

Achieving Cross Cultural Effectiveness:

Success Strategies When Working
in MEXICO

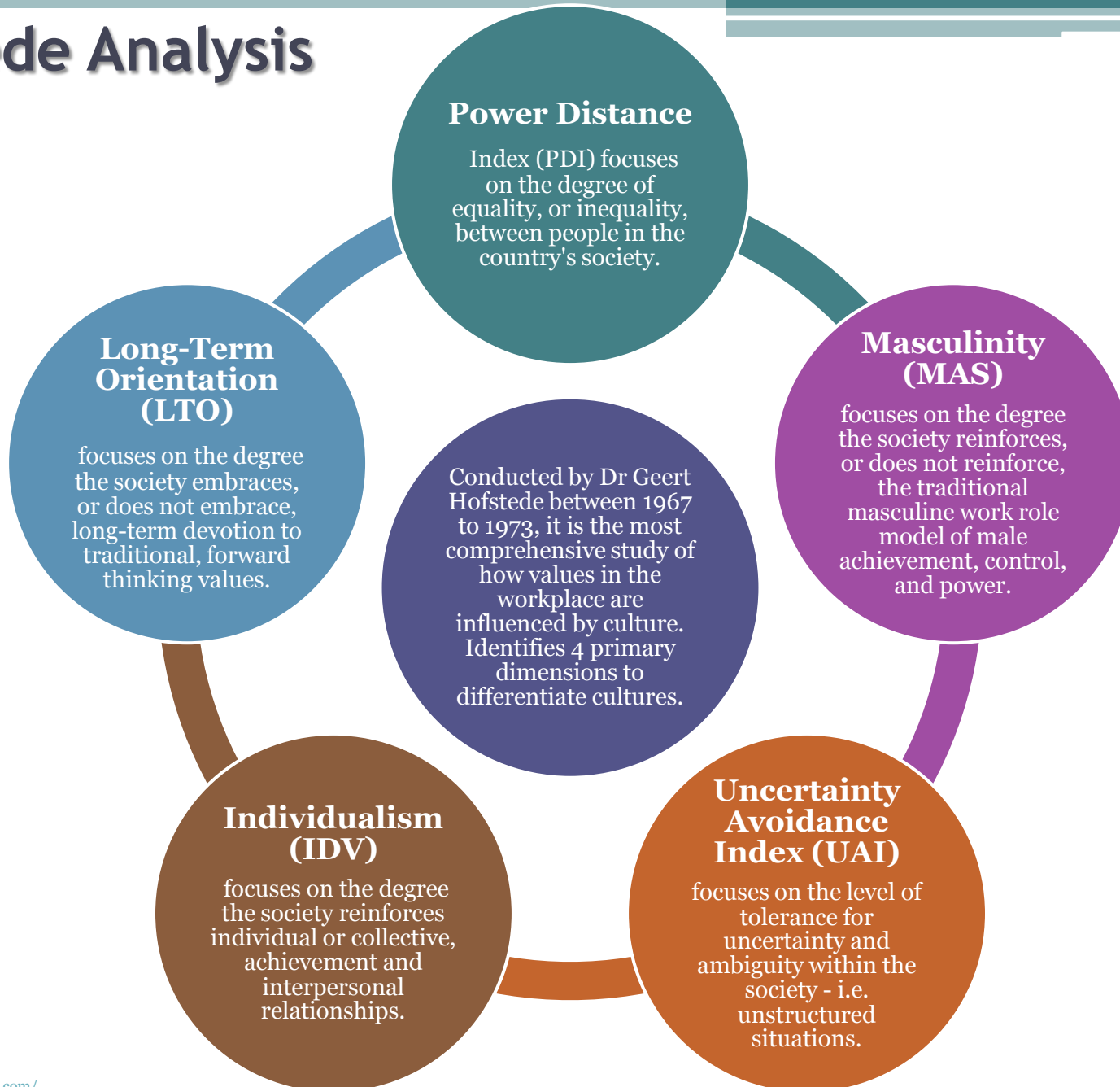
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Mexico

- Surface Area 2 Million Km² (760k mi²)
- Total Population 112 Million
 - 48% Men, 52% Female
 - 27% 15-29 yrs, 8.3% Over 60 yrs
 - 42% localized in three Metropolitan areas: Mexico City Valley(40MM, Guadalajara 4.5MM, Monterrey 4MM)
- Government
 - Federal Presidential Constitutional Republic
 - 31 free and sovereign states + 1 Federal District (Mexico City)
 - 6 yr term for Presidency and Senate and 3 yr term for Deputies (House). No re-election at any level
- Religion
 - 83% Roman Catholic
 - 10% Other Christian



Hofstede Analysis



Hofstede Analysis

Dimension	Mexico	USA	Germany
Power Distance	81	40	30
Individualism	30	91	62
Masculinity	69	62	62
Uncertainty Avoidance	82	46	60

Source
<http://www.geert-hofstede.com/>

So the questions is:
How to be successful in this
environment?

- Differentiation by rank is very important and fostered by the organizations. The higher you get the more decisions you can take. Higher level intervention is expected to close any deal
- Strong commitment and loyalty to the established “group”. Relationships are the most important factor when making a decision
- Everything needs to be controlled. Expect lots of procedures, strict rules, laws and regulations. Even in instances where it doesn't make any sense



Successful Strategies To do Business

- Patience is very important in U.S.-Mexico relations!
- Etiquette
 - Titles are important. Wait for an invitation to use first names (it will eventually come!)
 - Do NOT deal business cards or documents as if playing Texas Hold'em. No set protocol but hand off is expected
 - “Being late” is common but is less than a rule now. Let the relationship dictate what is acceptable
- Know your audience, tailor your message
 - Significant differences between Executive, Middle Management and Day to Day people across the organizations
 - If a Mexican firm's top managers are present at a meeting , they will expect the same from your firm. They will feel insulted if subordinates are sent to meet with them.
- Build relationships
 - Your biggest investment must be time. The right contact makes business easier
 - Phone numbers are important. You can expect to be jumping from assistant to assistant if you don't have a direct number
 - If you left a message probably a good idea to call back, don't expect to be called back
 - Scope for decision makers and invest time with them
 - Be a familiar face and the go to person. F2F is preferred over the phone



Successful Strategies Operations

- Establish time boundaries for deliveries
 - Avoid open ended statements. We'll deliver some time next week could mean Friday 9 pm, Monday or not until you call to remind me!
- Leave a paper trail
 - Spoken commitments are not always binding. Written correspondence can mitigate language barriers
- Check and double check references
 - Companies can get quickly in financial troubles. Loans go at double digit Interest Rate and Currency can be a factor.
 - Vast majority of business are private owned and there are no records available to the public.
- Be careful when committing, Potential vs. Promises
 - Not a practical difference between the two words "I will do my best to get it next week" can be interpreted as it will happen next week
- Look beyond the surface
 - People struggles to say NO and trend to over-commit
 - Look for a plan and expect to follow up. Things will not happen just because they are supposed to



Keep in mind also....

- The closer the relationship gets the less personal space will be. It is expected and it's part of being part of "the group"
- Mexico is sometimes remembered for its "machismo" attitude towards women, however, modern Mexico is not like this at all. The modern Mexican woman is cosmopolitan, professional, and well respected.
- If you are a woman planning to do business in Mexico, you should find that you are accepted, respected and treated very courteously and professionally.
- It's commonly said that Mexico works "Half day" meaning from 8am to 8pm. Expect calls after normal U.S. business hours if they need you
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner are still one of the favorite places to close business deals
 - Be conscious of eating times or you will starve to death. Breakfast before start of the day, lunch around 1-2pm, dinner after 8pm.



Keep in mind also....

- You can never be over-dressed in Mexico. Dark suits are still the rule in Mexico City while business casual is taking over the more industrial Monterrey-Guadalajara corridor
- Try to learn some Spanish if you are going to be doing lots of business in Mexico. Even an attempt to communicate with broken Spanish will be warmly appreciated and seen as a sign of interest and respect
- Mexicans tend to invert phrases in English. The meaning is always there, but you must listen carefully
- Be aware that their first impressions of you will count a lot. Use this time to develop the relationship and build a friendship
 - *Mexicans make friends first, and then they do business*
- In Mexico business meetings start off slowly, with the majority of time discussing general topics and waiting until the final moments to bring up the matter at hand.

