



# Cross-Cultural Teamwork Video

## Self-Study Guide for Skilled Immigrants

Developed by:

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**TRIEC**

Toronto Region Immigrant  
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Citizenship and  
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Citoyenneté et  
Immigration Canada



**Ontario**

Ontario receives support for  
some skills training programs  
from the Government of Canada

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## About TRIEC

TRIEC creates and champions solutions to better integrate skilled immigrants in the Greater Toronto Region labour market. We work in partnership with employers and with partner agencies that deliver employment-support services to skilled immigrants.

### Introduction

Cross-Cultural Teamwork is a training video developed by TRIEC. It uses a storytelling approach to illustrate how cultural differences can affect the way in which teams function in a Canadian workplace. The video highlights challenges that may arise in cross-cultural teams and suggests strategies for avoiding or overcoming such challenges.

Cross-Cultural Teamwork follows the experience of Nazneen and Victor, two skilled immigrants recently employed at CQR Logistics. The CEO of CQR Logistics, Peter Thompson, is committed to building a diverse workforce, which he believes will give the company an advantage in global marketing.

The video and facilitation guide were originally designed for Human Resources (HR) professionals, trainers, diversity consultants and immigrant-serving agencies who work with employers. These people all play a role in increasing the awareness of issues related to integrating and developing skilled immigrant talent within the Canadian workforce. Cross-Cultural Teamwork is also an important resource for skilled immigrants like you who are employed and/or looking for work. It provides valuable background information on workplace communication and culture that will help you keep your job.

You can use this self-study guide to learn about the topics covered in the video. It provides an overview of each video episode, identifies key learning objectives, and offers optional activities for you to reinforce your learning.

The video and guide consist of a brief introduction and four episodes:

**Episode 1:** Pre-meeting “Small Talk”

**Episode 2:** Accommodating Religious Diversity

**Episode 3:** Delegating Roles and Managing Communication Barriers

**Episode 4:** Facilitating Contributions to Team Discussions

### How to Use the Video and Self-Study Guide

The Cross-Cultural Teamwork video and self-study guide will provide you with valuable information on how to communicate effectively within a business context and contribute productively to a team.

Consider registering with TRIEC and downloading the video instead of viewing it online. In this way, you will be able to view the episodes without interruption.

In each of Episodes 1 to 4, you will first see a brief scene. After the scene, the characters most affected by the interactions become “talking heads”; each person describes his or her own feelings about what has happened. You will then see a number of written questions, after which the scene is replayed using more effective communication techniques. You may choose to skip the written questions on the screen and refer to the ones in this guide instead.

As you watch each scene, consider the characters' body language, English proficiency, and manner toward the others. Also look for behaviours or feelings that could be the result of cultural differences or expectations.

You will benefit from this video most if you:

- first watch just the scene or part of the scene indicated in the study guide
- consider the questions about the scene that are listed in the study guide
- watch the “talking heads”
- view the “Preferred Practice” segment of each episode
- replay segments that are most interesting to you
- talk about the video with a friend or family member
- do at least some of the optional activities included in this guide
- consult the resources to further your learning
- seek employment-support services as you need them
- are open to seeing things from a different point of view

Set aside some uninterrupted time to view the video and read the sections of this guide related to each scene. We have included questions and notes to help guide your thinking about what you have seen. The activities included here are optional. You will know how much time and effort you have to dedicate to this video. The more you put into your learning, the more you will get out of it! Come back to the video a few months from now and watch it again. As your employment situation changes, different parts of the video may hold more meaning than before.

### Cast of Characters

**Nazneen Khan** began to work as a Project Coordinator for CQR Logistics a month ago. Although this is her first job in Canada, she was a Project Manager in Pakistan and is sure she is “more than qualified” to make a strong contribution to the team.

**Victor Xiaozhi** has also been with CQR Logistics for one month. He is a Software Developer. An avid golfer, Victor has not played the game since coming to Canada. Although Victor feels that his English is good, he often finds that he has difficulty keeping up during business meetings when people are using jargon or speaking quickly.

**Carol Scott**, Program Manager and Team Leader, has worked at CQR Logistics for 10 years. She often seems pressed for time and is sometimes taken aback by Nazneen's and Victor's responses. She is quick to make assumptions and is unsure about the competence of the two “new hires” and their ability to make a positive contribution to the performance of the team.

**Rob Goldstein** holds the title of Project Manager and Team Leader. He has been working at CQR Logistics for five years. He has never worked with employees from outside Canada before and is having difficulty understanding Victor's accent. Rob is hoping to be promoted to Team Manager within the next year.

**Adeola Bankole** was recently promoted to the position of Communications Coordinator at CQR Logistics, where she has worked for seven years. She is excited – and nervous – about the challenges of her new job.

## Scene-by-Scene

NOTE: Each Episode in Cross Cultural Teamwork contains a scene and then a “preferred practice.” The preferred practice is a repeat of the original scene with a few changes, outlining a different, preferred approach.

### Introduction

This episode introduces the business context for the episodes that follow and the five members of the new team.

### EPISODE 1: Pre-Meeting “Small Talk”

One month ago, Nazneen Khan and Victor Xiaozhi began their new jobs at CQR Logistics, a medium-sized global company specializing in logistics software and support. The company is now launching a media campaign to introduce its new logistics software for small businesses. The CEO of CQR, Peter Thompson, believes that building a diverse workforce will give the company an advantage in the global market.

Nazneen and Victor have been asked to join Carol, the Team Leader, Rob and Adeola on a team that will identify strategies for improving the company’s global perspective.

In this episode, we see Nazneen and Victor at their first meeting with the team.

#### Key Issues

- Small talk is very common in the workplace. People have to work together, and they use small talk as a way of connecting with each other.
- The more comfortable you are at mirroring others’ body language, making eye contact and engaging in “pleasantries,” the more confident your co-workers will be that you “fit in.”

### Scene 1: Pre-Meeting “Small Talk”

#### Description

Nazneen and Victor are seated together in the meeting room, awaiting the arrival of the other team members. Carol and Rob enter in mid-conversation discussing such topics as their weekends, golf, family, etc. Carol says “Hi” in the direction of Nazneen and Victor and continues her conversation with Rob and Adeola. When Rob offers baseball tickets to Carol and Adeola (neither of whom can use them), Nazneen says she would love to take her daughter to see her first baseball game.

#### Reflection

“Talk at work is not confined to talk about work.” Is this true for your culture? If not, how could differing cultural practices around communicating in the workplace result in confusion, misunderstanding or frustration?

What is small talk? What do we talk about when we’re “making small talk”? When do we make small talk?

- Pleasantries or small talk among participants is a common and expected ‘ice breaker’ *before the start of and at the end of meetings*. Most Canadians use these few minutes to network with and get to know others in the organization.
- Small talk allows colleagues to get to know each other better, find areas of common interest or experience and interact more easily.

### Questions

- How are Nazneen and Victor feeling as they wait for the others to join the meeting? How do you know?
- What messages do you think Carol, Rob and Adeola are communicating through their body language?
- Is this group off to a good start? Why or why not?
- The expanse of table between the new hires and the other team members illustrates a cultural divide. How can the team bridge that divide?
- Victor keeps looking at his watch. Why?
- Why was Rob surprised when Nazneen said she would like to take the baseball tickets he had offered?
- As team leader, how could Carol have started the meeting differently so that all the team members felt included in the pre-meeting small talk?

### Tips and Tasks

- Join your co-workers for coffee or lunch. Listen to what they talk about with each other.
- Read about small talk. Why is it an important part of workplace communications?
- Learn about cultural differences in body language by taking a course in workplace communication or by consulting some of the resources listed here. You can also ask people you know who come from other cultures.
- Be open to conversation with others; make eye contact and show that you are following – and interested in - what the other person is saying.
- Ask questions, listen carefully to the responses and try to keep the conversation going.

### *Scene 2: Beginning the Meeting*

#### Description

As Victor looks once more at his watch, Carol begins the business part of the meeting by explaining that the CEO has formed the team so that the company can reach more of a global market. She then introduces Rob and Adeola by their first names only and mentions that Nazneen and Victor are their “new hires.” When she says that Victor will be working with Rob on the first part of the project, Victor interrupts to ask if Carol will be arranging a meeting at which they can all learn each other’s roles.

### Questions

- Why did Victor request an additional team meeting?
- What could Carol have done so that Victor would not have felt the need for a special team meeting?
- How do you think Nazneen and Victor were feeling at this point? Why?
- How do you think the other three team members were feeling? Why?
- If you were in a meeting that got off to a bad start, how could you help change the dynamics of the meeting?

### Tips and Tasks

- In an ideal meeting, you can expect the following:
  - everyone at the meeting is introduced or introduces themselves so that you know their names and roles the purpose of the meeting has been clearly explained
  - everyone knows and follows the “ground rules” for conducting the meeting
  - all team members feel equally valued
  - everyone contributes comfortably and confidently in the discussion

- Meetings are called for a reason, usually centered on action, decision-making, or information updating.
- Many newcomers are surprised or confused by the lack of meeting protocol or lack of formality found during meetings in some business sectors. Texting and using a Blackberry during meetings or ignoring the senior manager at the meeting is common at some organizations, but considered rude at others.
- Each company will have its own business meeting style, depending on the type, size and sector, and it is a new employee's responsibility to learn the "meeting culture" of the new company quickly.
- Practice introducing yourself to individuals and groups, either at work or in your community.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to participate in group discussions; practise listening and following what people are saying

### **Scene 3: "Talking Heads"**

#### **Description**

Carol, Rob and Adeola describe their impressions of their new colleagues and their concerns about the effectiveness of the team.

#### **Questions**

- How is Carol feeling? Why?
- What are Carol's concerns? Why?
- What are Rob's concerns? Why?
- Adeola realizes the team is going to have make some changes. What are they?

### **Scene 4: Preferred Practice**

#### **Description**

In this scene, Carol asks the new team members if they watched the Canadian Open on the weekend. This leads to inclusive small talk and more conversation.

Carol identifies the challenge of working with diversity, suggests ground rules for communication and asks each team member to introduce themselves fully.

#### **Questions**

- How did Carol make sure that Nazneen and Victor were able to participate in the small talk exchanges?
- What did the long-term employees learn about the "new hires"?
- Is this team off to a good start? Why or why not?

#### **Tips and Tasks**

- Making small talk is a common part of workplace communications.
- The meeting agenda should offer everybody a chance to introduce themselves and to understand everyone's role.

## EPISODE 2: Accommodating Religious Diversity

In this episode, the team is meeting over lunch. They are surprised that Nazneen will not be eating because she is fasting for Ramadan. The first order of business is to set a date on which they can all meet to report on their deliverables. Because Carol will be out of town for a week, Adeola will be off for Thanksgiving and Rob will be away for Yom Kippur, the only possible date is October 2. Nazneen apologizes and explains that, since Eid will fall on either October 1 or 2 (and she will not know which until the night before), she may not be able to attend the meeting.

### Scene 1: Accommodating Religious Diversity

#### Description

Carol is confused when Nazneen reminds her that she had previously spoken to her about Eid. Nazneen is assertive and patient as she explains why she can't be certain of the date on which Eid, which is noted on the workplace diversity calendar, will fall. Carol responds that Nazneen may therefore have to miss the status update meeting; if so, she will have to submit her report by email instead.

#### Questions

- How does Carol react when Nazneen mentions that she may have to take May 2nd off?
- Why did Carol accept Adeola's and Rob's holiday plans but question Nazneen's?
- What do you think of the way Carol handled Nazneen's request for a rescheduling of the meeting?
- What message is Carol sending to Nazneen in this interaction?
- How do you think Nazneen feels at the end of this scene? Why?

#### Tips and Tasks

- You are responsible for knowing your company's policies about religious accommodation.
- When requesting religious accommodation, you are responsible for following company procedures.
- You are responsible for understanding and asserting your human rights and responsibilities.
- Sometimes it is necessary to compromise when negotiating meeting times.
- Look into your organization's policy on cultural and religious diversity.
- Identify ways in which your organization puts those policies into practice.

#### Notes

Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, discrimination because of religion (creed) is against the law. Everyone should have access to the same opportunities and benefits, and be treated with equal dignity and respect, regardless of their religion.

Religion includes the practices, beliefs and observances that are part of a faith or religion. It does not include personal moral, ethical or political views. Nor does it include religions that promote violence or hate towards others, or that violate criminal law.

### Scene 2: "Talking Heads"

#### Description

Nazneen's fasting seems to set off warning bells for Carol, who wonders if not eating will affect Nazneen's - and the team's - performance. When Nazneen asks if the meeting can be rescheduled, Carol questions whether she needs to be "more of a team player." In turn, Nazneen thinks that CQR, a company that brands itself as a diverse organization, should ensure that its managers know how to accommodate employees' religious needs.

## Questions

- What concerns did Nazneen’s religious observances raise in Carol’s mind?
- What is an employer’s responsibility to accommodate religious observances and/or practices? What would be considered as going beyond reasonable accommodation?
- Carol wonders if Nazneen’s request is “beyond reasonable accommodation.”
  - The Ontario *Human Rights Code* states:
    - Where a rule conflicts with religious requirements, there is a duty to ensure that individuals are able to observe their religion, unless this would cause undue hardship because of cost, or health and safety reasons. Unlawful discrimination because of religion can include:
      - Refusing to make an exception to dress codes to recognize religious dress requirements;
      - Refusing to allow individuals to observe periods of prayer at particular times during the day;
      - Refusing to permit individuals to take time off to observe a religious holiday.
      - A measure of accommodation may be acceptable if it meets the needs of the person, to the greatest extent possible, short of undue hardship, and if it respects the dignity of the person requiring the accommodation.
    - Had Nazneen carried out her full responsibilities to her employer in requesting time off?

## Tips and Tasks

- Find out if your organization has a policy on religious accommodation. If so, how is that policy communicated to employees, particularly new hires, in terms of how and when to submit a request for a religious holiday?

## Scene 3: Preferred Practice

### Description

When Nazneen explains that she is fasting, Carol asks if she minds the others eating in front of her. She then asks what the fasting is tied in with, allowing Nazneen to give a fuller explanation of Ramadan and Eid. When Nazneen apologizes that she may not be able to attend a meeting on October 2, Carol asks her to explain why she is, at this point, not able to give a definite date for Eid.

Carol asks if the team has any ideas as to how they may resolve the problem. Adeola says that her presence at the meeting is not as important as the rest of the team’s, and offers to call in for an hour if they want to meet on October 10.

Carol thanks Nazneen for reminding her of the diversity calendar and promises in future to consult it first.

## Questions

- What do you think of the way Carol handled Nazneen’s request for a rescheduling of the meeting this time?
- How do you think Nazneen felt after this exchange with Carol? Why?

### Tips and Tasks

Both the people responsible for providing the accommodation and the person requesting it have rights and responsibilities during accommodation. For example:

Person Requesting	Person Responsible
Take the initiative to request accommodation	Respect the dignity of the person seeking accommodation
Explain why you need accommodation	Assess the need for accommodation based on the needs of the group of which the person is a member
Provide notice of request in writing, and allow a reasonable time for reply	Reply to the request within a reasonable time
Explain what measures of accommodation are required	Grant requests related to the observance of religious practices
Deal in good faith	Deal in good faith
Be flexible and realistic	Consider alternatives
Ask for details of the cost of accommodation if undue hardship may be a factor	If accommodation is not possible because of undue hardship, explain this clearly to the person concerned and be prepared to demonstrate why this is so

Source: Ontario Human Rights Commission, "Policy on creed and the accommodation of religious observances" <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/Policies/PolicyCreedAccomodEN/pdf>

## EPISODE 3: Delegating Roles and Managing Communication Barriers

Before the team tackles the first item on the meeting agenda, Carol asks if anyone would like to speak to the sales staff about the status of the new web site. Nazneen volunteers. Carol then moves on to the first agenda item and asks for ideas for increasing the visibility of the web site.

### *Scene 1: Delegating Roles and Managing Communication Barriers*

#### **Description**

Carol starts the meeting by expressing her frustration at being “hammered” by the “sales guys” about the status of, and marketing strategies for, the new web site. As she asks if anyone would like to handle the problem, she turns and says, “Rob, have you dealt with these guys before?” Before Rob can respond, Nazneen says she would like to do it. Carol seems somewhat taken aback by Nazneen’s offer and proceeds to express concern both in her words and in her body language: the “sales guys” are typically aggressive and crude/would Nazneen like her to join her for her first meeting?

Then Carol asks for ideas as to how to get the web site noticed by the small businesses they are targeting. Now the acronyms and jargon start flowing as the team members jump in with their ideas. We see that Victor is having trouble keeping up and frequently has to ask for clarification. He is unable to answer any request for information. Indeed, he is still trying to process the term “high-end reward” after that suggestion has been dismissed.

This episode illustrates some of the difficulties skilled immigrants who are not native English speakers may encounter when in a meeting with native speakers, who are using idiomatic English and a lot of business jargon. The communication difficulties result in the other team members questioning the competence of the “new hires.”

#### **Questions**

- What assumptions does Carol seem to be making about the experience and competence of the “new hires”?
- How do you think Nazneen feels at the end of this episode?
- Why is Carol surprised that Nazneen has been so “assertive”? What stereotypes do you think she might be applying to Nazneen?
- How do you think Rob felt about Nazneen’s volunteering to deal with the sales team?
- Describe Victor’s state of mind during this scene.
- What impression do you think Victor is making on the other members of the team?
- Why is Victor having so much difficulty following the discussion? Identify some of the terms that were unfamiliar to him.
- What strategies could Victor use that will enable him to participate more effectively in meetings?
- What could Carol, as team leader, have done to enable Victor to participate fully in the meeting?

#### **Tips and Tasks**

- Become familiar with the language of the industry
- Identify the company norms for conducting business meetings
- Interrupt if you need to seek clarification
- Describe your professional experience concisely

- Business meetings are not always led by the manager or senior person, and even when they are, business discussions within the meeting can be presented and led by other specific topic experts.
- The most important person in the meeting is not necessarily the highest-ranking executive present. A person speaking at a meeting must make eye contact and address everyone present at the table. Making eye contact with or addressing only the senior executive while ignoring the rest of the group is considered inappropriate and rude toward the other participants.
- Most people want meetings to ‘stay on track’ and ‘stick to the point.’ There is generally low tolerance for talking about other issues not on the agenda. Avoid digressions and unconnected topics outside the meeting scope.
- Individuals are expected to contribute updates, ideas, strategies or problem-solving solutions within their area of expertise or responsibility, and they are also expected to comment on other team members’ contributions which directly impact one’s own area of responsibility.
- Many newcomers find it hard to ‘jump in’ to a discussion and get their opinions heard when others are not paying attention to them. A newcomer who fails to speak up during a business meeting might be misinterpreted by the manager or other team members as lacking in confidence or knowledge.
- Strategies for team meeting participation
  - Use the pre-meeting time to make small talk; this will help you get to know your team mates.
  - Learn and use people’s names, if possible, when you address their comments or questions within the meeting.
  - If an issue is being discussed that concerns your area of expertise and you have information/perspective that affects the issue, your responsibility is to offer your input, not wait to be asked.
  - Make eye contact with and address your comments and input to everyone present at the meeting, not just the most senior person.
  - Good meeting leaders and meeting participants “read” others’ body language and non-verbal signals and respond to these cues (boredom, confusion, distraction, resistance, disagreement, etc.)
- Since language is based in culture, certain business idioms and jargon may not be obvious to both parties – skilled immigrants and employers.
- Jargon exists in every workplace, and when used appropriately, can be a quick way to communicate within a group of people who share a common definition and context. When people become accustomed to using acronyms, idioms and jargon that are specific to their profession or work environment, they may not always realize that other people may not understand.
- There is a distinction between industry-specific jargon that is globally understood and company-specific jargon that only employees will need to learn. As a skilled immigrant, you should know the jargon of your industry. This will help you understand job postings as well as communicate qualifications and experience.
- Strategies to learn new acronyms, new business jargon or industry slang
  - Keep a small notepad/diary at your desk. Jot down new or unfamiliar acronyms or expressions you see/hear as they come along. Compile a list.
  - Search for answers on your company’s INTRANET site, if available.
  - Consult a team member or another person on your team that you trust, and ask for clarification.

- Purchase one of the many book or CD resources available to learn North American business jargon and slang.
- Go to a free online site that provides business slang, jargon and idioms.
- Pay attention to HOW business is discussed and HOW decisions are negotiated in your team meetings. Does everyone contribute to the meeting? Only some people? Are meetings and discussions long and comprehensive, or quick and efficient?
- Learn the jargon of your industry as quickly as you can. Find out what acronyms are used in your business.

### **Scene 2: “Talking Heads”**

#### **Description**

Carol, Nazneen, Rob and Victor all have something to say about their concerns for the team and the project.

#### **Questions**

- What doubts does Carol have about Nazneen and Victor?
- What concerns does Nazneen have about Carol’s perception of her ability?
- Victor admits that, although his English is good, he sometimes doesn’t understand when people speak quickly. What role does he think the others wish he would play on the team?
- What are Rob’s concerns? Why?

### **Scene 3: Preferred Practice**

#### **Description**

This time Carol threw the request for assistance out to the team in general: “Who would like to deal with these guys?” When Nazneen volunteers, Carol responds that to be honest, the sales crew can be very difficult. Nazneen explains that in Pakistan she had to manage salesmen who didn’t like the idea of a female manager, so she feels capable of handling the CQR sales team. Carol offers to debrief Nazneen as to what she can expect.

Carol then sets some additional ground rules that will enable people new to logistics and the company to keep up during the meeting. She asks that everyone explain any technical terms they use and that the “new hires” not be afraid to seek clarification. As Rob speaks, he becomes aware through Victor’s body language that he should explain the meaning of “ACL” for him.

#### **Questions**

- How would you characterize Carol’s leadership style in this scene?
- What are the outcomes of this meeting?

#### **Tips and Tasks**

- When participating in team meetings, practice the following strategies:
  - Use the pre-meeting time to make small talk; this will help you get to know your team mates.
  - Learn and use people’s names, if possible, when you address their comments or questions within the meeting.
  - If the issue being discussed concerns your area of expertise and you have information/perspective that affects the issue, your responsibility is to offer your input, not wait to be asked.
  - Make eye contact with and address your comments and input to everyone present at the meeting, not just the most senior person.

- 'Read' others' body language and non-verbal signals and respond to these cues (boredom, confusion, distraction, resistance, disagreement, etc.)

## EPISODE 4: Facilitating Contributions to Team Discussions

### Description

At this meeting, Carol reports that senior management wants the team to consider what can be done about their outdated website. She then says that many cutting-edge companies are using Flash technology for their intro pages. Rob likes that idea but suggests that, in addition to modernizing the website, they build their list of leads, especially through cold calls and email follow-up. When Rob asks Victor to comment, his response is hesitant, unsure and confusing. It would seem that nobody has really understood his suggestion – and his role in this discussion should have been pivotal.

### Scene 1: Facilitating Contributions to Team Discussions

#### Description

The meeting seems to disintegrate as each member clutches onto his or her suggestion for updating the website. Carol again pushes the idea of Flash; Victor responds that Flash will not help them reach a global clientele. Rob repeats that market research indicates that people respond to personal contact. Nazneen explains that many countries lack the high-speed Internet connections that will enable them to use Flash technology. Adeola builds on the kernel of Victor's suggestion by saying that they should focus on the website showing up on search engines; she will compile a list of the most-used logistics key words.

This episode examines what the impact on decision-making within a Canadian team setting can be when some team members are unaccustomed to arguing their individual points, but believe in the importance of assessing the impact of each decision on the organization as a whole.

#### Questions

- How do you think Victor feels at the end of this scene?
- What factors are preventing Victor from providing input in a clear, concise manner?
- Why was Victor stumbling over words to express his idea fully? Could there be any cultural factors that may be affecting his behaviour or is there a language barrier?
- How do you think Carol feels at the end of this meeting?
- How effectively is this team making use of the global knowledge base of its members?
- What could Carol do differently to improve the chances of this team working together to create an outstanding product (e.g. improving the website)?
- How could Carol have more effectively managed the discussion between culturally diverse team members, who have different preferences regarding communication styles and notions of hierarchy?
- How do you think Carol and Rob perceive Victor's role in contributing to successfully updating the company's website?

#### Tips and Tasks

- Meeting styles and practices vary from company to company, but generally in the private sector, meetings are informal in communication style, with individual participation expected.
- Most North American meetings are non-hierarchical and have a flat communication structure. The most important person in the meeting is not necessarily the highest-ranking executive present.
- Business meetings are generally considered a forum for action and decision-making. They are focused on outcomes rather than on processes. (The process part is done prior to

meetings, in preparation.) Participants bring their “conclusions” to the meeting, and concise points to support those conclusions, rather than their entire thought process and development. This explains why/how people communicate very concisely at meetings.

- Employees who are concise and structured in their response are considered confident in their knowledge and grasp of their subject matter. A “narrative” communication style, which is less concise and which provides important information at the “end” of a long explanation, is not appreciated in most workplaces and can be wrongly interpreted by others. If English is not the speaker’s first language and the speaker uses this longer, narrative approach, people might mistakenly feel that his or her English level isn’t high enough for the task.
- Become familiar with the values of your organization – what you can expect as an employee and what is expected of you in terms of behaviour, productivity, participation, etc.
- Note how your co-workers express opinions that are different, especially to those who are senior in position.
- Pay attention to how your colleagues present their input in a meeting. What preparation have they done before the meeting?

### **Scene 2: “Talking Heads”**

#### **Description**

Centering on Victor, the episode illustrates the effect of cultural factors on communication. Victor seems reluctant to disagree with those senior to him in the hierarchy. But when asked to elaborate on his input, his comments seem unrelated to each other. While the others focus on their individual strategies, he thinks that, although they are on the right track, they should be thinking globally. The confusion – and concern - that Carol and Rob experience is clearly manifest.

#### **Questions**

- What does Carol think about Victor’s “organizational fit” with CQR? What has given her that impression?
- Victor says that Carol does not respect him. How does that make him feel?
- What does Victor think about the others’ suggestions?
- What does Adeola say about Victor’s contribution to the team. What is she concerned about?
- Rob is still having trouble understanding Victor’s accent. What steps could Victor take that might make him easier to understand?

### **Scene 3: Preferred Practice**

#### **Description**

Carol introduces the agenda item to be discussed and suggests a possible solution: Flash technology. She then opens the floor to further discussion, asking “Is that an idea for us?” Rob suggests that they generate an expanded list of leads and asks Victor for input. Victor responds that the success of the website will depend on the number of people who have access; the way to increase that access is not through Flash but by making sure that the site reaches search engines globally. He suggests that they identify the countries they will be targeting and translate their key words into the necessary languages. Carol asks for clarification when she doesn’t understand Victor, probes further and rephrases to confirm her understanding. Nazneen agrees that Flash will not be the most effective technology for clientele in countries lacking high-speed Internet connections. Adeola will list targeted countries/languages and the most-used key words.

**Discussion Questions**

- Outline some of the communication techniques the team members used to ensure that all could participate equally in the meeting.
- Why was Victor better able to express his ideas in this scene?
- How do you think each of the team members felt at the end of this scene?

## Reflection

Now that you have finished viewing the video and reading this guide it is time to take a few moments to reflect on your own situation. Complete the following sentences.

Two things I have learned from watching this video are...

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One thing I will do differently is...

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One thing I would like to learn more about is ...

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## Resources

The following list is a sample of helpful resources. Contact your local employment-support services if you require additional help.

Type of resource	Description
<b>Business Etiquette</b>	
articles	Business Etiquette <a href="http://www.canadianimmigrant.ca/careers/businessetiquette">http://www.canadianimmigrant.ca/careers/businessetiquette</a> A collection of articles from Canadian Immigrant on Canadian business etiquette
articles	Business Etiquette <a href="http://www.sideroad.com/Business_Etiquette/workplace-etiquette.html">http://www.sideroad.com/Business_Etiquette/workplace-etiquette.html</a> Over 30 articles, on topics ranging from business card etiquette to working with employees with disabilities
book	The Essential Guide to Business Etiquette Chaney, Lilian H. and Jeanette St. Clair Martin, Peager Publishers, 2007 Available from Google Books, See p. 107 – Meeting etiquette This source goes into detail on everything from seating arrangements to what people do wrong when leading a business meeting to what is required of the participants.
book	Business etiquette for dummies, Fox, Sue Part 4 – overcoming work-related challenges
book	Goldman, Lynda. <i>You're Hired...Now What?</i> Oxford University Press, Don Mills, 2010.
<b>Communication</b>	
article	Asking Clarifying questions, Brenner, Rick <a href="http://www.chacocanyon.com/pointlookout/090114.shtml">http://www.chacocanyon.com/pointlookout/090114.shtml</a> While this article is directed at job interviews, it provides tips that may be valuable in most work-related situations.
Web page	English Interrupting Expressions: How to interrupt someone <a href="http://www.englishpond.com/speaking/Communication%20and%20daily%20English/interrupting/index.html">http://www.englishpond.com/speaking/Communication%20and%20daily%20English/interrupting/index.html</a>
self-directed learning module	Group Interaction Skills <a href="http://www.elc.edu.sa/auto/English101-New/topic7/101-0701.html">http://www.elc.edu.sa/auto/English101-New/topic7/101-0701.html</a> This module covers topics such as asking questions, expressing opinions, agreeing and disagreeing, and negotiating. It provides practical examples and useful expressions.
blog	5 Tips on Leveraging Body Language at Work <a href="http://www.projectmanagers.net/profiles/blogs/5-tips-on-leveraging-body">http://www.projectmanagers.net/profiles/blogs/5-tips-on-leveraging-body</a>
blog post	25 Perfect Phrases for Starting a Business Conversation <a href="http://www.artofspeakingbusiness.com/?p=20">http://www.artofspeakingbusiness.com/?p=20</a>

Type of resource	Description
	This source has 25 opening lines for starting a business conversation, with a few different approaches (compliment, advice, etc.).
book	Wiley, Terrence G. and Heide Spruck. Communicating in the Real World: Developing Communication Skills for Business and the Professions. Prentice Hall Regents, New Jersey, 1987.



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