

The Multicultural Workplace – Sour Grapes or Peak Performance Operation?

You're from Scandinavia. Your co-workers are from Hungary and India, and you work in Canada for a company that is headquartered in Australia. Where once this scenario would have seemed far-fetched, it is now increasingly commonplace.

The bigger the company, the more employees are needed – and far better to **tap into** an international pool of candidates than to limit oneself to national borders.

What this means for job seekers is a virtual gold mine of opportunities – to broaden one's mind working with people of different cultural backgrounds.

Often times, better pay or a sense of adventure **entice** employees to work for multinational corporations. But this **gold-digging/Indiana Jones escapade** can **sour** quickly if the work atmosphere does not promote an active understanding of how multiculturalism impacts on the workplace.

Language barriers form a significant challenge, but so does a lack of understanding of how traditions, **customs** and gestures are **perceived** in different countries. What may seem as normal workplace **rules of engagement** to a Finn may be perceived as abrupt and inappropriate by a Japanese.

In order to reach **peak performance**, co-workers must first understand the cultural baggage that their fellow employees bring to the workplace. Once these differences are mapped out, common ground is more easily **attainable**.

Ultimately, we seek many of the same things... happiness, a sense of belonging, monetary well-being. For multinationals, effective communication that respects national boundaries may help in forming the social glue that binds **divergent** workers together.

Vocabulary List

attainable	within reach
custom	accepted or habitual practice
divergent	different
entice	attract
escapade	adventure
gold-digging	mining for gold
peak performance	the best possible result
perceive	understand something in a particular way
sour	become dissatisfied
tap into	take advantage of something