

Dear SIETAR Members and Supporters,

The theme for this month is confidence! Those of us who are engaged and interested in this field of intercultural work are indeed optimistic and confident about humankind's ability to communicate and build across differences. Even more so as the physical world keeps shrinking, thanks to technology. For creative solutions to emerge, which leverage our diverse world views and strengths, in the midst of stress, performance pressure and ambiguity, requires confidence. Both in our competency and in the capacities of those we work with. In that spirit, check out our reminders about the LE in Delhi, updates for the next SUSA conference and a personal moment with interculturalist and fellow board member, Jill Sheldekar.

REMINDERS

Do not miss the SIETAR Delhi learning event on IDI – Inventory on July 24th at the Korean Cultural Centre! The IDI – Inventory is a tool that helps individuals understand their intercultural competence. We are excited to have the opportunity to hear Robert Mitchell share his knowledge on this subject. Please RSVP to Delhi Chapter head Line Rugholt at line@culturewise.dk.

The 2013 SIETAR-USA conference is accepting conference session proposals! This year's theme is Exploring Intercultural Boundaries: Innovation, Inclusion, Inspiration. SIETAR-USA is particularly interested in the ethical component of these areas of practice. The conference will be held in Arlington, Virginia on Nov. 6-9 2013. Submission Deadline: July 15, 2013. Submit your proposal here: <http://www.sietarusaconference-callforproposals.com/>

EDITORIAL - What Do We Do? By Jill Sheldekar, Director Ethnosynth Consulting

Question: What do we do? Really. All of us in the intercultural field have asked ourselves this question. Be it the first few months on the job or even decades later. As our place in this field evolves in new and exciting ways, we must continue to ask this question.

Personally, I have struggled to answer this question during different periods in my career, regardless of who is asking – be it a past colleague, potential client or even a distant relative. Often my response was met with a scrunched brow. To answer this question, I would like to share with you a conversation that my husband/business partner (and partner in all that is meaningful and beautiful in my life) and I had a few days ago after finishing yet another client meeting.

S: "So, how did it go?"

Me: "Very well. I am pretty sure we will get the project."

S: "Why is that?"

Me: "One, I was referred directly by one of their longstanding contacts who they already trust....and two, there is no one else pitching!"

S: "Wow... so much confidence."

Me: "Speaking of confidence, I realized something today. I know what I do for a living."

S: "Really? Ok. What is that exactly?"

Me: "I sell confidence."

S: "...What do you mean?"

Me: "I mean that you can package it however you want – facilitators, trainers and coaches in the intercultural field sell confidence. Some call it, 'Promoting cross cultural collaboration between regionally distinct businesses striving for a global presence'...or 'Facilitating successful business relationships between culturally diverse teams' ... or 'Developing intercultural sensitivity to enhance business interactions globally'... the list goes on. But it all boils down to confidence.

What builds confidence? The attainment of knowledge and know-how along with the awakening and heightening one's understanding of themselves – basically replacing ignorance with knowledge, including self knowledge. This builds confidence. Furthermore, the source of fear is the absence of knowledge. This is a human phenomenon that spans all cultures. People are afraid of what they don't know (example: the motivations and expectations of a global counterpart). Include the challenges of working globally in the 21st Century – shifts in power and an unpredictable global economy – to name a few. It is now, more than ever, essential for individuals to be culturally intelligent if they are to have the confidence to contribute effectively when working across cultures.

You can add another level of complexity if you make this conversation "India" specific and look at the factors that impact confidence and assertiveness when working in India or with Indians...(that's a whole other story for a different time!) But really that's what we do. We increase people's awareness of their cultural identity. We give them the knowledge and skills required to work across cultures so they know what to do in a variety of situations. So yeah...I sell confidence.

S: "I would say you empower people to recognize their ability to add value in a global business environment, as individuals from a unique cultural orientation... or something like that."

Me: "Yes. And that's the reason I married an English major with a masters in Communications!"



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