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| **Multicultural Case Studies** (These examples are drawn from our files.  Watch for additional examples published periodically)  http://starkeygrp.com/images/bl%20man%20staring.jpg***Case study:***   Robert (African-American) and Alan (Anglo-American) had just met for a potential  business venture.  After a short while Alan began to feel uneasy, as he felt Robert was staring at him.   Robert couldn't understand why Alan was so fidgety.  Shortly thereafter the meeting adjourned with neither party satisfied.  Alan thought  Robert's manner was intended to intimidate him.   Robert felt Alan wasn't very serious, maybe shifty.  What the men did not understand about each other was that many black (and American Indian) men have a naturally steady gaze, whereas most white men tend to blink often and interrupt eye contact periodically to ease interpersonal tension.  Cultural knowledge can be key to successful  business ventures.    ***http://starkeygrp.com/images/Asian%20woman.jpgCase Study:***Lydia, Asian-American, was being praised by her fellow team members in front of the whole department.  Although Lydia, born in the U.S., was usually very relaxed and smiled freely, suddenly her beautiful smile disappeared.  The meeting head steered the conversation elsewhere and then, during the break, asked her if something was wrong−after all, her fellow teammates were praising her!  She replied, "In my culture we are extremely embarrassed to be praised in public."  What is rewarding in one culture may be punishing in another.     |  | | --- | | ***Case Study:***http://starkeygrp.com/images/j0410111.jpg    Jose´ was one of the best tech employees in ABC's software company.  He always had a positive attitude and was great with customers when they had problems.  One day, though, he didn't show up for work until late morning.  When his supervisor asked why he was late, he replied that a family member needed his help.  The supervisor reprimanded him, put a note in his file and was puzzled that Jose´― who had been so reliable―did not feel more strongly about his obligation to the employer.  Jose´ was hurt and disappointed that his supervisor did not automatically understand that one's family always comes first.  Both needed to discuss their different viewpoints, then create a mutually acceptable plan for how to handle such situations in the future. |     ***http://starkeygrp.com/Ramona.jpg Case Study:***Ramona was scheduled to participate in a class exercise which helped people to understand different personal characteristics and, thus, how to interact more effectively together.  However, when it came time for her to complete her questionnaire (followed by group discussion) she asked to be excused.  In checking with the meeting planner later the class leader learned that Ramona was American Indian and was intensely private, fearing any kind of public exposure.  Her upbringing and home environment frowned on any such display.  The class leader allowed her to leave, stressing that the exercise was strictly voluntary.  Ramona returned to the class later and watched as the others participated, although she remained silent.  After the class she thanked the leader for allowing her to not participate.  Organizations need to maintain non-threatening environments for their employees.  Through empathy, trust can be established encouraging workers to feel free to contribute to their maximum potential. |