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France and the United States: How Intercultural Competence Can Make or Break a Business in a Global World

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France and the United States: How Intercultural Competence Can Make or Break a Business in a Global World

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Abstract:

This thesis addresses the importance of intercultural competence to successful business practices in a globalized world from both a management and a marketing perspective. Drawing on research in the field of intercultural competence, section I addresses the role of intercultural competence in globalized business settings and discusses the acquisition and application of the principles of intercultural competence. Using France and the United States as examples, section II explores intercultural competence from a management perspective through a contrast of some primary cultural values and their implications on a business. Section III demonstrates the importance of intercultural competence from a marketing perspective through a comparison of McDonald's in both French and American culture.

Section I: Intercultural Competence

Introduction:

Companies lacking intercultural competence, defined as the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people of other cultures, are likely to fail. ("Intercultural Competence") Understanding the importance of intercultural competence is vital to businesses today. Norms and expectations vary across cultures, and a lack of knowledge and understanding of other cultures can be devastating to the success of a company. A key factor to overcoming this risk of failure is to keep an open mind and gain knowledge on the various cultures of interaction within the company. Intercultural competence is essential to a company from a management perspective in relation to internal employees, and also from a marketing perspective for a global consumer base.

Although there is widespread doubt about practices associated with globalization, it is likely that it is here to stay. Globalization affects a range of business practices in both positive and negative ways, and the interactions that form between different cultures as a result of globalization are similarly both positive and negative. The rejection of globalization can, in some aspects, be linked to a lack of intercultural competence and a deep knowledge of other cultures and their values. If companies take the extra steps to plan ahead, understand a culture, and consider all of the hypothetical business differences that will arise when moving from one country to another, they have the potential to be profitable and successful in an increasingly globalized world.

In the eyes of the French, globalization typically equals Americanization. Many French observers regard globalization as American cultural domination and an attempt by the United

States to replace various national cultures to further their own economic development. The

apprehension of globalization develops from the threat to the national economy and identity.

The French demonstrate their strong opinions on globalization through protests, riots, and

blockades. McDonald's, an American company, experienced this first hand when entering the

French market, an action the French viewed as detrimental to their culture. McDonald's is a

successful top competitor in the Fast Foods & Quick Service Restaurants industry with over

35,000 chains in 120 countries. (McLellan) Despite being an icon for globalization, McDonald's

did not have a smooth entrance into every country and acceptance had to be earned by each

culture. The anti-American resistance toward McDonald's in France led to a rocky start for the

company in the country. Originally a symbol of Americanization, McDonald's in France today

stands as a success story of a company that was able to successfully adapt to a new culture. In the

beginning, however, even though McDonald's was careful to understand each culture, and adapt

its business practices to reflect appropriate cultural values, success was not assured. In France,

many individuals were against the entering of McDonald's into their culture and decided to take

action, such as the 1999 riot in France.

On August 12, 1999 Jose Bové led a riot against McDonald's in France with fellow

members of the *Confederation paysanne*, a farmer's union in France. In Millau, a small town on

the Larzac plateau, the attack centered on "dismantling" a McDonald's that was under

construction. This attack on an American company was a form of anti-Americanization brought

on by a dispute between the United States and the World Trade Organization and Europe. The

United States was exporting hormone induced beef to Europe, and the WTO was backing this

action. When the Europeans resisted the hormone injected beef, the United States imposed

heavy duties on luxury items, including Roquefort cheese, one of Bové's main products offered from his sheep farm. (Northcutt)

This counterattack on McDonald's left Bové a hero, making him the leader of France's anti-globalization movement. Perceived in his local context as a modern day Astérix, Bové used non-violent civil disobedience to stand up against globalization, especially Americanization. Astérix is a famous French comic book character, a Gaul who fought off the Roman Empire. Because Astérix was the underdog, small in size and able to defeat such a large opponent, he is considered the symbol of a French hero, and modern-day heroes are often associated with his name. (Anders) The specific attack on McDonald's focused attention on the concern about the food supply used by McDonald's—not only hormone injected beef but 'artificial food' made with genetically grown crops as well. Bové led the nation to believe that they must control what they eat, and stop American companies from dictating their choices. The big picture behind Bové's protests is the need to protect French identity and preserve the traditional French culture by stopping new cultures from altering the country's values.

Today in France there are more than 750 McDonald's locations. (Northcutt) McDonald's survived this protest, and was able to continue successful business in the country due to its large market share and profit margin in a variety of other countries. Was McDonald's lucky? Did it overlook key factors when entering the French market? Could the issue have been avoided? Were they close to failure? These are all questions that should be asked by a marketer before entering a new country. Companies such as McDonald's with a high level of intercultural competence will be familiar with a culture before entering, and make the necessary alterations to encourage acceptance into the new culture. If McDonald's fully understood its new target audience in France, could they have predicted what would happen? The answer to these

questions comes from an understanding of culture; the case of McDonald's can be generalized to all companies seeking global markets.

Causes and Effects of Globalization

The world is constantly changing, and globalization plays an increasingly important role to how businesses function today. With globalization comes an array of different cultural norms, values, and beliefs, leading to differences in opinions and methodologies. The immense globalization of today's society is why intercultural competence has grown to such high importance for success. Globalization has increased rapidly for a variety of different reasons. One of the main reasons behind the increased global world is the development of new technology. ("Globalization")   Improved technology has made it easier to complete transactions across long distances, as well as transport both people and products over country borders. Other reasons for increased globalization include economic and political factors such as deregulation, lowering of trade barriers, and growth of a global civil society. Globalization is expected to continue growing throughout the world, contributing to the importance of intercultural competence.

Globalization has a variety of benefits to a company, including cost savings that are made possible by increasing economies of scope. Although the BRIC countries—Brazil, Russia, India, and China—are the largest emerging countries in the global world as they are at the fourth stage of Rostow's stages of economic growth (Jacobs), they are not the only countries to be considered when expanding internationally. To maximize profits, every country is essential to a company considering globalization. In order to achieve success when working with another country, it is

important to understand the differences in cultural values. Often those cultures that seem most similar to one's home culture cause the most misinterpretations because the proper research and sensitivity development can be overlooked, causing the relationship to be built on stereotypes and assumptions. Intercultural competence is important for a business working with different cultures because a lack of knowledge and understanding will cause the company to lose potential profits from working successfully with another country and their culture.

On another level, globalization leads to potential disconnect with clients if the cultural context that shapes the situation is not fully understood. Most managers conducting business internationally today have little to no understanding of consequences that could arise from cultural misunderstandings.   Due to the improvement of technology, it is easier than ever to communicate quickly with other countries, whether by e-mail or by phone. It is especially easy to miss cultural subtleties that have an impact on a situation when communicating over phone or computer and these subtle differences can have a tremendous impact on a situation. Intercultural competence is becoming increasingly important as the world evolves into the array of complex societies it is today.

Formation of Intercultural Competence:

Intercultural competence is complex, and cannot be learned simply through mere exposure to other culture groups. Intercultural competence goes much deeper than understanding observable cultural phenomena. In order to fully understand another culture, it is helpful to first understand its values and the way people think. (Bennett) The key to developing intercultural competence is having patience and flexibility as one develops an understanding of

the complex value systems that inform cultural behaviors; this understanding, in turn, can enable one to adapt one's own behavior in different cultural contexts. (Meyer) Many scholars, such as Geert Hofstede, Milton Bennett and Mitchell Hammar have developed tools to evaluate and compare cultures to help achieve intercultural competence. Milton J. Bennett, co-founder of the International Communication Institute, developed a widely accepted approach to intercultural competence, *the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*, with his co-author Edward Stewart. ("Milton J. Bennett") This model can be used to approach intercultural competence through different viewpoints. From Bennett's and Stewart's perspective, the first step to building intercultural competence within a company is to recognize the existence and importance of cultural differences within the company culture and beyond and to keep an open, flexible mindset. Before attempting to understand one's culture, one must be willing to adapt to changing perspectives. This is known as "the intercultural mindset." (Bennett) It is vital to remember that while knowledge is necessary to understand other cultures, "knowledge alone does not equal competence." (Bennett)

From a management perspective, this adaptive attitude means everything. Independent of the management style used, an open mind toward another way of doing things will facilitate effective communication and behavior in multiple contexts. When considering management techniques, it is imperative to remember that differences in culture are a segment of diversity within the workplace, and understanding this diversity from the start will lead to respect and minimization of conflict thereby increasing the business's profitability and overall success. (Mayhew) Because managers are in contact with specific employees, it is helpful to understand their individual differences rather than using generalizations.

The consumer base for many companies is becoming increasingly global, and it is essential that marketing efforts be culturally appropriate for their targeted audiences. Developing and showing respect for consumers' different beliefs and practices involves a large amount of research without which one may jump to cultural stereotypes. Everyone utilizes stereotypes every day, often unconsciously, and there is very little truth behind many of these stereotypes. (Paul) Even when stereotypes contain some accurate elements, they are often perceived as impolite or insulting, and can be more confusing than helpful. (Meyer) The best way to avoid cultural stereotypes is by using cultural generalizations or "predominant tendencies among groups of people." (Bennett) Cultural generalizations are not true to all individuals, but rather are broad hypotheses open to verification and developed through extensive research. They range from abstract to extremely detailed, depending on the situation at hand. ("What is Intercultural Competence?") Cultural generalizations serve as a way to combine cultural knowledge with an open mind for specific individual differences. In a marketing context, it is most accurate to utilize these generalizations due to the large population of potential consumers that is targeted, as it would be impossible to note the individual differences between each consumer.

The next step from Bennett and Stewarts' perspectives toward the development of intercultural competence is to create the intercultural skillset. (Bennett) This skillset involves learning how to identify potential misunderstandings and to utilize appropriate behaviors. There are hundreds of different cultures in existence, and depending on the situation it may be impossible to understand all cultures that one is working with. When this is the case it is helpful to develop cultural frameworks that one can use to compare different cultures with the culture of one's home country.

A widely accepted framework for cultural dimensions was developed by Geert Hofstede, and focuses on six dimensions of culture: power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientations vs. short term orientation and indulgence vs. restraint. Each dimension has a scale ranging from one extreme to the other. Additionally, the paradigm is relative to where other countries fall on the scale. There must be a comparison culture in order for the framework to be successful. Each country will fall at a point in between the two extremes; countries are not strictly on one side or the other but rather contain a mixture of characteristics across the range. More information on Geert Hofstede's model can be found on Geert Hofstede's official website.[1]

In the case of a company like McDonald's, it would be important to confirm every aspect of a business plan when globalizing; this includes the marketing plan, especially promotional materials such as, for example, the Happy Meal toys. The toys associated with Happy Meals are very successful in the United States because they are tied to popular American cultural events such as films and sporting events. In other cultures, these same toys may be interpreted negatively as a form of American cultural imperialism or crass consumerism, making them an ineffective promotional activity. It is also important to anticipate communication problems, which are extremely likely to arise when working with new societies and different target markets. Management needs to consider how employees will communicate with customers—in what language, about what topics, with which nonverbal cues, etc. Each possible cultural difference needs to be considered and analyzed thoroughly before entering a new culture, which is why many companies often use cultural representatives specializing in the new cultural and societal values before entering a country.

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[1] Hofstede, Geert. And Gert Jan Hofstede. *Dimensions of National Cultures.* Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede. Business Media, 2015. Web. 27 Feb. 2015. <http://geerthofstede.nl/contact-us>

The third and final step of forming intercultural competence, possibly the most important, is developing intercultural sensitivity. Once companies have developed the ability to recognize cultural differences with an open mind to new ideas, and developed the skillset of being able to notice where misunderstandings will arise, the third and final step is to develop the ability to experience these cultural differences respectfully and effectively. This ability is known as intercultural sensitivity. ("Intercultural Competence and Sensitivity")   Learning about other cultures is insufficient if one cannot adapt one's behavior to work effectively across cultures. (Bennett) Intercultural sensitivity is the final phase of development of intercultural competence because it is the ability to go out and act upon the gained knowledge, putting the idea of intercultural competence into effect.[2]

Evaluation:

Intercultural competence can be evaluated and taught in a number of different ways. A tool adopted by many businesses across the world is The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) which charts how one progresses through various stages of intercultural competence. ("Intercultural Competence and Sensitivity")   One's positioning within each stage of the model is an accurate predictor of success within the global environment, as the model not only rates how aware and sensitive a person is to other cultures but also takes into account how he or she will act upon this knowledge and sensitivity.   The six stages of the model range from extreme ethnocentrism to extreme ethnorelativism: denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation and

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[2] Recently, Mtichell Hammar has updated Bennett's original model in which he refers to this stage as Adpatation.

integration. More information on The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity can be found in Bennett's article in the Intercultural Development Research Institute.[3]

The stages of intercultural competence are useful to businesses in both a management and marketing sense because an awareness of where both managers and employees are positioned on the continuum can have a major impact on how managers make strategic decisions about global projects and the personnel that will work on them. For example, if a manager himself or herself is in the early stages of intercultural development—denial, defense, or minimization—then his or her worldview is central to how he or she defines reality and he or she would have a very difficult time developing culturally sensitive strategies both for managing local employees but also for getting beyond dualistic thinking when facing cultural difference.

In contrast, managers and employees in the final stages of Bennett's intercultural development model—acceptance, adaptation and integration—are aware of and accept other cultures, showing respect for differences. Managers in these stages use culturally sensitive management techniques that maximize the skills of employees. They are also able to maintain a high level of diversity in their workforce. In this scenario, managers can serve as liaisons between two groups of conflicting cultures. Marketing campaigns will be successful with employees from these stages because they can adapt the cultural aspects of their approach to accommodate various target markets and meet the needs of these local contexts through customization, thus becoming successful multicultural companies. (Bennett)

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[3] Bennett, Milton. "Intercultural Competence for Global Leadership." *The Intercultural Development Research Institute.* The Intercultural Development Research Institute, 2001. Web. 20 Feb. 2015. <http://idrinstitute.org>

In the final three stages, people have developed an ethnorelative mindset, which is defined by Bennett and Wiseman as "one's own culture being experienced in the context of others." (Hernandez) At these stages, managers are aware of and accept other cultures, showing respect for differences and using positive management techniques that maximize the skills of employees and contribute to the retention of a diverse workforce. This is a benefit to a company because it allows managers to serve as a liaison between two groups of conflicting cultures. Marketing campaigns will be successful with employees from the acceptance, adaptation and integration stages because they fully understand the importance of the different cultural aspects of the various target markets and the needs of these local contexts, improving customization and becoming successful multicultural globalized companies. (Bennett)

Conclusion

Intercultural competence is the ability to properly adapt one's behavior in different cultural settings and to communicate effectively with members of another culture. Due to increasing globalization, the importance of intercultural competence is growing significantly in the workplace. Working with other countries is essential to remaining competitive in today's society and companies that lack intercultural competence are unlikely to succeed due to misunderstandings that can ruin business deals. It is essential for individuals to be culturally aware from a management perspective, as well as from the perspective of the overall company because of culture's effects on marketing tactics.

Section II: Importance of Understanding Cultural Values from a Management Perspective

Introduction:

Given the importance of intercultural competence to business success today, one would think that two countries with a long standing relationship such as France and the United States would understand each other's values. When considering France and the United States, on the surface there seem to be many shared values and characteristics. Both countries prize individualism and freedom, for example, and see in their national models a universal message regarding the conception of democracy and human rights. On closer inspection, however, the two countries differ over a broad range of values and perceptions related to the conception of space, relationships and communication, decision making, giving feedback, and time management to name but a few. American businesses must cultivate culturally sensitive strategies in order to be successful in France and vice versa, but because the two countries seem to be so culturally similar, this dimension can often pose problems. From a management perspective, these intercultural strategies are critical because a number of consequences may arise if managers do not effectively lead and communicate with their employees.

Numerous differences in values can lead to potential misinterpretations between cultures, and these misunderstandings can be fatal to a company. Overlooking these differences when working across cultures can result in consequences that vary from missed deadlines to more serious accusations such as sexual harassment. Through a cultural comparison of France and the United States, I seek to illustrate how different values can lead to problems in the workplace and beyond. The areas of cultural difference I discuss here—time, space, relationships, communication and work vs personal life—represent a sample of practices that organize cultures

in general and therefore these practices can shed some light on how businesses may need to adapt their strategies in order to maintain successful relationships between managers and employees and between employees and their clients in different cultural settings. Conflicts regarding cultural values arise through the convergence of several values, and it is important to determine which values are in play in order to successfully manage these conflicts.

Time

Time management is a crucial dimension of the workplace. Differences in how cultures view time and manage it can have disastrous results on a company and therefore require attention. Edward Hall distinguishes cultures' orientation toward time as monochronic (M-Time) and polychronic (P-Time.) He developed these concepts after observing both the conscious and unconscious ways of a culture. Monochronic cultures approach time as a material resource to be spent and meted out in much the same way as money. Cultures with a monochronic orientation to time believe that they cannot afford to waste it and therefore stick to a strict schedule. Polychronic cultures, on the other hand, approach time as limitless and unimportant. Cultures with a polychronic orientation to time believe that time is never ending, and schedules are flexible. (Hall and Hall) The United States is an example of a monochronic culture with a linear time schedule, where "time is money". In the United States, individuals are expected to be on time for appointments and stick to the business agenda. (Asselin and Mastron) On the contrary, France is a loose polychronic culture with a flexible time structure. (Meyer) As a polychronic culture, France focuses on individuality and freedom, and has little time pressure for meeting deadlines. (Asselin and Mastron)

Time management is essential in the United States and schedules are often timed to the

minute, which leaves little time for interruptions. Therefore, interruptions are considered rude

and disrespectful to Americans and are consequently poorly perceived. On the contrary, in

France, interruptions are not considered rude, but rather an expression of interest in the

conversation and what the person is saying. Interruptions are expected, and the French often

have multiple conversations within one because the length of time spent on the conversation is

not a concern. Without interruptions, a conversation in the French context is considered boring

and even impolite because interruptions are used to signal that one is paying attention and is

interested in the conversation. (Carroll) This can cause massive misinterpretations between the

two cultures who draw erroneous conclusions about respect, politeness, and intellectual abilities

based on these interactions (Carroll). Obviously, this is not a good foundation upon which to

build successful business negotiations.

Another example of how differences in the way time is valued can affect the workplace

relates to the art of decision-making. Because, for Americans, "time is money" and therefore

needs to be used economically, decisions are made more quickly and are open to change as their

implementation unfolds. In contrast, the French perception of time is more elastic, thus leading

to a longer process of decision making where more time is spent thinking about the best possible

solution and all the potential consequences before implementation, upon which change is very

unlikely (Asselin and Mastron). This major difference in work styles can have profound effects

on the success of projects and touches upon many other dimensions of office life. A second

example is simply the way different cultures deal with managing time. In the United States,

executives often have secretaries who handle their time and are responsible for planning

appointments, dinners, etc. to maximize efficiency. In France, this isn't likely because

individuals are in charge of their own time, and would never want someone else to plan their time for them. (Asselin and Mastron)

Misunderstandings of these differences in the perception of time between France and the United States can be disastrous to the manager of a company. There are many reasons why time plays a vital role in the perception of individuals from different cultural backgrounds. One example is the comprehension of "deadlines." Deadlines in the United States are viewed as the absolute latest time that something must be completed. In France, deadlines are tentative and open to fluctuation, because time is unlimited and tasks can always be completed at a later time. (Asselin and Mastron) From an American cultural orientation, not only would a late completion negatively reflect on the manager, but it could adversely affect a company's bottom line and even possibly lead to employees losing their jobs. Another example is business meetings. Because time is unlimited from a French cultural orientation, French employees are often "late" to meetings without thinking anything of it whereas Americans strive for punctuality and therefore consider lateness as rude and unprofessional. (Asselin and Mastron) Without the understanding that time is valued differently, Americans may start meetings without all employees present, or even think that they are not coming at all while French managers would consider it inappropriate to start right at the scheduled time since it is expected that people will arrive later. The implications for effective working relationships are clear.

Space

The idea of space varies between France and the United States, both literally and figuratively. Differences in how space is valued and what it means arise from physical and

cultural differences and pertain to aspects of the workplace such as personal space and organizational space. France stands at 247,367 square miles, contrasted to the 3.794 million square miles that encompass the USA. To put it in perspective, France is approximately the size of Texas. (Corbett) In 2013 the population density in France was approximately 287 people per square mile, compared to 80 people per square mile in the United States. (Countries of the World) Such a vast difference in population density leads to a different way of living, and therefore different values between the two cultures. In France, for example, everything is closer together. One typically finds narrower roads and tighter spaces in restaurants, homes, shops, etc. This more restricted physical space influences the perception of the appropriate degree of proximity between people when interacting with one another. Because space is limited, in France it does not carry a social dimension; rather it is neutral and reveals little about the degree of relationship between people. The norm in France is to stand close to a person in conversation or sit tight with legs crossed, maintaining little distance between each other. (Alston, Hawthorne and Saillet). Conversation is, however, deeply social in France as we discussed aBové, and the type of conversation one has with other people indicates the type of relationship as well. Conversely, in the United States—where people are accustomed to maintaining a larger sphere of personal space around themselves—space is "socialized" and the spatial proximity between people is an indication of their relationship. Conversation, on the other hand, is neutral from the American perspective and does not engage the interlocutors in any type of relationship. An understanding of these differences will enable managers and employees to maintain appropriate boundaries and not take offense when they feel that their personal boundaries have been violated.

Misunderstandings related to space between cultures can indeed have a small or large impact on a situation. Mild reactions to violations of spatial boundaries might be to consider

them as impolite or disrespectful. However, a company could also face serious consequences for

misinterpreting personal space. For example, in an extreme case, standing too close to someone

within the workplace on a consistent basis in the United States can be interpreted as physical

intimidation or even as sexual harassment. ("What is Sexual Harassment") This unwelcome

behavior can affect not only those involved, but the company and work environment as a whole,

especially if legal actions are taken. From a manager's perspective, this could involve the

termination of employees over the misunderstanding of cultural differences.

The difference in the value of space is also portrayed through France's association of its

country with a geometric shape, the Hexagon. France is the only country in the world to

associate itself with a shape (Corbett) and its meaning relates to a French intellectual tradition

associated with logic, reason and classical aesthetics. This in turn reflects French identity and

the traits they value: symmetry, equilibrium, clarity, and precision. (Asselin and Mastron) This

geometric ideology expands beyond the shape of the country and shows up in various institutions

such as school, political life, and governance where there is a high degree of centralization and

theoretical thinking is privileged over practical experience. In the United States, however,

practical experience is valued to a much higher degree and learning hands-on through trial and

error is typical to both educational and business settings, which are highly decentralized. An

excellent illustration of these opposing tendencies is the way that gardens are constructed. The

typical garden in the United States is a mixture of different plants and herbs in one spot with a

fairly unstructured layout. Plants are thrown together in a way that is pleasing to the eye to

create a feel that harmonizes with nature. In contrast, gardens in France are precise geometric

patterns, arranged with trimmed hedges, color schemes and traced paths. Nature is reshaped and

subordinated to human logic and classical aesthetics. (Corbett) A great example is the giant

gardens of Versailles. When viewing the garden from an overhead perspective it appears to resemble a maze, trimmed perfectly with clear walkways. This is a much different image from the photo of the U.S. Botanical gardens.

Conceptually, centralization also plays a role in the workplace through hierarchical relationships. The difference in hierarchy between France and the United States is illustrated by Hofstede's concept of power distance. The United States rates relatively low on the power distance continuum when compared to France. This low power distance is also known as an egalitarian culture, in which the authority figure acts as part of the team, equal with lower level employees. American companies often have a flat organizational structure in which communication between layers is not only acceptable but encouraged. (Meyer) On the contrary, French culture has a hierarchical structure with high relative power distance in which status is important and authority sets itself apart from lower level employees. French businesses are multilayered organizational structures in which communication must move up the chain of command. (Meyer) Differences between French and American interpretations of hierarchy can lead to a variety of different problems in the workplace. Because communication doesn't have to follow a strict chain of command in the United States, it is acceptable for an employee to call or e-mail a co-worker several levels up the chain. This is unacceptable in France where communication would have to travel from one level of command to the next until reaching the proper destination. Without knowledge of this, American employees in France may contact an

upper level manager, showing them great disrespect. Also, in France it is unacceptable to disagree with one's boss in public. This isn't the case in the United States where the boss's authority is more decentralized and he or she is not always considered the expert. Misunderstanding major differences related to space and hierarchy leads to potential disrespectful behavior when communicating with management in a public setting. (Meyer) A thorough understanding of organizational patterns and how space affects communication in the workplace can lead to more effective communication.

Work vs. Personal Life

Work and personal life are valued differently between French and American cultures. In France there is a strict separation between work and pleasure. (Corbett) Because the two lives do not intertwine, it is not common to speak of personal life at work, and office life stays in the office. Unlike in the United States, offices in France aren't decorated with personal items and pictures. Likewise, weekends in France are not for work, they are reserved for leisure activities with the family. (Alston, Hawthorne and Saillet) In the United States, however, work easily intrudes into personal space, including weekends. Weekend phone calls and meetings are not uncommon. This lack of separation between work and personal space is also reflected in the conversations that are deemed appropriate for the workplace. Americans frequently talk about their families, especially their children, at work. Co-workers are frequently sharing stories about their kids, and how they spent their weekends. In France, this conversation is unlikely; conversation topics are kept to those relevant to the workplace, limiting gossip with each other about outside information. (Asselin and Mastron)

The conception of social identity is also different between the two cultures. The French think of themselves mostly in relation to their personal lives, whereas Americans associate themselves mostly with their careers. For example, Americans frequently relocate to follow or find work but the French are unlikely to leave their family and friends for a job. (Asselin and Mastron) Another demonstration of this difference is the response given to the simple request "tell me about you?" When prompted, most American's will begin by stating their career position. In France however, one is more likely to answer with a description of their role within their family. (Rapaille) This relates back to the value assigned to work and personal life; to Americans, money is proof of hard work and success; they embrace work because it makes them more money and gives them better social standing. The French however value family relationships as proof of success. To the French, family time is more important than additional income. (Rapaille) They often refuse the overtime and weekend pay that many American's strive for. The different view toward the importance of work can cause confusion between cultures. Americans who take time away from their personal lives to complete extra work will be considered imbalanced and even materialistic to the French and French folks who don't take time away from their personal lives to do extra work will be considered unmotivated or as having a poor work ethic to Americans.

Another important aspect regarding work life is the value of freedom. In France, workers often represent their freedom through demonstrations, especially strikes. Strikes, while uncommon in the United States, are constantly occurring in France, usually with little to no notice. Strikes often affect more than just the striking industry. For example, when the transportation industry goes on strike, many students are unable to get to school and workers are unable to get to the office. (Corbett) If this were to happen in the United States, it would cause

chaos as people scramble to get to work and school on time, knowing that the lack of

transportation would not excuse them from their daily duties. In France however, people would

simply find a different solution or accept the situation, experiencing little stress about what they

may miss by not making it to school or work that day. The strike in France would be viewed as

more of an annoyance than a problem because striking is a freedom of workers in France.

Today, many American companies have partnerships with other companies abroad. Having a

strike in a country such as France may cause such companies to miss deadlines. It is important

for Americans to communicate with their French partners that even in the event of a strike, they

still expect the deadline to be met because in the French mindset, it might be considered

acceptable to push back the workload until the public transportation problem was resolved.

Communication

Different values promote different ways of thinking, and different communication styles.

A gesture that is polite in the United States, such as the okay sign formed by your fingers, has a

different meaning in southern France, where it means worthless or zero. ("What does the 'Okay'

Symbol Mean Elsewhere?") As you can see, differences in aspects of communication can cause

vital misunderstandings between cultures if interpreted incorrectly. The major difference in

communication styles between France and the United States can be explained by Edward Hall's

concept of low context and high context cultures. Low context cultures favor simple, clear and

explicit communication and all necessary information will be included in the message.

Repetition is often used for additional clarification on a subject. The United States is the lowest

context culture globally. France, on the other hand, is considered a high context culture which

means that the meaning in messages is often suggested or implicit, multi-layered and inferential.

This often makes for difficult communication between the French and Americans. The French

view Americans as condescending and patronizing; they feel as if they are being talked down to because of the repetition and simplicity present in the messages. (Meyer) To Americans, the French appear secretive and lacking transparency since one must "read between the lines" to interpret messages correctly. (Meyer) These underlying differences in communication will affect many aspects of interaction including formality, negotiation, feedback and persuasion, all of which have possible consequences when interpreted incorrectly.

Formality is an important aspect of communication, whether communicating by writing or speech.   In general French are much more formal in their speech than Americans, and formality is a key factor to French writing. The formality of the French comes from their pride, both in their language and in themselves. (Spielman) In fact, French speech and text has two forms of the word "you." One form, "vous," is for formal speech, which is most often used in the workplace; the other form, "tu," is informal and reserved for use with close friends. This is not true of the English language, which has the single word "you". Not realizing the importance of formality, and addressing a French co-worker at an informal level could be interpreted as extremely disrespectful by French cultural standards. The art of conversation is taken more seriously in France. In France, it is important to stay up to date on the most recent sports events, news, and politics for every day conversation. General French speech is much more formal and polite than that of Americans as French people tend to avoid personalizing their remarks, stating them rather as opinions. Examples of personalized remarks include the use of the word "I." For example, instead of saying "I like winter best," in France, one might say "winter is an excellent time to go skiing." (Alston, Hawthorne and Saillet) This politeness is a significant value with great importance in French conversation. For example, instead of telling a neighbor to turn down their radio, they may ask "Have you moved your radio? I've never heard it before."

(Alston, Hawthorne and Saillet) The lack of accusation makes the statement much more polite while stating the same opinion. It is important to understand the differences in values of politeness before interacting within another culture, since what is perceived as normal speech in one culture may be insulting in another.

The value of patrimony is unique to France. Patrimony involves French heritage and includes everything from cultural and family traditions, to religion, art, music, and language. Patrimony encompasses a variety of different values and is viewed with high importance in France. The French believe it is the responsibility of every individual to be familiar with their culture and philosophy, and those uneducated about it are seen as improper. (Alston, Hawthorne and Saillet) Patrimony relates to business practices through the thought that businesses or professional roles are a part of the chain linking generations, to be inherited and passed along in the future. This makes the French less likely to take risks or abandon long-standing family business practices, and they feel that this continuity is equally valuable as profits. Language itself is considered an important part of patrimony and is a central part of everyday life. An example of the use of patrimony and language is the pride in the French language itself and even though many English words are used in France, it is illegal to use "Franglais" in public advertising or disclosures. (Alston, Hawthorne and Saillet)

In spite of the fact that France is a high-context culture that often uses indirect communication styles, it is very direct with providing negative feedback. The rule of the French is to "criticize passionately and provide positive feedback sparingly." (Meyer) The French are not hesitant to provide criticism in front of a large group, and give negative feedback directly, to avoid any false and confusing messages. The United States, although it is a low-context culture uses an indirect style for presenting negative feedback. Criticism is delivered in private, and

begins with the positives. The negative feedback is wrapped up in positive language to soften

the information. An example of a general rule in the United States is to give three positives for

every negative. (Meyer) Providing feedback and performance reviews is an important function of

being a manager, and providing these reviews to a multicultural workforce can cause a great deal

of misinterpretations. For example, if an American manager provides feedback in an indirect

manner to a French employee, the message will be interpreted differently than expected and will

therefore not result in the desired outcome. The American will understand the importance of the

negative feedback whereas the French person will think that he or she has been praised due to the

high number of positive comments. (Meyer) In contrast, a French manager's direct negative

comments to an American employee will be interpreted by the employee as severe, effectively

amounting to a terrible performance evaluation which can result in a loss of confidence and

motivation.

Another important form of communication in the workplace is persuasion. Persuasion is

essential is all aspects, whether presenting a marketing plan, management plan, or project idea.

It is a challenge to collaborate or present to a multi-cultural team due to the different opinions in

what is expected during the presentation. Major differences exist between the United States and

France when it comes to a formal presentation. Presentations in the United States begin with

recommendations, because Americans focus on practicality. Providing applications first allows

the presenter to focus on how the information can be used and it is often accompanied by

practical examples. (Meyer) Instead of focusing on practicality, French presentations focus on

theory and begin by first stating the principles. This deductive reasoning approach starts with a

basis or framework to help answer the question of why. (Meyer) It is important to tailor a

presentation to the culture of the audience to be successful. This is why it is a challenge if

presenting to multiple cultures at once, it is often difficult to please everyone. For example, if

one starts a presentation with theory, and members of the audience are from the United States,

there is a likely chance that they will be bored with the presentation, and no longer be paying

attention when the information they find important is presented. The best way to handle a

situation in which there are multiple cultures present is to explain the situation and go back and

forth between application and theory throughout the proposal. (Meyer)

Relationships

Relationships differ between cultures, specifically France and America. These

differences come from how relationships form, as well as how to interact within a relationship.

Gender, friendship and team work are three aspects within the workplace that will be affected by

the differences in relationships and their values. Each relationship differs based on the

difference in the value of trust. Trust is a crucial element of not only relationships in the

workplace, but every aspect of a business. The United States has a task based trust system in

which trust is built through business related activities. Therefore, one who does their job well is

trusted. France however has a relationship based style of trust in which trust is built through

personal encounters such as sharing meals, or having a cup of coffee. (Meyer)

Gender plays a much more prominent role in French society. In the U.S. items are not

associated with a gender; a noun is simply a noun. The French however place a value on gender,

and associate gender to nouns, and the gender plays a role. An example is the French noun for

the sun, *le soleil;* a masculine noun inferring that men shine bright likes the sun. The moon, *la*

lune; is a feminine noun implying that women reflect the light of men. (Rapaille) In the United

States there is no gender associated with nouns. Additionally, France itself is feminine (*La*

France), freedom (*la libertée*), and symbols of the Republic such as Marianne, who represents

the bravery of French women. (Asselin and Mastron) An example of how these differences could

play a role in the workplace is the meaning of seduction. Because the idea of being "sexy" and

seducing one another differs between cultures, it is important to understand these differences to

make sure one doesn't misinterpret another's actions.   In the United States being sexy involves

dressing up and changing oneself through surgeries, makeup, etc. whereas in France it means

enhancing one's natural appearance and seeming as casual as possible. The idea of suggestion

differs because of this difference in what is considered "sexy" between the two cultures.   In

France it is acceptable to attempt to seduce women that one would meet in the workplace, but in

the United States it would be seen as objectifying women, and possibly sexual harassment.

(Asselin and Mastron) Knowing this difference is important because one may misinterpret the

actions of one gender toward another.

　　　In all relationships, and work environments there is teamwork; however, the French have

a much different definition of teamwork than that of Americans. In the United States, teamwork

means people working together toward a common goal. It involves constant communication and

individuals going back and forth to succeed together, as a team. In France teamwork means

people working separately toward the same goal. (Asselin and Mastron) This difference results

from the base value of individualism, and the need of the French to distinguish themselves from

one another. Misunderstanding how teams work together in different cultures could be fatal to a

company. A manager may think that a team would work together and equally contribute to all

parts of a goal, expecting it to be completed by everyone, but instead it may be completed in

steps by individuals separately if the expectation for group input were not made clear from the

outset. This could hurt the final product by restricting the number of ideas that were contributed

to each step along the way as well as make the integration of the project difficult from a wider perspective.

In the United States, friendship plays a huge role in the workplace; co-workers often form personal relationships and become close friends. This is less likely to happen in France, not only because of the stricter separation of work and personal life but also due to the differences in how friendships are viewed and formed. Friendships in France develop over a much longer period of time and are strengthened through intellectual and personal conversations (Alston, Hawthorne and Saillet), rather than simply doing activities together as friends in the United States do to bond. (Asselin and Mastron) In France, friendship is not a relationship formed through convenience or location. Proximity doesn't matter to friendships in France, whereas proximity and convenience are often the sole reasons for co-workers developing friendships in the United States. It is important to understand this difference, because individuals may feel insulted when fellow employees deny their efforts toward creating a friendship.

Conclusion

From a management perspective, it is imperative to recognize the thoughts and actions of other cultures, because there are potential consequences that could arise from cultural misunderstandings. With increased globalization, countries such as France and the United States are constantly interacting. These countries are a strong example of the importance of understanding the differences between cultures, because although they seem different at first glance, there are many differences that could be fatal to a company. Differences between the countries relate back to cultural values, and how they structure individuals. Cultural values that

have an effect on the workplace include space, time, relationships, work vs. personal life and

communication. Each area has potential to cause numerous misunderstandings in the workplace,

leading to minor or dire consequences.

Section III: Cultural Implications on Marketing: McDonald's A Success Story

Introduction:

It is not surprising that McDonald's founding country; the United States is its most successful country. It is surprising however that U.S. McDonald's are closely followed by their second most profitable country, France. (Beardsley) It is shocking because French often reject Americanization; there will always be those select individuals in France who dislike McDonald's because of the American culture it is bringing to France. This rejection of Americanization is similar to José Bové and his followers in the 1999 riot. McDonald's is referred to by some as "malbouffe" or bad eating; however the select criticisms did not stop it from reaching its target market. McDonald's was able to successfully overcome cultural challenges by creating a marketing strategy specific to France and adapting to the French society, including eating habits and tastes. Alterations in its seven p's of services marketing strategy include adaptations to the physical environments within the stores, changes and adoptions of new products, the use of locally sourced foods and country specific promotions.

7 P's of Service Marketing:

Product:

McDonald's has a standardized set of products served in every location around the world, but it also uses additional local products to tailor the product selection to each specific culture. ("Successful Global Marketing") Altering its product selection to France's cultural tastes is one of the main reasons McDonald's has been so successful in France. France is the culture of pastries. The art of the French pastry dates back deep into its cultural roots, and serves as a cultural icon. French pastries are an everyday appreciation to the French, and love for them will

not be replaced by Americanized choices. (Laiskonis) For this reason, McDonald's locations in France serve pastries and doughnuts in the McCafé. Pastries include croissants, macaroons, doughnuts, muffins, biscuits, flan, tarts etc. (McDonald's-France) Serving products popular to the local cliental increases the appeal of McDonald's to the French culture. Lack of serving these popular items would cause potential customers to seek other businesses for their meals. Although there is a McCafé associated with McDonald's in the United States, it is at no comparison with the size and product selection of a McCafé in France. McCafé in the United States serves solely beverages.

Alterations in products also modify to localized tastes. McDonald's fries are its staple in the United States, known for their consistent crispy taste and thin shoestring style. This taste is not stemmed from the type or shape of potato used; it is the result of the cooking oil. (Schlosser) This allows McDonald's to customize the shape and look of their fries in France. While McDonald's in France still offers the thin shoestring like fry, there is also a second option of a thicker wedge shaped potato fry called "the deluxe potato." (McDonald's-France) There are multiple reasons that this new form of McDonald's most famous and favored product may have entered France. Perhaps the appearance of higher quality? Appearance of being healthier? Different taste? There are many arguments on the success of this second option of fry in France and why is has not been tried in the United States.

McDonald's also locally sources its products. This means that the meat used in France is locally raised, and French brands of packaged products are used. An example is the water bottles distributed at McDonald's in France is Evian, whereas Dasani brand is served in the United

States. (McDonald's)   French have great pride in their country and it is important that they support it through the purchase of local products. In 1999, José Bové and his followers rioted against a McDonald's location that was under construction as protest against hormone injected beef imported from the United States. One of the causes for the protest was the quality of food, which is extremely important to the French consumer, even in fast food. The quality of food used at McDonald's in the United States does not meet French standards. Beef served at McDonald's in the United States is hormone injected and corn-fed, whereas cattle in France are grass fed and growth hormones are illegal. France stresses the quality of its meat in such a way that it has a traceability system in place, communicating where each animal comes from with a statement of where it was born, raised and slaughtered. Additionally, American chicken is banned by the European Union because the chickens are often rinsed in chlorine to be disinfected. This would never happen in France, even for lower quality chicken, such as that served at McDonald's because it doesn't meet the standards of the EU. (Beardsley) French culture rejects low quality food, and would find a restaurant serving such low quality insulting to their culture. McDonald's approached this cultural concern by localizing its products and locally sourcing its food to increase the quality. This was a key element in its success; without these efforts, the company would likely have failed upon entrance into the country and culture.

Many products on the menu at McDonald's in France are English, or "franglais."   For example, spicy Chicken McNuggets have the same name in both France and the United States. Similarly; filet-o-fish, cheeseburger, McWrap, etc. (McDonald's-France) As well as using classic English product names, English is also used to name France-specific products such as the McFarmer and McRancher.   These names go beyond incorporating English, and imply Americanization through the meaning behind the names as well. American is often symbolized

by the "old west" and mountain terrains, because the American culture evolved from memories of the open frontier. (Rapialle) It is a risky marketing move for McDonald's to include additional American culture in its products and promotions as well as emphasize Americanization through the use of English in their product names. However, Americanization was unavoidable when McDonald's entered France, and the company cannot try to hide its American roots. In this case, McDonald's decided to enhance Americanization and acknowledge that they are indeed an American company that is based on American-style fast food and culture.

Place:

In 2012, the United States had over 14,000 McDonald's locations compared to around 1,250 in France. (Chalabi and Burn-Murdoch) With over eleven times the number of locations in the United States one may find it surprising that France is McDonald's second most profitable country. The United States however is just over fifteen times the size of France, implying there is a closer proximity between stores in France. Because these numbers are so close and continuously changing as new McDonald's locations are popping up in both France and the United States, it can be inferred that place does not play a vital difference in the marketing strategies between France and the United States.

Promotion:

Promotions are essential to a successful marketing campaign. Often the first thing that pops into a consumers mind when hearing the name of a company is its logo. McDonald's is known around the world for its golden arches logo, which is the same in every country. However, the background color behind the logo, therefore being the color that represents the

company varies throughout the world. In the United States the colors of McDonald's are red and yellow. Red and yellow are the colors of the advertisements, buildings, Ronald McDonald, etc. Colors are interpreted differently by each culture, and color associations have existed in society for centuries, bringing both positive and negative implications to their use. Red is interpreted to Americans as energy and passion. Red doesn't share a similar positive meaning around the world. For example, red symbolizes communism in Russia, danger in the Middle East, and is the color of mourning in many parts of Africa. ("The Color Red") This is precisely why the color of McDonald's and its corresponding logo differ by country. In France, McDonald's is associated with green, a color at the opposite end of the spectrum. In the United States green is associated with money and jealousy, which wouldn't be a great choice for a fast food restaurant. The interpretation of green in France differs however; it is calming and peaceful. (Bortoili and Maroto) The changing of the color logo also represents the different meaning behind McDonald's in the minds of American and French consumers. In American, McDonald's is for a quick bite on the go, whereas French consumers are more likely to spend time relaxing in the restaurant.

"I'm lovin' it" is McDonald's longest standing slogan and campaign. The slogan has been in place for over seven years in the United States, and has brought great success to the company. (York) "I'm lovin' it" sends out a universal yet personalized message to its consumers. This universal message is applicable to most cultural audiences, and the same slogan is used in France, only translated. "C'est tout ce que j'aime" its French slogan, is often incorporated with the English translation listed below.

This shows that not all aspects of the marketing plan need to be tailored to each country; but

rather it can be beneficial to keep universal standards for the most famous aspects of the company, in this case its slogan and accompanying tune.

Specific promotions, both overall and limited time are tailored to the cultural values of a society. In France, one of McDonald's long lasting promotions is the McLunch. The McLunch consists of a sandwich, side and drink for 4,95 euros. (McDonald's-France) The price of this promotion is comparable to that of a lunch from McDonald's in the United States. So why does the promotion exist in France and not the United States? The French view eating much differently than Americans. American's eat to keep them going, and lunch is often a quick meal on the go in the midst of a busy day. It is not necessary for McDonald's to have a lunch promotion in the United States because Americans view McDonald's as a fast-food establishment to grab a quick bite to eat, which is exactly what they are looking for in a lunch. The idea of McDonald's is already going to pop into their heads when needing a meal during a busy day. On the other hand, the French value their meals and the time spent enjoying them. The attitude toward McDonald's in France is extremely different, and customers go to relax and enjoy what they eat rather than take it to go. McDonald's needs to establish itself within the consumers mind as a suitable location to sit down and enjoy a meal. Therefore, it is important that McDonald's in France spend its promotion budget promoting meals, because it is simply the French way.

McDonald's most famous promotion is the Happy Meal. Happy Meals are McDonald's way of marketing to children from a young age. In the United States, 15% of preschoolers ask their parents to take them to McDonald's every day and and 40% of children ages 2 to 11 ask their parents to take them once a week. (Jacques) Children don't want McDonald's for the food, at such a young age that isn't the deciding factor but rather children want the toy associated with

the Happy Meal. This aggressive marketing strategy to children at such a young age helps them develop trust for the brand. It is evident that forming this dependence works extremely well in the United States as many argue that McDonald's is most American kids favorite restaurant, solely because of the toy accompanied with their meal. In fact, McDonald's is the largest distributor of toys around the world, larger than Hasbro or Mattel selling over 1.5 billion toys per year. This is made possible by pairing up with many different entertainment companies directed toward children, except Disney which has refused to pair up with fast food providers in fear of hurting its image since 2006. (Jacques) Happy Meals were successful in the United States from the start, and they were carried to all McDonald's locations around the world. There has been a lot of recent controversy about the Happy Meal as Americans are becoming more health conscious, and sales of Happy Meals are declining slowly. However, this is not stopping McDonald's from promoting its Happy Meal. While opinions of who to blame for child obesity differ from one individual to another, many Americans blame the parents of the children, saying that they are the ones to bring them to the restaurant and order that food in the first place. As Amy T. stated is response to an article about McDonald's being to blame for childhood obesity "We all have choices to make. As a parent, it is my responsibility to make the choices for her. The marketing campaigns might target children, but it is adults who choose whether or not to succumb to them." (Jacques) Americans decide to put the blame on parents, not the company and the Happy Meal is not looked at negatively, instead it's the parents who frequently feed them to their children.

Happy Meals aren't viewed as innocently in France. The idea of rewarding children with a toy for eating an unhealthy meal is not popular among the French. France has stricter laws and regulations than the United States when it comes to advertising toward children. The BVP or

Bureau de Verification de la Publicité, has laws in place against providing misleading information to children, including restrictions on suggesting poor eating habits. McDonald's was careful to educate itself with the laws and regulations before creating advertisements for its Happy Meals in France. The law also suggests the protection France has on its children, and that the blame for obesity would be directly blamed on the company itself, rather than the parents as it is in the United States. The Happy Meal wouldn't be as successful in France as the United States without making some changes.. McDonald's approached the different cultural values between France and America regarding the Happy Meal through several small alterations. Not every Happy Meal in France comes with a toy, but rather starting in 2015, the consumer has a choice of receiving a toy or a small book, tailoring its promotion to the strong educational values in France. (McDonald's-France) McDonald's was trying to associate the Happy Meal in adults' heads as a chance to further their child's education; rather than eat a unhealthy meal. Additionally, the average Happy Meal in France has 140 calories less than those in the United States and there are more extensive choices to create the meal. Understanding that French culture has a different perception on food and a meal is essential when creating promotions, even something as standardized as the Happy Meal needs to be altered to reach each country individually.

Price:

McDonald's uses a localization pricing strategy as part of their "Think Global, Act Local" campaign. This localization strategy is used with the goal of increasing market share by setting prices ideal for the society they have entered.

(Steinberger) The prices between the United States and France at McDonald's are comparable. The little difference is prices is a reflection of the fluctuation of the two currencies and does not play a role in the differing marketing campaigns between the two countries.

People:

McDonald's staffs its locations locally and promotes from within the company. This allows the employees to fully understand and respect the culture they are serving, encouraging positive attitudes toward the customers. This technique causes the workforce of a McDonald's in France and in the United States to differ. In the different working culture, French McDonald's employees are more polite and respectful to consumers; wishing them a good day, thanking them for their business, etc. This increased customer service in France extends from a friendly smile, to bringing food to a consumers table if it is not ready upon ordering. In the United States, a McDonald's employee would not be expected, or likely, to deliver food to a customer at a table, instead they will simply call out the order and wait for the consumer to come up and get the food themselves. The difference in the culture and the way people operate lead to a different experience within the restaurant.

Attitude towards work is encouraged through payment, which at McDonald's is an hourly wage to their employees. In the United States, according to glassdoor.com the average McDonald's employee in 2014 made between $7.05 and $8.77 per hour. Whereas the hourly wage in France is on average, 10 euros, or roughly $11. ("McDonald' Salaries in France") With nearly a 150% wage increase between McDonald's in the United States and France, the job is portrayed differently. Americans believe that McDonald's, as well as other fast food jobs should be start up jobs for teenagers and young adults. Culturally, while it's an excellent high school

job, Americans often look down upon adult aged McDonald's workers as uneducated and unsuccessful. This is because Americans associate individuals with their careers and their work identifies who they are. Working at McDonald's is enough to cause Americans to form negative opinions about an employee without knowing any of the person's background. McDonald's' jobs are viewed differently in France. While it is not the most prestigious job, McDonald's employees are respected, and with the increased wage, encouraged to work hard. The extra pay and job security encourages employees to go aBové and beyond. In France, one does not associate work with who a person is, but rather family and personal life. In French culture, a career is nothing more than a job; it does not define who you are. The difference in the attitudes both of employees and consumers toward the employees leads to a difference in atmosphere with increased respect.

Process:

When thinking of the most technologically advanced nations in the world, France is not usually one of the first to come to mind. French stereotypes hinder Americans from viewing France as a technologically superior country. France however places high importance on developing new technology. An alteration in the order processing at McDonald's in France has developed, allowing orders to be placed by kiosk. The goal of the new process was to increase efficiency and customer efficiency. 7,000 new kiosks were installed in McDonald's' locations around Europe allowing customers to place their order and pay at the kiosk by credit or debit card. Along with the additional convenience, it opened up new opportunities of data collection

as it can track orders by credit card number. (Kooser) This allows data to be collected by customer, preferences, timing, eating habits, etc. This new modern image of McDonald's allows locations to have fewer workers present. McDonald's locations in France use this as a chance to offer better pay and benefits to their already existing employees, rather than using it as cost savings for the company. (Collado) This partnership with Microsoft and McDonald's usage of "The Surface" is just the beginning for McDonald's. Although beginning in France, the process has recently been introduced to a single McDonald's location in Illinois. It is predicted that these machines will enter the United States at an increasing rate over the next few years. (Kaye) Culturally France is technologically advanced and served as a successful starting point for this new technology.

Physical Environment:

French and Americans have dissimilar views toward food and eating. The French relationship with food is linked with the pleasure obtained during consumption. It is the experience as a whole. Americans have a looser relationship with food, and often eat because they have to rather than to obtain enjoyment. Because of this, McDonald's designed the interior of their restaurants when entering France to reflect the French way of lingering, socializing and enjoying their meals. Additionally, French culture doesn't snack as frequently as American culture which causes the customers to visit the restaurant around certain peak times, rather than spread out consumers as there is in the United States. To conform to the culture, for example, McCafés were incorporated into European locations. McCafés are a large part of McDonald's in France and are an experience all in their own. McCafé sections within each location were

created to conform to European tastes and preferences. France is the country of pastries, and offering the additional products helps conform the marketing plan to the culture.

When walking into a McDonald's location in the United States, one generally is not impressed by the physical appearance of the restaurant. An upscale McDonald's location in the United States is pictured to the right. Locations are usually a moderately clean opened space with several booths and tables. McDonald's locations in the United States have been trying to improve, and renovate; but they will never be up to the level of those locations in France, because it is not a necessity for the company. Most McDonald's orders in the United States are to go orders and those who stay to eat do just that, they eat and leave. On the contrary, McDonald's locations in France are "chic," spacious and tastefully decorated. (Paynter) The contemporary designs have bright colors and wood panels. There is free Wi-Fi at every location in France as well as flat screen TVs, subdued lighting, laptop charging stations and comfortable furniture. ("More French Saying 'Oui' to McDonald's") The interior does not feel like a fast food restaurant, but rather a place to meet with friends and family.   Pictures of French McDonald's locations are below. It is easy to see the difference between the United States and French locations by the additional color, luxury, TVs, and welcoming furniture. It was essential for McDonald's to alter the physical environment of their

stores because French customers spend a significant time with their meals and the interior of these locations encourages them to relax and remain in the restaurant for an extended period of time. For example, the restaurants have a much larger seating area than those in the United States to provide maximum comfort and accommodate for waves of customers coming at the same time of the day. This method of marketing to how they eat, rather than only what they eat contributed to its success. Commenting about McDonald's as a popular teen hang-out, Layan, a 17-year-old student stated, "Here we can stay studying for hours, the food is cheap, and no one is going to tell you to leave." ("More French Saying 'Oui' to McDonald's") French students go to McDonald's to study, business meetings are conducted at McDonald's over the McCafé, and families spend time socializing after their meals. McDonald's in the United States is viewed differently overall; it isn't the restaurant of choice for socializing over a meal.

Conclusion:

To successfully enter France, McDonald's had to overcome many cultural obstacles, especially movements against Americanization. With alterations to its marketing strategy, such as product variations, creating a new physical environment, and having country specific promotions France became a successful addition to McDonald's globalized franchise. Standing at the second most profitable country for McDonald's after the United States, France is important to its overall success. The first step to the successful entrance into France was to develop cultural understanding for the society and culture. Once this understanding was thoroughly developed it was possible for McDonald's to create a specific localized marketing strategy to be carried out at the correspondin g locations. New ideas are spreading from France back to the United States as they work to increase sales and customer satisfaction globally.

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