



Will That Cross-Cultural Coach Really Help Your Team?

Adapted from 'Will That Cross-Cultural Coach Really Help Your Team?' by Andy Molinsky and Christian Höferle, Harvard Business Review, April 29, 2015.

<https://hbr.org/2015/04/will-that-cross-cultural-coach-really-help-your-team>

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The coach–client dynamic can vary significantly across cultures. In some Western countries, coaching is often seen as a dialogue or partnership. However, in East Asian cultures, it tends to be more hierarchical, with coaches providing knowledge rather than engaging in an interactive exchange.

Feedback styles in coaching also differ greatly among cultures. In the U.S., it's common to provide critical feedback to a coach, but in East Asian cultures, this may be considered inappropriate, potentially damaging the client–coach relationship.



To ensure effective cross-cultural coaching,
organizations and coaches must:

01

Recognize that cultural differences can impact the coaching relationship

Awareness of how cultural differences affect coaching is crucial, as coaching practices may not be universally applicable, and coaches should adapt to cultural nuances for effective engagement.



02

Use coaching sessions to address and work with cultural differences

Coaching sessions serve as a platform to openly discuss and resolve cultural disparities, promoting better understanding and more effective collaboration between coach and client.

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03

Frame coaching in a way that aligns with the cultural values and preferences of the client

Tailoring coaching to align with the client's cultural values ensures that the coaching process is relevant and respectful, addressing both personal development and collective community objectives.

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