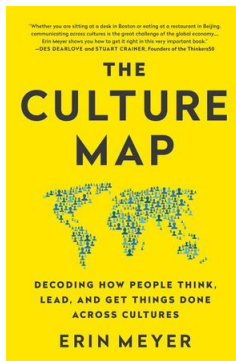## The Culture Map Erin Meyer (2015)

Introduction

Every individual is different. And yes, when you work with people from other cultures, you shouldn't make assumptions about individual traits based on where a person comes from. But this doesn't mean learning about cultural contexts is unnecessary. If your work success relies on your ability to work successfully with people from around the world, you need to have an appreciation for cultural differences as well as respect for individual differences.

The eight-scale model is at the heart of this book. Each of the eight scales represents one key area that managers must be aware of, showing how cultures vary along a spectrum from one extreme to its opposite:

1. Communicating: low-context vs. high-context
2. Evaluating: direct negative feedback vs. indirect negative feedback
3. Persuading: principles-first vs. applications-first
4. Leading: egalitarian vs. hierarchical
5. Deciding: consensual vs. top-down
6. Trusting: task-based vs. relationship-based
7. Disagreeing: confrontational vs. avoids confrontation
8. Scheduling: linear-time vs. flexible-time

2. Evaluating Performance and Providing Negative Feedback

The Evaluating scale will provide you with important insights into how to give effective performance appraisals and negative feedback in different parts of the world. People from all cultures believe in "constructive criticism." Yet what is considered constructive in one culture may be viewed as destructive in another. Managers in different parts of the world are conditioned to give feedback in drastically different ways. The Chinese manager learns never to criticize a colleague openly or in front of others, while the Dutch manager learns always to be honest and to give the message straight. Americans are trained to wrap positive messages around negative ones, while the French are trained to criticize passionately and provide positive feedback sparingly.

FIGURE 2.2. EVALUATING

Russia	France	Italy	US	UK	Brazil	India	Saudi Arabia	Japan
Israel	Germany	Spain	Australia	Canada	Mexico	China	Korea	Thailand
Netherlands	Denmark	Sweden		Argentina	Kenya	Ghana	Indonesia

Direct negative feedback ←——————————————————→ **Indirect negative feedback**

4. How Much Respect Do You Want? Leadership, Hierarchy, and Power

The placement of cultures on the Leading scale positions cultures from highly egalitarian to strongly hierarchical.

FIGURE 4.1. LEADING

Egalitarian										Hierarchical
Denmark Israel	Canada	US			France	Poland		China	Japan	
Netherlands	Finland		UK	Germany	Italy		Russia	India	Korea	
Sweden Australia				Brazil	Mexico	Peru		Saudi Arabia	Nigeria	

Egalitarian The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is low. The best boss is a facilitator among equals. Organizational structures are flat. Communication often skips hierarchical lines.

Hierarchical The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high. The best boss is a strong director who leads from the front. Status is important. Organizational structures are multi-layered and fixed. Communication follows set hierarchical lines.

5. Big D or Little d. Who Decides, and How?

While Americans perceive German organizations as hierarchical because of the fixed nature of the hierarchical structure, the formal distance between the boss and subordinate, and the very formal titles used, Germans consider American companies hierarchical because of their approach to decision making. German culture places a higher value on building consensus as part of the decision-making process, while in the United States, decision making is largely invested in the individual. In this respect, American culture is one of a few outliers on the world map. Most cultures that fall as egalitarian on the Leading scale also believe in consensual decision making. The Dutch put a strong emphasis on both egalitarian leadership style and consensual decision making.

FIGURE 5.3. DECIDING

Consensual							Top-down
	Sweden	Germany		US	France	India	Nigeria
Japan	Netherlands		UK		Brazil Italy	Russia China	