

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

- tips for your workplace

Having a diverse workforce is essential to the success of an organisation, let's start by improving how we communicate with each other

R

RECOGNISE that we are human beings first and cultural beings second. There are many complexities which make us who we are even if we share the same gender, country of birth or the same religion. So don't judge people by their race, gender, sexuality, religion or religious beliefs or make jokes about these. This kind of behaviour could amount to discrimination and get you into trouble.

E

ENGAGE your work colleagues in your conversation at every opportunity, they will really appreciate your effort. Regular conversations are the best way to improve your verbal communication skills in English or if you are learning another language. If you don't use it, you lose it.

S

SMILE often, it takes no effort to produce and is good exercise for your face muscles too, helping you stay young and healthy. Also remember that non-verbal communication plays a significant role in how you communicate across all cultures. Did you know that almost 90% of all human communication is actually non-verbal?

P

PERSONAL space should be respected. Being friendly is great, but being too friendly is not so good as it could make the other person feel uncomfortable. For example invading their personal space by standing too close when speaking with them or talking about matters which may be very personal. It could potentially be offensive to the other person.

E

ENCOURAGE sharing of knowledge and culture amongst your work colleagues and across your organisation, you may be surprised by how much you have in common and how much you can learn from each other. Never waste an opportunity to learn something new or re-learn something old. If not, there is no guarantee that you will become older and wiser, just older.

C

CELEBRATE diversity, it makes things so much more fun and interesting. Imagine if everyone in your workplace was just like you, how long could you really handle that? Be honest. Open your mind to the possibilities.

T

TALK it out. Don't be afraid to seek clarification and ask questions if you're unsure or don't understand something. It is better to ask a few more questions than to say or do something you may regret later or start something that you may have to fix or do again.

F

FUN is for everybody and it's great to share. Whether you're celebrating workplace achievements, employee birthdays and special occasions or cultural events such as Christmas, Chinese New Year, Ramadan or Deepavali, there is always a reason to celebrate and have fun. After all, in Australia we are known for finding any excuse to have a party.

U

UNDERSTANDING is a great skill to have, and means you are able to see things from another person's point of view. It requires a lot of practice and you will need to do it often if you want to be really good at it.

L

LISTEN twice as often, that is why you have two ears and one mouth. By listening to what others have to say, you reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings and your work colleagues may be encouraged to share their stories and ideas.

