Boeing Employee Business Cultural Training and

Development Packet: South Korea

MSC 523-6

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Introduction

Organizational Background

The Boeing Company (Boeing) is currently America's largest manufacturing exporter and the world's largest aerospace and defense company. It is a worldwide leader of commercial airplanes, and defense, space, and security systems. Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, the company has airline and government customers in over 150 countries outside of the U.S., and employs over 150,000 people across the globe in more than 65 different countries (Boeing, 2017). The company also leverages an even larger supplier employee network of manufacturing, service, and technology partnerships of hundreds of thousands located all around the world. As a result, the company boasts and welcomes immense diversity throughout its workforce, and is able to utilize this mixture of talent offerings to generate creative and innovative solutions across the company.

Approximately half of the worldwide fleet of jetliners existing today are Boeing or of Boeing heritage aircraft with more than 10,000 in service today. Worldwide revenue in 2016 was $94.6 billion, with commercial airplanes at $65 billion, and the defense business at 29.5 billion. Figure 1 displays the company's revenue trend for the last 10 years (Boeing, 2017).

Figure 1
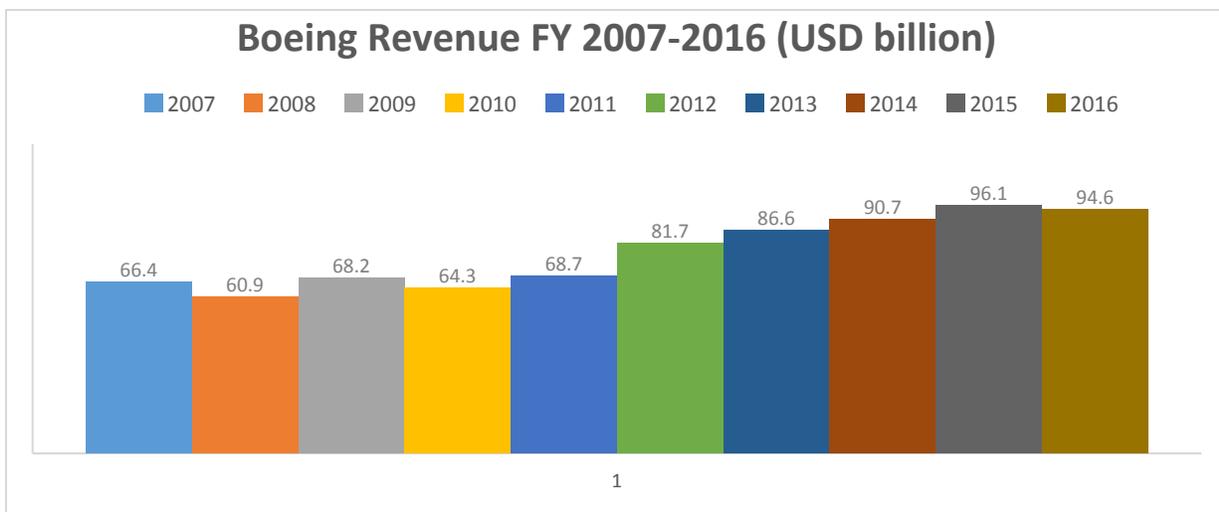
By value, $45.5 billion, or 70 percent of commercial aircraft sales are to customers located outside of the U.S. Due to the proprietary nature of defense business contracts, it is difficult to

accurately capture the percentage of international sales for defense, but it has been reported at approximately 37 percent (Smith, 2017).

Cross-Cultural Employee Development

Boeing also invests heavily in the development of its employees which includes graduate education, career advancement, and the embracement of diversity of thought. Employees are continuously trained in multiple Leadership Centers across the U.S., and the company invested more than $1 billion in furthering employee education in 2016 (Boeing, 2017). However, with such significant reliance on the growing international market, there is a surprising lack of cultural business understanding and training to empower the enterprise-wide diversity within the company in comparison to the large investments made in postgraduate education and internal leadership training. Educational opportunities should exist for employees to embrace the international aspect of diversity, and in order for such education to be successful in aligning to company's international strategy, the company must consider that it is relatively difficult to simply change employee mindset and perception that has historically been in place. Iris Bohnet, Harvard Kennedy School director of Women and Public Policy Programs stated in an interview with regards to appreciating and accepting diversity, that it is important to remember "for beliefs to change, people's experiences have to change first" (Morse, 2016, pg7).

Cultural competence and appreciation of diversity is not a trait that comes naturally, and this can be a cause for major issues for business travelers and expatriates who are working face-to-face with international partners. Cross-cultural miscommunication has and will continue to lead to lost opportunities for the company, whether the issues are based internally or externally, and unless this is formally addressed, the unfortunate trend will continue. Furthermore, with the expectation of global commerce growth and boundaryless business expansion, other global companies are also realizing the importance of investing and training their employees with this critical skillset. It is central for the company's future to invest in this education for its employees to stay on par with, and ahead of the competition. In essence, strategic communication is defined as communicating purposefully to advance a mission (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Vercic, & Sriramesh, 2007, pg4), and this educational training will be communicated to employees on

behalf of the organization in order to engage employees deliberately and in a strategic manner for the advancement of the company.

As the future outlook for Boeing is to continue to see increases in international sales in both commercial and defense units, it is important that its employees understand business standards and protocols of the different cultures that it does business in, but also the importance of contributing to changing the company culture to become more agile and flexible. In order to enhance innovation, competition will continue to dispose of internal hierarchies and boundaries. Boundaryless organizations remove barriers among traditional functions, ignore group labels such as 'management' or 'hourly employees', and recognize no distinctions between domestic and foreign operations (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992, pg4) and Boeing has to continue to strive for this. There is a strong need for enhancement of employee cultural intelligence in order for the company to work effectively in today's global marketplace, and this Training and Development Packet will serve as an initial Work Based Learning (Organizational Learning) pilot for the company to test and implement with one of its key focus countries, Republic of Korea (South Korea), with long term intent of developing a standard template and utilizing a Training and Development Packet for employee education for all of its strategic focus partner countries.

This Training and Development Packet will take into consideration key business and academic communication factors and fields including, but not limited to, strategic communication and management, communication strategy with regards to regulations, and collaboration technology communication with a focus on adapting concepts to the South Korean business culture. The goal of the Training and Development Packet will be to provide company employees the proper communication skillset and cultural knowledge to effectively and successfully leverage and navigate across intercultural business and management partners – in this case, linked with South Korea.

Training

Participation, Utilization, and Assessment

The number of non-Korean Boeing employees with limited cross-cultural knowledge of the South Korean business environment who visit Boeing Korea is not openly documented, but

the Boeing Korea office has provided information that the number is approximately 100 travelers on an annual basis, with over 90 percent originating from the U.S. Additionally, there are also 14 teams that Boeing Korea employees either lead or are a part of within the overall Boeing organization. If the majority of team-leads, team members, and travelers are able to participate in the training, approximately 120 individuals will have the opportunity to participate in the training. Studies on company diversity education have shown that voluntary training actually leads to an increase in participation of 9-13% and is preferred over mandatory training, which is often met with resistance from employees (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016, pg 5), and in an effort to increase participation rate, this training will be optional for first-time travelers to South Korea as well as for team-lead and team members which consist of a Korean national. However, managers and HR representatives will be pushed to highly encourage their employees to participate in the training.

Although assessment of effectiveness for such cultural training cannot easily be quantified, employee engagement in a follow-up survey (Appendix 1) following training and business trips to Korea can be distributed to measure both user experience and opinions on benefits and effectiveness, as well as to receive recommendations on how the training can be more effective and practical. The hope is that as the training continues and becomes more established, the training itself within the company will develop and auto-communicate, as described by Jablin & Putnam as communicating within themselves, evoking and enhancing its own values (pg 246). There will also be a test at the end of the training in order to assess employee competence and attention level, which will be explained in further detail in the following *Methodology* section. Training style will be visually focused Work Based Learning, but this is not to state that there will not be room for changes in the future. As the training is implemented and improved, it can undoubtedly benefit from incorporating other auditory and kinesthetic aspects to enhance user experience. As previously mentioned, the long-term goal is that once a standard template is in place, the conceptual framework can continue to be applied to other key strategic countries of business interest for Boeing, ultimately leading in further globalization and improved cross-cultural intelligence of the organization.

Methodology

  The training will be visually focused Work Based Learning in the form of an interactive video which would take approximately 30 minutes to finish. The training will be accessible to all employees and will take place within the "My Learning" section of the Boeing employee HR portal called "Total Access" as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2
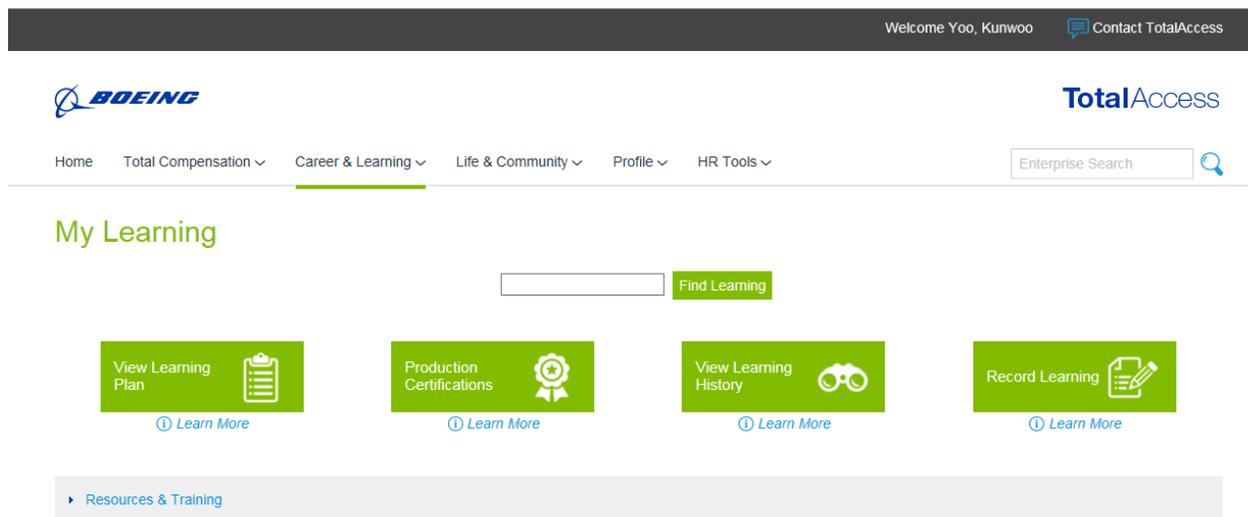
  Keeping mind the design principle that such layouts "should intrinsically tie in with the organization with the point to communicate" (R. Williams, 2014, pp.152), visualization of the training template itself will be kept minimal and simple, and in line with Boeing themes in order to avoid other distractions. The training can be optionally assigned by employee managers, and will also be automatically recommended via email notification once an employee schedules travel to Korea via the Boeing Employee Travel Navigator, which employees are required to use when travelling. Clicking on the green box labelled "View Learning Plan" on the left side of Figure 2 would lead the employee to see a list of company mandated or recommended learning plans including the due dates for completing the training, and this particular session would be included in this list under the title of, "Employee Cultural Competence Training - Republic of Korea". From there, the employee would be able to open the portal to the training. HR

representatives within international business functions as well as the HR representative in Boeing Korea will also be authorized to recommend employees for the training, should they determine its necessity. For reference to a visual example of another currently existing training within the employee portal, please refer to the "Acceptance of Business Courtesies – Anti-Kickback" example capture in Figure 3.

Figure 3
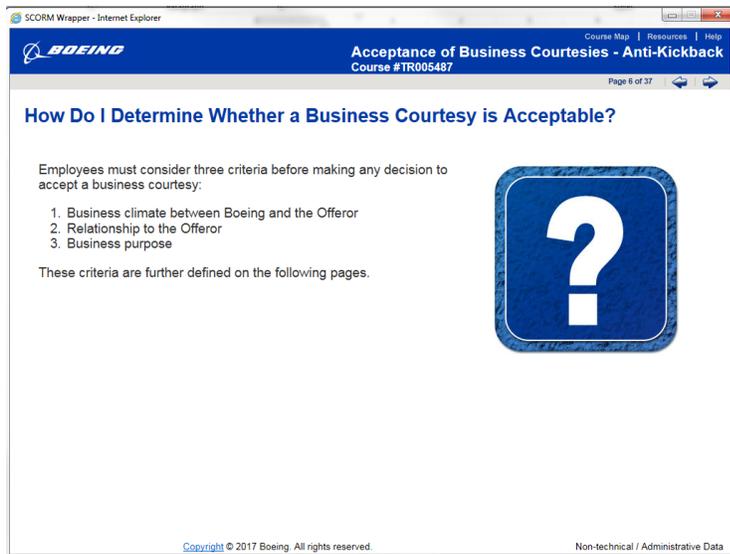
The training would begin with introductory instructions, a video, and a "Test Out" at the end of the course, consisting of 10 quiz questions, later listed in the *Test* section of this paper, in order to test competency. Much like any other existing Boeing training, an employee will be required to correctly answer a minimum of 8 out of the 10 questions in order to pass the test and receive credit.

Content

Business values and culture

In an effort to not simply notify employees of the business norms and behaviors and expect blind accordance, but to provide meaningful and contextual information on why such traits exist, this first unit will focus on employee education to achieve better understanding of country-specific business values and culture, providing a high-level overview of background

information and perspective of the norms and expectancies in South Korea. Burrell (2016) wrote that "in order for training to be effective, one should not take away individuals rights to decide – rather, one should make it easier for them to reach more rational decisions (pg 6)", and this portion of the training will aim to do this for employees. It will briefly address the history of South Korea's culture and how Confucianism has had an influence on business practices. It will also look at a brief history of the economy and touch on factors about how it became one of the fastest growing economies in the world, and the after-effects of a country strongly influenced by the U.S. in so many different ways. This influence has brought upon the Korean public a strong political preferential sentiment, whether this be towards the right or towards the left, regarding opinions on the U.S. Much like previous "naked attempts by European authorities to lessen the power of American enterprise against the interest of their own citizens" with regards to Google's expansion in the region (Hakim, pp.2), there have been multiple examples from the Korean government where logic plays a lesser role than it should in terms of business regulation, due to anti-U.S. sentiment, and this information is important for employees to understand as they navigate the business environment.

Some representative Korean companies such as Samsung, Hyundai, and LG, which were major factors in driving the modern economic growth of the country will be looked at. This section will address how these conglomerates influenced the overall business culture of the country and also how this culture itself has blocked such large companies from becoming true boundaryless organizations (Hirschhorn & Gilmore, 1992). Information on Boeing's two major commercial customers, Korean Air and Asiana, and their relationships with Boeing will also be provided for further context. With over 200 employees on ground and growing, a brief overview of this history will go a long way in terms of business success in South Korea for Boeing.

This unit will also look at the role of the government and federal agencies in terms of enforcing business regulations, and how they differentiate local companies from foreign companies. In a Harvard Business School case study, Desai & Villalonga (2003) looked at how a European Competition Commissioner contemplated his decision on approval of GE's acquisition of Honeywell, considering disparities in different regulatory environments and the organizations that enforce then around the world. This type of dilemma can be considered commonplace in international business regulations, and the training will encourage using this strategically for the

benefit of the business. Reich (2009) pointed out that in the U.S. and Japan, as well as in Europe, government oversight of business and commerce with regards to regulations is different today from its traditional role of being an iron-grip regulator, in that with recessions brought strong public distrust of business. This, in effect, has deepened the public's reliance on the government to protect the consumer, and the corporate world must strengthen ties between the interests of its business and the public. Korea very much falls under this category as well, and the government continues to make efforts to increase its efforts to lessen regulations and enhance business, but at the same time, the reality is that non-tariff barriers and bias against foreign entities still exists. Effective strategies to tackle such tariff and non-tariff barriers will also be discussed. This is particularly important for Boeing, which works with the Korean military on various large-scale defense related procurement programs. As such, a portion of the training will also be dedicated towards introducing the military customer. The Korean military can be defined as a 'definitive' stakeholder which holds 'power, legitimacy, and urgency' as a key stakeholder for the Boeing business in Korea, as defined by Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997). It is important to understand the salience of their stake in the local landscape as the company continues to work with the military customer, and this section will highlight this fact.

Other aspects which can be linked to the overall South Korean business culture and values include the role that the legal system plays. Public expectancy for foreign companies are different than those of the local businesses, and although by no means will this training encourage unlawful or unethical business practices, it is also important to understand the different landscape for foreign and local companies because Boeing will continue to compete against, partner with, and utilize suppliers in which this business culture can all have significant effects on the Boeing business.

This can be the same case for the role of the local media. There exists a different set of rules for how the local media interact with the local and foreign companies, and yet another set of rules for how the local foreign correspondents interact with businesses. Although the media lack the 'urgency' as defined by Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) to be labelled as a 'definitive' stakeholder, it still holds significant salience as a 'dominant' stakeholder with traits including 'power' and 'legitimacy'. The media plays a very influential role in public opinion, and public opinion plays a much more influential role in both business and legislative decisions in

comparison to western cultures. Because of the significant role the media holds in South Korea, it is important for Boeing to understand how to strategically utilize this factor, especially when the majority of sales campaigns are so symbolic, large-scale, and receive high public visibility.

Grunig and Huang (2000) pointed out that more and more, Public Relations functions of organizations are realizing that relationships are key indicators of successful public relations, and this has always been the case for the Korean media. The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (Thomas-Kilmann, 2017) lists interpersonal conflict-handling modes, and the Korean media have a tendency to sway on the 'competing' side as they tend to be aggressive, autocratic confrontational, and intimidating, as opposed to more cooperative and collaborative styles. However, they still expect to be 'wined-and-dined' because they know that companies do not want to upset them, which can result in bad publicity and even false reporting. A common mistake that happens with foreign companies in Korea is when subscription numbers for newspaper paper copies, viewership for TV news, or "hit" numbers for websites are taken into account when engaging the media. This should not be the case, as even small media organizations have the power to mobilize a very vocal minority in Korea, and this can lead to eventually influencing the general public as well. All media, small or large, should be treated the same. This is in line with Olson's (1982) theory that in many cases, small interest groups can be more effective than larger and more established groups in influencing public opinion. This can also be used strategically by targeting these small interest groups by understanding what media they prefer. Furthermore, the media was, and continues to be financially burdened with the rise of online content, and this has led to the media being vulnerable to advertisements. There have been countless occasions of stories being influenced, or even stopped through advertising. Because conglomerates have a long history of bribing the media, the media have high expectations when meeting representatives from large companies, but they also understand that foreign companies will not go to extremes to please them like Korean companies. It is important to balance this expectancy with the company strategy.

Business Communication and Management

This unit of the Training and Development Packet will take a detailed look at employee education on the communication aspect of cross-cultural business interaction with relation to the

South Korean business environment. The unit will include internal and external team management communication for both team leads who have South Koreans reporting to them, and subordinate members of teams who report to South Koreans. In a case study called *Why China Can't Innovate*, Abrami, William, and McFarlan (2014) point out that the rigid Chinese education system, dubbed "China's Examination Hell" for focusing on exam results rather than emphasizing actual learning, has placed barriers on students becoming innovators. The same argument can be made for Korea, where the entire K-12 education system is focused on preparation for university entry exams, and thus cultivation of high test results only. There is no doubt that Koreans have the intellectual capacity to think outside the box and innovate, but because of this upbringing in such a rigid education system, they have been trained to sit down and listen, and do as told by seniors throughout their lives. Understanding that employees might be holding back and encouragement to speak up can go a long way in this case, and in order to maximize the potential output and results of teams spread across both geographically and culturally and decrease potential losses due to miscommunication, this information will be important to address as multiple teams within the company consist of both cases. The diversity of a team can only be maximized if the proper communication methods are used.

Korean management styles places heavy emphasis on the harmony of the team over individual performance. Even if an individual is a high performer, if they are detrimental to the harmony or teamwork of the group, they are thought of as less value to the team. Commitment to the company and team is expected by managers, as Koreans are strong believers that "the most intractable employees take up a disproportionate amount of one's time and energy" (Nicholson, 2002). Daily absentee rates can be looked at as an indicator of employee commitment to the company, and the New York Times reported that the rate is 1% in Korea, compared to 5% in the U.S (Kristof, 1985). Although difference in mindsets within a team has the potential to cause tension, according to Hill, Brandeau, Truelove, & Lineback (2014), this is an opportunity for managers to embrace diversity as part of their teams and provide a supportive environment by managing differences in their teams so that people are willing to share their knowledge, improve ideas, and spark new thinking – this thought process will be emphasized in this training.

Lessons under this unit will also address in detail, verbal and non-verbal communication norms and expectancies on representative communication based interaction including initiating

and maintaining business relationships, the differences in addressing hierarchy in the business culture, work hours to take into consideration for virtual meetings and management of expectations, social situations and how they translate to the office environment, the meaning of names and titles, business language in comparison to casual language, non-verbal gestures, and proper attire.

The South Korean culture places heavy weight on relationships, and often times it is these relationships that play a larger role in business decisions rather than what logically or financially makes business sense. A very important trust factor is added into existing relationship formulas, and winning the trust of potential customers can lead to business success; on the other hand, a loss of trust will most certainly lead to losing business. Attention to details that might seem trivial or small but are indeed very important details is essential to company success.

Collaboration Technology Communication

The final unit of the Training and Development Packet will look at collaboration technology communication within the business culture. South Korea is one of the most technically advanced and connected countries in the world, and the infrastructure available continues to change the business environment and landscape. Proper and accepted communication methods will be covered, as well as information on the mindset of Koreans on why this is the case. For example, Korean's have a strong tendency to clearly differentiate organizational dimensions from external and internal dimensions when considering the four layers of diversity as defined by Gardenswartz & Row (2003). They prefer not to mix professional relationships with personal relationships, and this is especially the case for certain communication technology platforms including social media, and it is important to understand this as team managers continue to work with their employees. Sengupta (2011) questioned how to regulate and deal with how Twitter prompts people to create public personas and puts them in direct contact with public figures, and the lack of Twitter usage in Korea in comparison to other social media platforms can be an indicator that interaction with public figures, or strangers – or in this case, work contacts - is exactly the opposite of what most Koreans prefer, as unlike other popular social media platforms in Korea, Twitter is public.

It is also important to understand how the company can utilize these technologies to the company's advantage in terms of leading and managing existing teams within South Korea. With Korea being one of the leading technology innovators for communications in the world, Korean's are especially savvy with regards to platforms used, and are quick to move on and adapt to new technologies, making previous platforms impractical. Darrell Rigby looked at the future of shopping in a Harvard Business Review article (2011) and pointed out that more and more, successful companies will engage customers with a mix of both digital and physical experience, and this is very strongly implemented into the mindset of Koreans. A telling statistic is that according to the Pew Research Center, as of Feb 2016, 100% of Koreans aged 18-34 use smart phones. Age 35+ is at 83%, compared to the U.S., a country which can also be considered technically advanced, at 92% and 65% (Top 15, 2016).

Using the same technology without cultural literacy can lead to miscommunication and lack of team motivation, but understanding the differences can also lead to increased production, motivation, and higher quality output. Usage of voice mail will also be looked at as an example – Koreans are quick at adapting and not expending more effort than is needed to put forth least collaborative effort (Clark & Brennan, 1991, pp.134), and this trait can be seen in how voice mail is no longer used, even though the platform still exists. Video conferencing is another example reviewed, with Koreans considering constraints on reaching common ground such as presence, visibility, and audibility (Clark & Brennan, 1991, pp.141), to outweigh the efficiencies provided by video conferencing, and thus not implementing the technology into their everyday business lives. This information is also vital for the company to understand, as customers and other businesses have standards and expectations which the company needs to manage. The nature of using technology for human interaction is approached differently in South Korea, and having an understanding of this will aid the company's local business efforts.

Test

The final portion of the training will consist of ten questions. The questions will not be difficult in nature, but more strategically listed to emphasize and remind employees of some of the key takeaways from the training.

The questions are as follows:

1. **True**/False: The Korean business environment was heavily influenced by major conglomerate companies such as Samsung, Hyundai, and LG

2. Who is the largest commercial airplane customer in Korea?
    a. Asiana
    b. Jeju Air
    c. Air Pusan
    d. **Korean Air**

3. True/**False**: One should give up on a business strategy if a government regulation is a roadblock

4. **True**/False: The Korean military has traditionally been in a more powerful position within the government hierarchy

5. **True/**False: Regardless of size, viewership, or subscription numbers, Korean media should all be treated the same.

6. What should always be given and received with two hands?
    a. Pens
    b. Phones
    c. **Business Cards**

7. You are meeting Mr. Kim and his wife Lucy, for the first time, for lunch. How should you initially address her?
    a. Mrs. Kim
    b. Lucy
    c. Mr. Kim's Wife
    d. **You should ask how she would like to be addressed**

8. What color ink should be avoided when writing names?

   a. Red

   b. Blue

   c. Black

   d. Green

9. True/**False:** Koreans are generally very responsive to voice mail as they understand the urgency.

10. True/**False**: Koreans generally like to connect with work colleagues on social media.

Conclusion

Boeing foresees that over the next 20 years, close to 80% of its commercial sales will be outside of the U.S. Hiring numbers outside of the U.S. continue to see dramatic increases never seen before in the past. As the company continues to place high emphasis on welcoming and championing employee diversity, one of the necessary steps is to properly learn about the various cultures of the existing diversity of thought within the company. Once this diversity of thought begins to truly be embraced, the company will then be able to go from being an international company to a truly global company and will be able to maximize the strength of its employees and realize that its strongest assets is its people.

Appendix 1

Survey

Thank you for participating in this survey. The company will use survey results to assess and improve the effectiveness of the training and would appreciate your opinions and feedback. The survey should not take more than 15 minutes to complete.

Instructions: Please choose the appropriate number according to the scales listed.

The Employee Cultural Competence Training for the Republic of Korea helped with my overall understanding of South Korea.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	No Opinion	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

The Employee Cultural Competence Training for the Republic of Korea helped with my overall understanding of business in South Korea.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	No Opinion	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

During business interactions, I remembered and utilized knowledge gained from training content.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	No Opinion	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

I will remember training content for future business-related interactions.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	No Opinion	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

I would recommend this training to other employees who are visiting South Korea or have regular business interaction with South Koreans.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	No Opinion	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

I would take similar training for other countries that I visit for business in the future.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	No Opinion	Slightly Agree	Strongly Agree

(Optional)

What are other contents you suggest be included in the training? Any other suggestions for improvement?

What contents do you think should *not* be included in the training?

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