducted. The above information was obtained from Contrastive Analysis of American and Arab Nonverbal and Paralinguistic Communication (1985, pp. 25-30).

    Arabs also dress differently than Western civilization, and their dress has different meanings and values than ours. While their actual dress depends on where they are, a typical Arab could be seen in anything from the traditional flowing robes to the jeans and tee shirts of western civilization to anything in-between. Men are usually seen with a headdress, and the color of the headdress represents which tribe an Arab belongs to as well as his status within that tribe. For example a red and white checker generally means he is from Jordan and that he is considered a monarch; while a black and white checker constitutes a Palestinian who is of a presidential rule, and Shi’a-black represents a clergy of the prophet Mohamed, and white represents those who are considered low-class (Intelligence, O.o. 2006, ,p.7). Arab men also tend to treat their women differently than Western culture. While they will stand when a woman enters the room, they do not consider most women as equals, but instead as an instrument to keep their homes tidy and take care of their children. It is never appropriate for someone to ask an Arab man about any female members of his family.

Women play an extremely different role in Egypt than in North America. While the tradition of their dress still varies depending on their location, there are some absolutes that are almost always followed. Arab women are known for their modesty and are usually seen in full robes with their head and face covered. There are some very important rules when it comes to interacting with an Arab woman. A man must be careful to never touch, flirt, maintain eye contact or talk in private to a woman, or he could be endangering her life. A man may only shake a woman’s hand IF she has first offered her hand, and may only speak in public to her if she has been introduced first and is conversing only about business matters.

As has already been demonstrated, there are numerous areas that need to be considered in this endeavor. Not only does our company need to be careful with what is said, but we need to be careful how we present ourselves through dress, speech and interactions with the people of Egypt. By following some simple rules, we can ensure a longstanding business with the Arab culture around the world.

Team Signatures,

References

Bovee, C.L., and Thill, J.V. (2008). Business communication today. (9th ed). Upper Saddle     River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall

*Egypt – Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette Guide.* (n.d.).  Retrieved on March 22, 2011, from Kwintessential: reference http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/egypt-country-profile.html

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Safadi, M., & Valentine, C. (1985). Contrastive Analysis of American and Arab Nonverbal and Paralinguistic Communication. Retrieved on March 22, 2011 from EBSCOhost.

Veenstra, C. (2004). Listening Between Arabs and Americans. Listening Professional, *3*(1), pp.  5-30. Retrieved on March 22, 2011 from EBSCOhost.