

Leadership Talk

Speaker: Prof. Catou Faust

Date: 8th November, 2023

Theme: Cross Culture Communication: Connecting Worlds, Bridging Hearts

The first-year students of the School of Human Resource Management, XIM University, were fortunate enough to attend a Leadership Talk on the theme – **Cross Culture Communication: Connecting Worlds, Bridging Hearts** on November 8, 2023, very immaculately delivered by **Prof. Catou Faust**, Associate professor Emlyon Business school, France that was highly relevant to the first-year students, the speaker made it a point to deliver her thoughts using real-time examples from her professional experience and personal experience as an expatriate, which made the session even more exciting and valuable.



Talk Summary

Culture is the widening of the mind and of the spirit." - Jawaharlal Nehru

In her enlightening address, Professor Catou Faust passionately dissected the profound impact of globalization on culture, shedding light on its pivotal role in business and human relations. With a striking revelation that two-thirds of merger and acquisition failures stem from intercultural causes, she sounded a compelling call for heightened cultural awareness, asserting that mere spreadsheets and paper-based strategies fall short in our modern global landscape.

With an intricate exploration of cultural dimensions, Prof. Faust emphasized the intricacies of interpersonal relations and trust. Drawing from corporate narratives, she shared a compelling anecdote from Sanofi, illustrating the critical role of trust in penetrating the Chinese market. Profoundly, she distinguished between cognitive trust, rooted in qualifications, and affective trust, grounded in personal character. As a cautionary note, she urged recognition and transcendence of ethnocentrism to foster genuine connections.

The realm of work emerged as a key factor in cultural disparities among nations. Prof. Faust illuminated varying perspectives on job identity, highlighting the dichotomy between customer-centric cultures and those valuing the emotions of service providers, as exemplified in French culture. Understanding these nuances, she underscored, is vital for recognizing receptivity differences and navigating diverse work cultures adeptly.

Prof. Faust asserted that time, is a potent factor in shaping cross-cultural relationships. Through a thought-provoking social experiment, she categorized individuals as either monochromic (M) or polychromic (P), revealing distinct attitudes toward time management. Monochromic individuals meticulously optimize their time, adhering to schedules, while polychromic individuals prioritize flexible timelines, less confined by rigid schedules.

Prof. Faust stressed the pivotal role of clear communication in bridging cultural gaps, emphasizing the need for a fluid cultural language. Her compelling speech resonated deeply with HR professionals, inspiring them to become culturally fit and adept at overcoming the challenges posed by cultural diversity. She left them with a powerful reminder: "Unity in diversity is the strength of a nation."



Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Cultural Awareness is Imperative:** Two-thirds of merger and acquisition failures are attributed to intercultural causes, highlighting the critical need for heightened cultural awareness in the global business landscape.
- ✓ **Trust as a Foundation:** "In the grand mosaic of global interactions, Prof. Catou Faust's
- ✓ **Work Culture Disparities:** Varied perspectives on job identity exist, with differences between customer-centric cultures and those valuing the emotions of service providers.
- ✓ **Time as a Cultural Factor:** Time plays a potent role in shaping cross-cultural relationships, with individuals categorized as either monochronic or polychronic in their approach to time management.
- ✓ **Clear Communication Bridges Gaps:** Clear communication is key in overcoming cultural differences, emphasizing the need for a fluid cultural language to facilitate mutual understanding.
- ✓ **Embracing Cultural Diversity:** Celebrating the richness of cultural diversity, and embodying the spirit of unity that transcends borders and unites us all is something that will help the workforce stand strong and make us more susceptible to changes in the real work-life scenario.
- ✓ **Cultural Competence as a Skill:** Culturally adaptable professionals are better equipped to navigate global markets, establish enduring partnerships, and lead diverse teams effectively.



About the Speaker

Prof. (Dr.) Catou Faust is an Associate Professor at Emlyon Business School in Lyon, France, with over 25 years of professional experience on three continents. Her expertise lies in cross-cultural management and HRM. She holds a Ph.D. that redefines the concept of intercultural competence to better align the skills needed in international companies. Catou's research also explores the intergenerational dynamics within the corporate world.

As an enthusiastic educator, she has been teaching a wide range of courses to undergraduate, graduate, and executive education students. Her interactive pedagogy encourages student engagement and critical thinking. Prof. Catou has also provided consulting services for international companies, contributing to intercultural issues and corporate culture evolution.

In addition to her teaching and consulting, Prof. Catou Faust has published research articles and authored case studies that address intercultural challenges in the business world. Her dedication to enhancing intercultural competencies and understanding makes her a valuable contributor to the field of management and HRM.

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