

Negotiating with "Romans" – Part 1

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IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY, MANAGERS CONSTANTLY NEGOTIATE WITH PEOPLE FROM OTHER CULTURES, WHETHER THE ISSUE IS COORDINATING OPERATIONS WITHIN A multinational firm, arranging a joint venture, or convincing a foreign government to approve construction of a plant. Yet managers have had to rely on simplistic formulas — following lists of “dos and don’ts” — or very demanding ones — “doing as the Romans do” — to deal with the cultural aspects of these negotiations. Actually, a number of strategies are available. The author presents these strategies in a framework based on the parties’ level of familiarity with each other’s cultures and the extent to which they can explicitly coordinate their strategies. These factors determine the subset of strategies that are realistically feasible for an individual manager. Part 2 of this article, which will describe a methodology for choosing among these strategies, will appear in the Spring 1994 issue. ☞

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“Smith,” an American, arrived at the French attorney’s Paris office for their first meeting. Their phone conversations had been in French, and Smith, whose experience with the language included ten years of education in the United States, a year of residence in France with a French family, and annual trips to Paris for the previous seven years, expected to use French at this meeting. “Dupont,” the Frenchman, introduced himself in French. His demeanor was poised and dignified; his language, deliberate and precise. Smith followed Dupont’s lead, and they went on to talk about a mutual acquaintance. After ten minutes, Dupont shifted the topic by inquiring about Smith’s previous work in international negotiations. One of Dupont’s words — “opérations” — surprised Smith, and he hesitated to respond. In a split second, Dupont, in fluent English, asked: “Would you like to speak in English?”¹

Smith used the approach to cross-cultural interaction most widely advocated in the West, with a history dating back to St. Augustine: “When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” It had seemed to be a reasonable way to convey cooperativeness, sensitivity to French culture, and respect for Dupont as an individual. But Smith overlooked important considerations, as have many other people who continue to recommend or follow this approach.²

The need for guidance for cross-cultural negotiators is clear. Every negotiator belongs to a group or society with its own system of knowledge about social interaction — its own “script” for behavior.³ Whether the boundaries of the group are ethnic, organizational, ideological, or national, its culture influences members’ negotiations — through their conceptualizations of the process, the ends they target, the means they use, and the expectations they hold of counterparts’ behavior. There is ample evidence that such negotiation rules and practices vary across cultures.⁴ Thus cross-cultural negotiators bring into contact unfamiliar and potentially conflicting sets of categories, rules, plans, and behaviors.

Doing as “Romans” do has not usually resolved this conflict effectively. (Throughout this article, the terms “Romans” and “non-Romans” are used as shorthand for “other-culture negotiators” and “own-culture negotiators,” respectively.) “Fitting in” requires capabilities that relatively few non-Romans possess; most cultures involve much more than greeting protocols.⁵ The approach takes for granted that Romans accept a non-Roman’s behaving like a Roman when, actually, many Romans believe in at least some limits for outsiders.⁶ Also, the approach presumes, misleadingly, that a Roman will always act Roman with a non-Roman in Rome.

Today’s challenges should motivate a cross-cultural

negotiator to search for additional approaches or strategies. An American negotiator may meet on Tuesday with a group of Japanese who speak through an interpreter and meet on Thursday one-on-one with a Japanese who is fluent in English and a long-time personal friend. In addition, geographical referents are blurring: just off of Paris's Boulevard St. Germain, an American can go to a Japanese restaurant in search of Japanese food and customs, yet find there Chinese waiters who speak Chinese to each other and French to their customers. Indeed, Americans negotiate with Japanese not only in Tokyo and Los Angeles but at third sites such as London. They may forgo face-to-face meetings to communicate by fax, E-mail, telephone, or video conference. Some of these negotiators have one day to finalize a sale; others have fourteen months to formulate a joint venture agreement. This variety of people and circumstances calls for more than one strategic approach.

What are the options for conducting negotiations in culturally sensitive ways? What should non-Roman negotiators do, especially when they lack the time and skills available to long-time expatriates?⁷ How should the non-Roman businessperson prepare to use a culturally responsive strategy for negotiation with a particular Roman individual or group in a particular set of circumstances?

This article presents a range of eight culturally responsive strategies for Americans and other groups involved in cross-cultural negotiations at home and abroad. The corresponding framework takes into account the varying capabilities of different negotiators across different circumstances and thus provides options for *every* cross-cultural negotiator. Among other benefits, it enables a negotiator to move beyond the popular, one-size-fits-all lists of "dos and don'ts" for negotiating in a particular culture to see that what is appropriate really depends on the negotiating strategy. In short, this article offers the manager a broadened, realistic view of strategies for effective cross-cultural negotiation.

Eight Culturally Responsive Strategies

Stories of cross-cultural conflict — faux pas and "blunders" — abound.⁸ They highlight feelings of anxiety, disorientation, misunderstanding, and frustration, and they tempt negotiators to try to minimize apparent behavioral differences by "matching" or "imitating" their counterparts' ways. But there are more fundamental goals for a cross-cultural negotiator.

Consider what often happens when Americans negotiate with Japanese. Viewing negotiation as a process

of exchange involving several proposal-counterproposal iterations, Americans inflate their demands in initial proposals and expect later to give and receive concessions. Their Japanese counterparts often do not promptly reciprocate with a counterproposal. Thus the Americans offer concessions, hoping that they will kick the exchange model — "the negotiations" — into gear. The Japanese, however, ask many questions. By the end of the talks, the Americans feel frustrated with the extent of their concessions and conclude that Japanese do not negotiate. Although the Americans may believe that the Japanese are shrewdly trying to determine how much their American counterparts will concede, it is quite likely that these Japanese are operating from a different model of negotiation: negotiation as a process of gathering information, which, when consistent and complete, will reveal a "correct, proper, and reasonable" solution.⁹

Research on communication suggests that the minimal, fundamental goal for non-Romans is to ensure that both sides perceive that the pattern of interaction makes sense.¹⁰ For negotiation to occur, non-Romans must at least recognize those ideas and behaviors that Romans intentionally put forward as part of the negotiation process (and Romans must do the same for non-Romans). Parties must also be able to interpret these behaviors well enough to distinguish common from conflicting positions, to detect movement from positions, and to respond in ways that maintain communication. Yet a non-Roman's own script for negotiation rarely entails the knowledge or skills to make such interpretations and responses.

Figure 1 shows the range of negotiation characteristics that may vary across cultures. The basic concept of the process, for instance, may be one of distributive bargaining, joint problem solving, debate, contingency bargaining, or nondirective discussion. Groups and organizations may select their negotiators for their knowledge, experience, personal attributes, or status. Protocol may range from informal to formal; the desired outcome may range from a contract to an implicit understanding.

A culturally responsive strategy, therefore, should be designed to align the parties' negotiating scripts or otherwise bring about a mutually coherent form of negotiator interaction. This definition does *not* assume that the course of action is entirely premeditated; it can emerge over time. But a culturally responsive strategy does involve a clear goal and does consist of means by which to attain it. Effectively implemented, such a strategy enables the negotiators to convey their respective concerns and to

respond to each other's concerns as they attempt to reach agreement.

By contrast, strategies that do not consider cultural factors are naive or misconceived. They may sometimes be successful for non-Romans, but they are hardly a reliable course of action. One such strategy is to deliberately ignore ethnic or other group-based differences and operate as if "business is business anywhere in the world." A "business is business" approach does not avoid culture; it actually represents a culture, one usually associated with U.S. businesspeople or a cosmopolitan elite. Negotiators cannot blithely assume the predominance of this particular business culture amid the multiple cultures represented in their negotiations.

The framework shown in Figure 2 organizes eight culturally responsive strategies according to the negotiator's level of familiarity with the counterpart's culture; the counterpart's familiarity with the negotiator's culture; and the possibility for explicit coordination of approaches.¹¹ For the sake of clarity, it focuses on negotiations between two parties, each belonging to one predominant culture.

"Familiarity" is a gauge of a party's current knowledge of a culture (in particular, its negotiation scripts) and ability to use that knowledge competently in social interactions.¹² Operationally, high familiarity denotes fluency in a predominant Roman language, extensive prior exposure to the culture, and a good track record in previous social interactions with Romans (which includes making correct attributions of their behavior).¹³ This is no mean accomplishment; it takes some twenty-four to thirty-six months of gradual adaptation and learning for expatriates to "master" how to behave appropriately.¹⁴ Note that negotiators can consider using the strategies feasible at their level of familiarity and any strategies corresponding to lower levels of familiarity.

The strategies in brackets in the figure are those that require coordination between parties. Although all negotiators must ultimately coordinate their approaches

with counterparts during the talks, if only tacitly, sometimes parties can explicitly address coordination and coherence issues.

Low Familiarity with Counterpart's Culture

The negotiator who has had little experience with a counterpart's culture has a choice of two culturally responsive strategies and, depending on the counterpart's familiarity with the negotiator's culture, a possible third. If the counterpart's familiarity level is low, neither party

Figure 1 Cultural Characteristics of Negotiation

General Model

1. Basic Concept of Process
Distributive bargaining / Joint problem-solving / Debate / Contingency bargaining / Nondirective discussion
2. Most Significant Type of Issue
Substantive / Relationship-based / Procedural / Personal-internal

Role of the Individual

3. Selection of Negotiators
Knowledge / Negotiating experience / Personal attributes / Status
4. Individuals' Aspirations
Individual ←————→ Community
5. Decision Making in Groups
Authoritative ←————→ Consensual

Interaction: Dispositions

6. Orientation toward Time
Monochronic ←————→ Polychronic
7. Risk-Taking Propensity
High ←————→ Low
8. Bases of Trust
External sanctions / Other's reputation / Intuition / Shared experiences

Interaction: Process

9. Concern with Protocol
Informal ←————→ Formal
10. Communication Complexity
Low ←————→ High
11. Nature of Persuasion
Direct experience / Logic / Tradition / Dogma / Emotion / Intuition

Outcome

12. Form of Agreement
Contractual ←————→ Implicit

Source: Adapted from S.E. Weiss with W. Stripp, *Negotiating with Foreign Business Persons* (New York: New York University Graduate School of Business Administration, Working Paper #85-6, 1985), p.10.

is well equipped cross-culturally; their interaction can be facilitated by changing the people involved.¹⁵ That is, the negotiator can employ an agent or adviser or involve a mediator. If the counterpart's familiarity level is high, a third strategy becomes feasible: inducing the Roman to follow the negotiating script of one's own cultural group.

• **Employ Agent or Adviser.** To augment his or her own capabilities, a business negotiator can employ cultural experts, translators, outside attorneys, financial advisers, or technical experts who have at least moderate and preferably high familiarity with both the counterpart's and the negotiator's cultures. These experts serve two distinguishable roles, as "agents" who replace the negotiator at the negotiating table or as "advisers" who provide information and recommend courses of action to the negotiator.

In 1986, a U.S. chemical company that had bartered chemicals for tobacco from Zimbabwe hired an American commodities trader in London to negotiate the sale of the tobacco and some chemicals to Egyptian officials and executives. The Egyptians were offering payment in commodities; the U.S. company sought \$20 million cash. As an agent, the American trader engaged in lengthy meetings, rounds of thick coffee, and late-night talks with the Egyptians and succeeded in arranging cash sales of the Egyptian commodities to the United Kingdom, Bangladesh, and other countries.¹⁶

The value of this strategy depends on the agent's attributes. Skilled, reputable agents can interact very effectively with a negotiator's counterpart. However, their employment may give rise to issues of increased structural complexity, trust, and ownership of the process, not to mention possible cultural tensions between principal and agent.¹⁷ Clearly decipherable by a counterpart, this strategy works well when the counterpart accepts it and the particular agent involved.

Employing an adviser involves other actions and effects.

Between 1983 and 1986, IBM prepared proposals for a personal computer plant for approval by Mexico's National Commission on Foreign Investment. The company hired Mexican attorneys, consulted local experts such as the American Chamber

of Commerce and U.S. embassy staff, and met with high-level Mexican government officials. These advisers provided information about political and social cultures and the foreign investment review process, access to influential individuals, and assessments of the leanings of key decision makers on the commission.¹⁸

A negotiator can select this strategy unilaterally and completely control its implementation. Of all eight strategies, this one is the least decipherable, sometimes even undetectable, by the counterpart. It is also uniquely incomplete in that it does not directly provide a script for negotiating. The negotiator must go on to select, with or without the adviser's assistance, a complementary strategy.

• **Involve a Mediator.** The use of go-betweens, middlemen, brokers, and other intermediaries is a common practice within many cultures and represents a potentially effective approach to cross-cultural negotiation as well. It is a joint strategy; both negotiator and counterpart rely on a mutually acceptable third party to facilitate their interaction. In its most obvious form, the strategy involves contacting a mediator prior to negotiations and deliberately bringing him or her into the talks. A mediator may also emerge, as happens when the "introducer" (*shokai-sha* in Japanese¹⁹) who first brought the negotiator to the counterpart continues to play a role or, in team-on-team negotiations, when an individual involved in the talks who does not initially have authority as a mediator, such as an interpreter, becomes a de facto mediator in the

Figure 2 Culturally Responsive Strategies and Their Feasibility

Counterpart's Familiarity with Negotiator's Culture	High	Induce Counterpart to Follow One's Own Script	Improvise an Approach [Effect Symphony]
		Adapt to the Counterpart's Script [Coordinate Adjustment of Both Parties]	
	Low	Employ Agent or Adviser [Involve Mediator]	Embrace the Counterpart's Script
	Low	Negotiator's Familiarity with Counterpart's Culture	High

Brackets indicate a joint strategy, which requires deliberate consultation with counterpart. At each level of familiarity, a negotiator can consider feasible the strategies designated at that level and any lower level.

course of the negotiation. Such cross-cultural mediators should be at least moderately and preferably highly familiar with the cultures of both parties.

In the 1950s, an American truck manufacturer negotiated a deal to sell trucks to a Saudi contractor because of the intermediation of Adnan Khashoggi. Khashoggi, the son of the personal physician of the founder of Saudi Arabia, had met the manufacturer while in college in the United States and learned about the contractor's needs upon returning to Saudi Arabia. This was his first "deal," long before his involvement with Lockheed and Northrop. By the 1970s, each of his private jets reportedly contained two wardrobes: "one of three-piece suits, shirts, and ties; . . . the other of white cotton thobes [and] head-dresses, . . . the full traditional Arabian regalia."²⁰

With this strategy, a negotiator faces some uncertainty about the negotiation process: Will the mediator use one side's negotiation script at the expense of the other's? If the mediator is from a third culture, will he or she use that culture's ways — or introduce something else?²¹ In relying on a mediator, the negotiator relinquishes some control of the negotiation. Then again, the mediator can educate the negotiator about the counterpart's culture and bring out ideas and behavior from each side that make the interaction coherent. It is important to find an individual who is not only appropriately skilled but who will also maintain the respect and trust of both parties.²²

• **Induce the Counterpart to Follow One's Own Script.** Deliberately inducing the counterpart to negotiate according to the model common in one's own culture is feasible when the counterpart is highly familiar with one's culture. Possibilities for inducement range from verbal persuasion to simply acting as if the counterpart will "come along" — as happens when Americans speak English to non-American counterparts known to speak English as a second language.

When U.S.-based ITT and CGE of France conducted merger talks in the mid-1980s, negotiators used "an American business — American M&A [merger and acquisition]" approach, according to French participants. The French went along with it (despite their unfavorable impressions that it consisted of a "vague" general concept of the deal, emphasis on speed, and formulation of long contracts), because only U.S. law and investment firms had the capacity to carry out this highly complex negotiation. Although

their motivations are not exactly known, ITT lawyers have stated that their chief negotiator followed their own methodical style, one developed within ITT.²³

The pros and cons of this strategy hinge on the counterpart's perception of the negotiator's motivations for pursuing it. The counterpart may conclude that the negotiator is naive or deliberately ignorant of cultural differences; arrogant; culturally proud but not antagonistic; or merely using an expedient strategy.²⁴ It is reported that IBM's Thomas Watson, Sr., once said: "It's easier to teach IBM to a Netherlander than to teach Holland to an American."²⁵ Using one's own ways could also be the result of mistakenly concluding that the two parties share one culture (e.g., Americans and English-speaking Canadians).

For this strategy to work most effectively, the negotiator should convey that it is not based on a lack of respect for the counterpart or for the counterpart's culture. It is the counterpart, after all, who is being called on to make an extra effort; even with a high level of familiarity with the negotiator's culture, a counterpart usually feels more skilled and at ease with his or her own ways. (Were the counterpart to *offer* to follow the negotiator's script, we would be talking about an embrace strategy by the counterpart, which is described below.)

Moderate Familiarity with Counterpart's Culture

The negotiator who already has had some successful experience with a counterpart's culture gains two more strategic options, provided that the counterpart is at least moderately familiar with the negotiator's culture. The unilateral strategy is to adapt one's usual approach to the counterpart's. The joint version is to coordinate adjustment between the two cultures.

• **Adapt to the Counterpart's Script.** Negotiators often modify their customary behavior by not expressing it to its usual degree, omitting some actions altogether, and following some of the counterpart's ways. The adapt strategy refers to more than this behavior, however; it refers to a broad course of action usually prompted by a deliberate decision to make these modifications.²⁶

*In the early 1980s, American negotiators in the Toyota-Ford and GM-Toyota talks over car assembly joint ventures prepared by reading books such as James Clavell's *Shogun* and Edwin Reischauer's *The Japanese*, watching classic Japanese films (e.g., "Kagemusha"), and frequenting Japanese restaurants. Then they modified their usual negotiating behavior*

by: (1) paying extra attention to comportment and protocol, (2) reducing their expectations about substantive progress in the first few meetings, (3) providing Japanese counterparts with extensive, upfront information about their company and the U.S. business environment, and (4) trying "not to change positions too much once they had been voiced."²⁷

A major challenge for the negotiator considering this strategy is to decide which aspects of his or her customary negotiating script to alter or set aside. The aspects most seriously in conflict with the counterpart's may not be easily changed or even readily apparent, and those most obviously in conflict or easily changed may not, once changed, markedly enhance the interaction. Marketing specialists have distinguished between customs to which non-Romans must conform, those to which non-Romans may but need not conform, and those from which non-Romans are excluded.²⁸ Although a marketing specialist has a fixed, one-sided target in seeking entry into the counterpart's arena, these distinctions may also guide some of the cross-cultural negotiator's deliberations.

A counterpart usually notices at least some evidence of a negotiator's use of the adapt strategy. Deciphering all of the modifications is difficult. It may also be difficult for a counterpart to distinguish an adapt strategy from a badly implemented embrace strategy (described below). Further, if both the negotiator and the counterpart pursue this strategy on their own initiative, their modifications may confuse rather than smooth the interaction. Still, a negotiator can independently make the choice to adapt and usually finds at least some areas within his or her capacity to do so.

• **Coordinate Adjustment of Both Parties.** The parties may develop, subtly or overtly, a joint approach for their discussions; they may negotiate the process of negotiation. The jointly developed script is usually a blend of elements from the two parties' cultures; it is not totally distinct from them yet not wholly of one or the other. It may take various forms.

At the outset of a 1988 meeting to discuss the telecommunications policies of France's Ministry of Industry and Tourism, the minister's chief of staff and his American visitor each voiced concern about speaking in the other's native language. They expressed confidence in their listening capabilities and lacked immediate access to an interpreter, so they agreed to proceed by each speaking in his own language. Their discussion went on for an hour that way, the American

speaking in English to the Frenchman, and the Frenchman speaking in French to the American.

In a special case of this strategy, the parties "bypass" their respective home cultures' practices to follow the negotiating script of an already existing, third culture with which both have at least moderate familiarity. The parties know enough about the other's culture to recognize the limits of their capabilities in it and the desirability of additional guidance for their interaction.

Negotiations over MCA's acquisition by Matsushita Electric Industrial Company in 1990 were conducted largely via interpreters. At one dinner, MCA's senior American investment banker and Matsushita's Japanese head of international affairs were stymied in their effort to communicate with each other until they discovered their fluency in the same second language. They conversed in French for the rest of the evening.²⁹

Professional societies, trade groups, educational programs and institutions, and various other associations can similarly provide members with third scripts for conduct. This phenomenon is dramatically illustrated, within and between teams, when people who do not share a language play volleyball or soccer socially. The sport provides a script for behavior.

Overall, this strategy has the benefits of the adapt strategy while minimizing the likelihood of incompatible "adjustments." For some Roman counterparts (e.g., Arabs and Chinese), verbally explicit implementation of this strategy for interaction will be awkward — even unacceptable.³⁰ Other groups' members will appreciate its decipherability and the shared burden of effort that it implies. Since both parties must go along with it, the negotiator's opportunity to "veto" also preserves some control over its implementation.

High Familiarity with Counterpart's Culture

Finally, the negotiator highly familiar with a counterpart's culture can realistically contemplate, not only the five aforementioned strategies, but at least one and possibly two more. If the counterpart is not familiar with the negotiator's culture, the negotiator can unilaterally embrace the other's negotiating script (i.e., "do as the Romans do"). If both parties are highly familiar with each other's cultures, they can jointly or unilaterally search for or formulate a negotiating script that focuses more on the individuals and circumstances involved than on the broader cultures. Such strategies may radically change the process.

• **Embrace the Counterpart's Script.** The embrace strategy calls for the negotiator to use the negotiation approach typical of the counterpart's culture.

In the 1970s, Coca-Cola undertook negotiations with a state-run, foreign trade organization in the People's Republic of China in order to produce and sell cola drinks there. The company sent one of its research chemists, a China-born man with no business background, to Cambridge University to study Chinese language and culture studies for a full year. Later acclaimed to be highly knowledgeable about China, this chemist was the most active negotiator for Coca-Cola in what became a ten-year endeavor.³¹

Relatively few individuals should attempt this strategy. It demands a great deal of the negotiator, especially when the cultures involved differ greatly. In general, it requires bilingual, bicultural individuals — those who have generally enjoyed long-term overseas residence.

When implemented well, especially when very different cultures are involved, this strategy is clearly decipherable by a counterpart. (When it is not, a counterpart may confuse it with an adapt strategy.) Furthermore, the embrace strategy can make the interaction relatively easy and comfortable for the counterpart. The strategy requires considerable effort by the negotiator, and its implementation remains largely — but not completely — within the negotiator's control.

• **Improvise an Approach.** To improvise is to create a negotiation script as one negotiates, focusing foremost on the counterpart's particular attributes and capabilities and on the circumstances. Although all negotiators should pay some attention to the Roman counterpart as an individual, not all can or should improvise. The term is used here as it is used in music, not in the colloquial sense of "winging it" or of anyone being able to do it. Musical improvisation requires some preconception or point of departure and a model (e.g., a melody, basic chord structure) that sets the scope for performance. Similarly, the negotiator who improvises knows the parties' home cultures and is fully prepared for their influence but can put them in the background or highlight them as negotiation proceeds.

In the early 1990s, Northern Telecom, a Canadian-owned telecommunications equipment supplier with many Americans in its executive ranks and headquarters in both Mississauga, Ontario, and McLean, Virginia, maintained a "dual identity." Its personnel dealt with each other on either an American or a Can-

adian basis. On the outside, the company played up its Canadian identity with some governments (those unenthusiastic about big American firms, or perhaps not highly familiar with American ways), and played up its American identity with others.³²

This strategy is feasible only when both parties are highly familiar with the other's culture. Without that level of familiarity, the negotiator would not know what the counterpart is accustomed to or how he or she is affected, and would not be able to invoke or create ways to relate to the counterpart effectively; nor would the counterpart recognize or respond to these efforts appropriately. At the same time, since the counterpart is highly skilled in at least two cultures and may introduce practices from both or either one of them, it is extremely important to consider the counterpart as an individual, not just as a member of a culture. High familiarity enables the negotiator to do just that, because he or she does not need to devote as much effort to learning about the counterpart's culture as other negotiators do.

During the Camp David "peace" talks between Egypt, Israel, and the United States in the late 1970s, then President Jimmy Carter set up a one-on-one meeting with Prime Minister Menachem Begin to try to break an impasse. Carter took along photos of Begin's eight grandchildren, on the backs of which he had handwritten their names. Showing these photos to Begin led the two leaders into talking about their families and personal expectations and revitalized the intergovernmental negotiations.³³

This strategy is often used at high levels, especially at critical junctures, but it need not be limited to that. It can counteract the treatment of a counterpart as an abstraction (e.g., stereotype) and can facilitate the development of empathy. It also seems particularly efficacious with counterparts from cultures that emphasize affective, relationship factors over task accomplishment and creativity or presence over convention.

On the down side, the cultural responsiveness of the improvise strategy is not always decipherable by the counterpart. When a top-level negotiator is involved, the counterpart may assume that the negotiator's strategy is to appeal to status or authority rather than to recognize cultural issues. If the strategy overly "personalizes" negotiation, its implementation can lead to the kinds of problems once pointed out in former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's "personal diplomacy": becoming too emotionally involved, failing to delegate,

Table 1 Recommended Behavior for Americans Negotiating with the Japanese*
(by type of culturally responsive strategy)

Employ

- Use "introducer" for initial contacts (e.g., general trading company).
- Employ an agent the counterpart knows and respects.
- Ensure that the agent/adviser speaks fluent Japanese.

Induce

- Be open to social interaction and communicate directly.
- Make an extreme initial proposal, expecting to make concessions later.
- Work efficiently to "get the job done."

Adapt

- Follow some Japanese protocol (reserved behavior, name cards, gifts).
- Provide a lot of information (by American standards) up front to influence the counterpart's decision making early.
- Slow down your usual timetable.
- Make informed interpretations (e.g., the meaning of "it is difficult").
- Present positions later in the process, more firmly and more consistently.

Embrace

- Proceed according to an information-gathering, *nemawashi* (not exchange) model.
- "Know your stuff" cold.
- Assemble a team (group) for formal negotiations.
- Speak in Japanese.
- Develop personal relationships; respond to obligations within them.

Improvise

- Do homework on the individual counterpart(s) and circumstances.
- Be attentive and nimble (improvising entails different behaviors for different Japanese).
- Invite the counterpart to participate in mutually enjoyed activities or interests. (e.g., golf).

*These are examples, not a complete listing, of attitudes and behaviors implied by a negotiator's use of each strategy.

undercutting the status of other possible representatives, and ignoring those one does not meet or know.³⁴ The strategy may not be appropriate for all cultures and may be difficult to orchestrate by a team of negotiators. It also offers fewer concrete prescriptions for action and greater uncertainty than the four other unilateral strategies. Nevertheless, its malleability should continue to be regarded as a major attribute.

• **Effect Symphony.** This strategy represents an effort by the negotiator to get both parties to transcend exclusive use of either home culture by exploiting their high familiarity capabilities. They may improvise an approach, create and use a new script, or follow some

other approach not typical of their home cultures. One form of coordination feasible at this level of familiarity draws on both home cultures.

For their negotiations over construction of the tunnel under the English Channel, British and French representatives agreed to partition talks and alternate the site between Paris and London. At each site, the negotiators were to use established, local ways, including the language. The two approaches were thus clearly punctuated by time and space. Although each side was able to use its customary approach some of the time, it used the script of the other culture the rest of the time.³⁵

Effecting symphony differs from coordinating adjustment, which implies some modification of a culture's script, in that both cultures' scripts may be used in their entirety. It is also one resolution of a situation where both parties start out independently pursuing induce or embrace strategies. Perhaps the most common form of effecting symphony is using a third culture, such as a negotiator subculture.

Many United Nations ambassadors, who tend to be multilingual and world-traveled, interact more comfortably with each other than with their compatriots.³⁶ Similarly, a distinct culture can be observed in the café and recreation area at INSEAD, the European Institute of Business Administration, which attracts students from thirty countries for ten intensive months.

Overall, the effect symphony strategy allows parties to draw on special capabilities that may be accessible only by going outside the full-time use of their home cultures'

conventions. Venturing into these uncharted areas introduces some risk. Furthermore, this strategy, like other joint strategies, requires the counterpart's cooperation; it cannot be unilaterally effected. But then, as former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Edwin Reischauer suggested about diplomatic protocol, a jointly established culture — the “score” of a symphony — makes behavior predictable.³⁷ It can also make it comprehensible and coherent.

Implications

A cross-cultural negotiator is thus not limited to doing as the Romans do or even doing it “our way” or “their way.” There are eight culturally responsive strategies. They differ in their degree of reliance on existing scripts and conventions, in the amount of extra effort required of each party, and in their decipherability by the counterpart. As a range of options, these strategies offer the negotiator flexibility and a greater opportunity to act effectively.

Because the strategies entail different scripts and approaches, they also allow the negotiator to move beyond the simplistic lists of behavioral tips favored to date in American writings. For example, an American working with Japanese counterparts is usually advised to behave in a reserved manner, learn some Japanese words, and exercise patience.³⁸ Such behavior applies primarily to an adapt strategy, however, and different strategies call for different concepts and behaviors. Table 1 gives some examples of how an American might behave with Japanese counterparts, depending on the unilateral strategy employed.

Similarly, for his meeting with Dupont in Paris, Smith could have considered strategies other than “embrace” and its associated script. An adapt strategy may not have necessitated speaking exclusively in French. Table 2 suggests some ways he might have behaved, given each unilateral strategy. Smith might also have

Table 2 Recommended Behavior for Americans Negotiating with the French*
(by type of culturally responsive strategy)

Employ

- Employ an agent well-connected in business and government circles.
- Ensure that the agent/adviser speaks fluent French.

Induce

- Be open to social interaction and communicate directly.
- Make an extreme initial proposal, expecting to make concessions later.
- Work efficiently to “get the job done.”

Adapt

- Follow some French protocol (greetings and leave-takings, formal speech).
- Demonstrate an awareness of French culture and business environment.
- Be consistent between actual and stated goals and between attitudes and behavior.
- Defend views vigorously.

Embrace

- Approach negotiation as a debate involving reasoned argument.
- Know the subject of negotiation *and* broad environmental issues (economic, political, social).
- Make intellectually elegant, persuasive yet creative presentations (logically sound, verbally precise).
- Speak in French.
- Show interest in the counterpart as an individual but remain aware of the strictures of social and organizational hierarchies.

Improvise

- Do homework on the individual counterpart(s) and circumstances.
- Be attentive and nimble (improvising entails different behaviors for different French individuals).
- Invite counterpart to participate in mutually enjoyed activities or interests (e.g., dining out, tennis).

*These are examples, not a complete listing, of attitudes and behaviors implied by a negotiator's use of each strategy.

contemplated using strategies in combination (e.g., “adapt,” then “embrace”), especially if meetings had been scheduled to take place over a number of months.

At the same time, only the negotiator highly familiar with the counterpart's culture can realistically consider using all eight strategies. The value of high familiarity, as a current capability or as an aspiration to achieve, should be clear. The value of the cultural focus should also be clear, notwithstanding the importance of also focusing on the individual counterpart (Part 2 of this article will expand on this point). Culture provides a broad context for understanding the ideas and behavior of new counterparts as well as established acquaintances. It also en-

ables the negotiator to notice commonalities in the expectations and behavior of individual members of a team of counterparts, to appreciate how the team works as a whole, and to anticipate what representatives and constituents will do when they meet away from the cross-cultural negotiation. As long as the negotiator intends to go on negotiating with other Romans, it behooves him or her to pay attention to commonalities across negotiation experiences with individual Romans — to focus on cultural aspects — in order to draw lessons that enhance effectiveness in future negotiations.

As presented here, the eight culturally responsive negotiation strategies reflect one perspective: feasibility in light of the negotiator's and counterpart's familiarity with each other's cultures. That is a major basis for selecting a strategy, but it is not sufficient. This framework maps what is doable; it should not be interpreted as recommending that the best strategies for every negotiation are those at the highest levels of familiarity — that improvising is always better than employing advisers. The best strategy depends on additional factors that will be discussed in Part 2. In its own right, the framework represents a marked shift from prevailing wisdom and a good point of departure for today's cross-cultural negotiators. ♦

References

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1. All examples that are not referenced come from personal communication or the author's experiences.
2. Contemporary academic advocates of this approach for negotiators include:
S.T. Cavusgil and P.N. Ghauri, *Doing Business in Developing Countries* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 123-124;
J.L. Graham and R.A. Herberger, Jr., "Negotiators Abroad — Don't Shoot from the Hip," *Harvard Business Review*, July-August 1983, p. 166; and
F. Posses, *The Art of International Negotiation* (London: Business Books, 1978), p. 27.
3. The concept of a script has been applied by:
W.B. Gudykunst and S. Ting-Toomey, *Culture and Interpersonal Communication* (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1988), p. 30.
4. See, for example, N.C.G. Campbell et al., "Marketing Negotiations

- in France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States," *Journal of Marketing* 52 (1988): 49-62; and
J.L. Graham et al., "Buyer-Seller Negotiations around the Pacific Rim: Differences in Fundamental Exchange Processes," *Journal of Consumer Research* 15 (1988): 48-54.
- For evidence from diplomacy, see:
R. Cohen, *Negotiating across Cultures* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1991); and
G. Fisher, *International Negotiation: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1980).
5. See J.L. Graham and N.J. Adler, "Cross-Cultural Interaction: The International Comparison Fallacy," *Journal of International Business Studies* 20 (1989): 515-537. The authors conclude that their subjects adapted to some extent, but a lack of adaptability could also be convincingly argued from their data.
 6. For an experimental study showing that moderate adaptation by Asians in the United States was more effective than substantial adaptation, see:
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 7. The majority of leaders of North American firms still lack any expatriate experience and foreign language ability, according to:
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 9. M. Blaker, *Japanese International Negotiating Style* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), p. 50.
 10. See V.E. Cronen and R. Shuter, "Forming Intercultural Bonds," *Intercultural Communication Theory: Current Perspectives*, ed. W.B. Gudykunst (Beverly Hills, California: Sage, 1983), p. 99. Their concept of "coherence" neither presumes that the interactants make the same sense of the interaction nor depends always on mutual understanding.
 11. Although similar in form, this plot differs in theme from the "model of conflict-handling responses" developed by:
K.W. Thomas and R.H. Kilmann, *Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument* (Tuxedo, New York: Xicom, Inc., 1974).
- It also differs in key variables from the "Dual Concerns" model of:
D.G. Pruitt and J.Z. Rubin, *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement* (New York: Random House, 1986), p. 35ff.
- Moreover, neither of these models appears to have yet been applied cross-culturally.
12. This notion of familiarity draws on Dell Hymes's concept of communicative competence. See:
R.E. Cooley and D.A. Roach, "A Conceptual Framework," *Competence in Communication*, ed. R.N. Bostrom (Beverly Hills, California: Sage, 1984), pp. 11-32.
 13. See, for example, R.W. Brislin et al., *Intercultural Interactions* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage, 1986);
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16. S. Lohr, "Barter Is His Stock in Trade," *New York Times Business World*, 25 September 1988, pp. 32-36.
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18. S.E. Weiss, "The Long Path to the IBM-Mexico Agreement: An Analysis of the Microcomputer Investment Negotiations, 1983-1986," *Journal of International Business Studies* 21 (1990): 565-596.
19. J.L. Graham and Y. Sano, *Smart Bargaining: Doing Business with the Japanese* (New York: Ballinger, 1989), p. 30.
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