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Culture is a technical term used by anthropologists to refer to a system for creating, sending, storing, and processing information developed by human beings, which differentiates them from other life forms. The terms mores, tradition, custom, and habit are subsumed under the cultural umbrella. Sometimes culture is used in reference to the fine arts. While art and literature do indeed form an important part of a culture, in this book the term is used in its wider context.

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# I. What Is Culture?

Your organization's culture is not (he espoused list of values developed at an offsite by the executive team and framed on the wall in your lobby. These are ideals. What you strive to be as an organization and what values you hope to endorse, may be different from the values, beliefs, and norms expressed in your actual practices and behavior. Don't fool yourself. It is critical that you find out who you really are as well as striving for who you want to be. Awakening the emperor to the fact that he/she has no clothes is often a risky and delicate first step in closing the gap between the real and the ideal. Cultural assessment can provide measurable data about the real organizational values and norms that can be used to get management's attention. It can dispel some of management's illusions about what really matters in the organization and will tell them how far off the mark things really are. Management may find that it is not practicing what it preaches. However, telling the CEO the truth about the organization he/she has built, can often be dangerous to your career progress. Delivering such a message takes skill as a coach and a willingness to take risks and confront conflict.

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## a. Basic Assumptions, Values And Norms Drive Practices And Behaviors

The culture of an organization operates at both a conscious and unconscious level. Often the people who see your culture more clearly are those from the outside—the new hires, the consultants or vendors. When coaching or I advising senior management, remember that culture comprises the deeply rooted but often unconscious beliefs. values and norms shared by the members of the organization. Those not living inside the culture can often see it more objectively. Better to ask a New Yorker to tell you what Californians are like than ask a Californian.

Culture drives the organization and its actions. It is somewhat like "The operating system" of the organization. It guides how employees think, act and feel. It is dynamic and fluid, and it is never static. A culture may be effective at one time, under a given set of circumstances and effective at another time. There is no generically good culture. There are however, generic patterns of health and pathology.

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## b. Culture Operates At Various Levels - The Visible Artifacts To The Deeply Rooted And Unconscious

Culture can be viewed at several levels. Some aspects of culture arc visible and tangible and others are intangible und unconscious. Basic assumptions that guide the organization are deeply rooted and often taken for granted Avoidance of conflict is a value that is an excellent example of an unconscious norm that may have a major influence on the organization but is frequently unconscious. For an insider, this is difficult or impossible to sec. particularly if the individual has "grown up" in the organizational culture. Recently hired employees, the external consultant and the executive coach is frequently in the best position to identify these unconscious assumptions or values. Espoused or secondary values are at a more conscious level; these are me values that people in the organization discuss, promote and try to live by. All employees of Hewlett Packard, for example, are required to become familiar with the values embodied in the "HP Way. " Some of the most visible expressions of the culture arc called artifacts. These include the architecture and decor, the clothing people wear. the organizational processes and structures, and the rituals, symbols and celebrations Other concrete manifestation of culture are found in commonly used language and jargon, logos, brochures, company slogans, as well as status symbols such as cars, window offices, titles, and of course value statements and priorities. An outsider can often spot these artifacts easily upon entering an organization. For insiders, however, these artifacts have often become part of the background.

## c. The Role of the Leader in Transmitting Culture

One of the critical factors in understanding a corporate culture is the degree to which it is leader-centric. Ask yourself, how central is our leader to the style of this organization? If you are the leader yourself, the culture of your company is likely to reflect your personality, including your neurosis. So if the CEO avoids conflict and tends to sweep it under the carpet, don't be surprised if you see avoidance of conflict played out in the organization. The behavior that is modeled by the leader and the management team profoundly shapes the culture and practices of the organization. What management emphasizes, rewards and punishes can tell you what is really important. The behavior of members of the senior team, their reactions in a crises and what they talk routinely talk about, all sets the tone of the culture. If the culture is already firmly established when the CEO assumed leadership and he/she simply inherited a strong set of traditions, then he/she may play the role of the guardian of the old culture. On the other hand, CEOs such as Lou Gerstner at IBM, or Lee Iococca at Chrysler were brought in to be a change agent charged with dramatically transforming the organizational culture.

# II. Why Assess Culture?

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## a. Closing The Gap Between The Real And Ideal Culture

Why would a company be interested in assessing its culture? If the organization wants to maximize its ability to attain its strategic objectives, it must understand if the prevailing culture supports and drives the actions necessary to achieve its strategic goals. Cultural assessment can enable a company to analyze the gap between the current and desired culture. Developing a picture of the ideal and then taking a realistic look at the gaps is vital information that can be used to design interventions to close the gaps and bring specific elements of culture into line. If your competitive environment is changing fast, your organizational culture may also need to change. However, you may only need to change some of its practices and secondary values while keeping a few precious and non-negotiable core values intact. Often an objective assessment tool can be zero in on a limited number of elements of culture that need to change, rather than embarking on the futile attempt to change the entire culture.

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## b. Value and Goal Alignment across Subcultures, Divisions and Geographic Regions

In many companies there is a strong dominant culture that is pervasive throughout the organization and across business units or even regions. This kind of organization is said to possess a high level of cultural integration. However, often the culture in large organizations is not singular or uniform. Organizations can vary widely in terms of the degree of cultural integration and the strength of the subcultures that coexist. Subcultures may share certain characteristics, norms, values and beliefs or be totally different. These subcultures can function cooperatively or be in conflict with each other. In general, subcultures can differ by function, (engineering vs. marketing), by their place in the hierarchy, (management vs. administrators, assistants) by division, by site, or by geographic region and country.

It may be both undesirable and unrealistic to try to homogenize the organization across all of its parts. Still, a thoughtful assessment of the culture can facilitate the alignment of values and strategic goals across subcultures and geographic areas. It is very important for global companies to tolerate and support a certain amount of cultural differentiation. Yet there may be a core of values, a subset of four or five deeply held principles that management thinks should cut across subcultures, divisions, and international settings.

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## c. Individual-Organization Fit

Corporations that are growing fast must hire a large number of new employees. It is critical that these new hires are a good fit with the current culture. If an individual is out of synch with the culture, the organization's cultural antibodies will often attack. However, there must also be a good fit with the culture that you are trying to create. It is now possible to make hiring decisions based on quantitative assessment of the compatibility between the candidate's personality, values and behaviors and both the current and desired culture.

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## d. Organizational Change

Today the pace of change is so rapid, particularly in the high tech industries. Only organizations that can adapt to j this fast changing environment can survive. However, as Built to Last, by Jim Collins and Jerry Porris has demonstrated, enduring great companies are usually built on both a solid foundation of timeless core values, but also on the adaptability of their behavioral practices, secondary values, structures and other cultural artifacts. The secret to a company that will last is its ability to manage both continuity and change. Such companies are capable of responding with nimbleness to the environmental drivers that necessitate change in strategy and practices. These drivers include: rapid technological change, changes in industries and markets, deregulation, aggressive competition, the global economy, increased organizational complexity, new business models Getting a profile of the current culture can enable organizations to thoughtfully bring the elements of the culture into alignment and move forward towards an ideal.

Organizations develop cultures whether they try to or not. If your intention is to appraise individual-organization fit, align culture with its strategic goals, understand subcultures, assess mergers and acquisitions partners, or to make organizational changes in practices or values, understanding your culture in an objective manner can give you a business advantage and spare you enormous time and money. Not understanding your culture in today's business world can be fatal. Sometimes the emperor or empress needs to be told that his/her baby is ugly. Having objective measurement tools such as Hagberg Consulting Group's "Cultural Assessment Tool" can provide a consultant or coach with valuable objective measurement of existing culture. Executives are frequently analytical and quantitative in their orientation. Having data and an assessment tool to deliver a painful message may be the key to getting management to pay attention and face the reality of what kind of culture really exists. It is also useful in preventing the demise of me messenger.

# III. What is Corporate Culture?

As your text points out, every company (or institution, organization, etc.) has a culture of its own, and employees are usually smart to try to fit in with that culture. The culture of a company deals with its atmosphere and social preferences and includes aspects such as how employees dress, whether they are free to talk among themselves about non-business topics, whether breaks arc limited and strictly timed, whether entry-level employees are free to visit upper-echelon offices, whether superiors are addressed by first name or by Mr. /Ms. whatever, and a host of other considerations. Now no one is going to give you a list of the cultural aspects of the company you work for; those aspects are often intangible and difficult to define. But as an employee, you'll pick them up over time. There are a number of factors that tend to influence corporate culture, and your book does a good Job of explaining them. However, remember that your text is talking about tendencies; don't make assumptions about the culture of any particular company until you've been with it long enough to leam it firsthand A company's history will influence its culture, particularly in terms of how stable the culture is. If you are hired by a company (hat has been around for 100 years and done things pretty much the same way for the whole lime, you probably aren't going to be able to change the culture much. If. on the other hand, me company is relatively new. the culture might not be firmly established, and you may have some influence on it. The type of business has more to do with culture than the company's history. Let me give you an example by comparing the cultures of two long-standing U. S. companies. When I was heavily involved in corporate life in the late '80s, ЮМ was considered me bastion of conservative business. Now, I've never been in an IBM office, and what 1 heard might be an exaggeration. But the scuttlebutt was that you could wear any color suit as long as it was dark blue or dark gray. I read that the employee restrooms and lounges were painted orange because studies have indicated that that is the least restful color, and die company wanted to discourage employees from spending time in the Johns. Men were more or less expected to wear wing-tips, and women were expected to wear 1/2-inch heels in dark colors and neutral-colored hose.

Now, just as IBM is the father of all business machine companies. Disney is the father of animation in the U. S. I have been inside the Disney corporate offices. The employees wear shorts and tennis shoes. They wander between each other's offices at will. Some play music in their offices. Some sit at their desks, and others lounge on sofas. The difference? IBM is a conservative company that produces a product used largely by business professionals Ii wants to exude professionalism and confidence. Disney produces films; it wants to encourage its employees to be creative in any way it can. It hires artists and writers.

Another thing I wanted to mention is that the corporate culture may vary from department to department. When I first started in advertising as a writer/editor, I was in the creative division of the company. Now, we didn't wear shorts or jeans, but the women did wear slacks and sweaters, and none of the guys wore jackets or tics. The people in the front offices wore suits, though.

The idea is that you need to find out what the culture of your peers is and adapt to it. Generally speaking, when you first join a company and don't know what is expected, you should keep in mind that it is better to err on the side of conservatism and formality than on the side of informality.

# IV. AMERICAN CULTURE

The U. S. is not a melting pot: ethnic groups persist. Nonetheless, Americans feel a bond to other Americans that transcends differences in ethnic origins.

—Jackson Toby, "America Works Despite All the Odds" —Wall Street Journal

Like people all over the world, Americans take their culture for granted. Indeed, it's only in juxtaposition with other cultures that Americans begin to understand the influence of their own culture on their behavior. Only when we can see that there is more than one approach to life and many different ways of behaving can we begin to experience the strong, pervasive influence of our own culture.

It is more difficult to describe American culture than German or French culture because the United States is not just another country; it spans a continent, and has a population of over 250, 000, 000 people whose ancestors came from virtually every country in the world. American culture is a rich mix of Anglo-Saxon, French, German, Scandinavian, Spanish, Italian, Latin American, Native American, African, Polish, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Arab influences, Just to name a few. In its early days the country was strongly influenced by the British and other people from northern Europe; its laws are based on British common law and American English has absorbed many northern European words. While the U. S. is a nation of immigrants and there are ^any people in American business who are not of northern European heritage, for the purposes of our discussion of American culture, it is the American-European culture we refer to and not the many other cultures represented in the American population. This dominant or mainstream business culture is the norm to which people with other cultural backgrounds are expected to conform, particularly in large corporations.

Despite its ethnic diversity, the U. S. has managed to absorb bits and pieces of many cultures and weave them into a unique culture that is strikingly consistent and distinct. You can pick out Americans any place in the world, often very quickly, because of their behavior. Among their most observable traits are openness, friendliness, informality, optimism, creativity, loudness, and vitality.

In common with others, Americans tend to be ethnocentric, in part because of the great size and economic power of the United States. Unlike the Germans and the French, Americans do not have close foreign neighbors with whom they interact constantly. The country shares borders with Canada and Mexico, but relatively few Americans have dealings with or know much about either country.

While the United States has absorbed millions of people from countries around the globe, the core culture of the United States has its roots in northern European or Anglo-Saxon culture. As a result, it is a predominantly monochrome, low-context culture. To succeed in the American economic system, people must adapt to schedules and the other conventions of doing business in a monochrome, low-context environment. It also means their approach to life is compartmentalized and they need detailed background information because they do not have well developed information networks.

# V. Corporate Culture and Local Culture

Businesses which have strong corporate cultures have certain advantages over those that don't. A strong corporate culture provides shared ideals and a common way of communicating. It also performs several other important functions:

1. Increasing context (i. e., providing necessary background data)

2. Decreasing compartmentalization

3. Increasing information flow

4. Facilitating organizational unification and coordination

5. Increasing survival capabilities

In good times a strong corporate culture is not a prerequisite to survival. In bad times it is vital. Companies that do not have a strong corporate culture and a strong corporate image will tend to fragment under the stress of the struggle to survive when times become difficult. Strong corporate cultures are cohesive; they bind their employees together. They encourage cooperation and enable companies to respond quickly and effectively to changing conditions.

But a strong corporate culture at home does not necessarily guarantee an effective corporate presence abroad. Overseas, it is necessary first to create an environment in which the indigenous employees can flourish. Management must adapt the company's corporate culture to the local culture. This adaptation requires great patience in the home office and depends in large part on the selection of the foreign manager, who must understand the requirements of the home office and also have the skills to interact effectively with the local people. Interfacing between the home office and the local affiliate is the greatest challenge to any overseas population. In time local employees should be encouraged to adapt the corporate culture and corporate image to ensure maximum impact on both local people and local markets.

# VI. American Business Executives Abroad

Corporate cultures are apparently more exportable than national cultures and are certainly more understandable to Americans, who are used to the idea that working for a company means doing things the company way.

When Americans work overseas, they tend to isolate themselves in "golden ghettos" and interact with each other rather than with the people of the host country. We have observed this phenomenon for over thirty years; only in the last decade have we noted a heartening change. Today many Americans, the younger executives in particular, really do try to live in the country of assignment, making friends and learning the language. Somehave had prior experience living abroad with their parents or in the Peace Corps. This change in attitude and behavior has made an enormous difference in their ability to adapt and learn the foreign culture.

American business is often criticized for its lack of concern for the families of its overseas employees. Many executives are assigned overseas for short periods, usually two years, which is simply not enough time to learn the language and integrate into the society- Additionally, since they expect to be leaving m two years, they may feel the effort of learning the language would be wasted, another example of how the American short-term time orientation adversely affects business performance.

Spouses of American executives overseas bear the brunt of adjusting to the local culture since they must cope with housing, schools, shopping, repairs, health care, and social life- They need not only language training but orientation to the culture as well. Quite often American-espouses are unable to obtain work permits. With their husbands or wives working long hours or traveling extensively and the children at school, the spouses are left alone with no means of communication—with predictable results. The rate of marital difficulties, divorce, and alcoholism among American families abroad is high and reflects a lack of understanding and intelligent planning by American business. Recently, however, some American business firms have become slightly more realistic and are now willing to make longer assignments overseas, permitting employee and spouse to become fluent in both language and culture.

American overseas business personnel today are much better educated and informed than their predecessors of thirty years ago and more competent and adaptable. For many years American business was not cognizant of the crucial importance of proper selection and training of overseas personnel. As a result they lost millions of dollars. In the past there was an unfortunate tendency to transfer problem employees abroad, and even today there are many Americans working overseas who should never have left the United States. You can usually spot them in restaurants and bars of clubs or international hotels, loudly voicing their frustrations with locals, arrogant and impatient. Despite these unfortunate errors in selection, there has been a noticeable improvement in the quality of American business representation overseas. An executive who has been successful in the U. S. often has difficulty when transferred abroad because of her or his expectations of continued success. When those expectations are not met (because the techniques that were successful in the U. S. do not always work in foreign cultures), the result can be a devastating sense of failure. The ability to cope with failure is therefore a prime qualification for cross-cultural effectiveness, but is unfortunately not a quality highly prized in American business.

It is our strong recommendation that only the best and most adaptable people be sent overseas and that their training in both language and cross-cultural effectiveness be extensive. A recent study for the Southern Governors' Association concluded, "We have yet to learn a critical lesson: the language of trade is the language of the customer. " We would add that the language of the customer includes not only the spoken language but also the language of behavior, that is, the culture.

Once the company has invested the time and money in training, it should leave the employees in the country long enough to reap the benefits (a minimum of five years). Several executives agreed with the highly experienced general manager of a German subsidiary, who said, "American companies make a big mistake by rotating their managers too often. "

Companies should also develop long-term plans for utilizing the expertise of overseas employees once they return to headquarters. All too often their knowledge and experience is ignored and lost. Even worse, their overseas experience may be a handicap to career advancement in the United States since they may be perceived as having been out of the mainstream.

In our interviews overseas, almost all the directors of American compan ies overseas ranked the home office as their number one problem. Americans have a world-wide reputation for oversupervising their foreign operations. One top manager (a Swiss) with many years of experience working for American companies abroad had this to say: "American companies tend to keep you on a short leash. There are constant demands for reports and financial data. At headquarters you are smothered with staff who 'know better' about everything. Overseas you are alone but you are closely watched; whenever there's a blip, you hear from headquarters and they hover and hover. "

It is difficult for headquarters to understand what is happening i in a foreign operation. The people who are most likely to know f are those on the spot who are cognizant of the cultural differences involved. Thus, the best policy for the executives at the home office is to assign good people to foreign posts and then, listen to what they say.

# VII. Key Points for Foreigners to Keep in Mind

There are several characteristics that flow from the massive size of the United States as well as from the great variety of cultural antecedents that distinguish American culture from all others.

In spite of the numerous and visible inequities in the American system, there is still no society in the world that provides both the freedom and the opportunity to become a success for anyone who has brains or talent and is willing to apply her- or himself. America is still the land of opportunity.

Because of the way in which American business and marketing systems are organized, and possibly because of reinforcement from the extensive and ubiquitous television commercial, the tempo of American business interactions is unusually fast. Everything is faster and bigger in the United States. Keep this in mind: Americans tend to "tailgate" other people.

In the U. S., there is no defined class system. People are constantly moving up and down in the social system because of variations in their financial and educational status. Americans are very status-conscious and place great emphasis on status symbols such as money, celebrity, power, image, possessions, and institutional affiliations.

In over a quarter of a century of working with, talking to, interviewing, and being friends with people from other parts of the world, there is one point that is made consistently: American friendship patterns are of the temporary sort and often do not go very deep. The reasons behind this are many and varied and relate to the unusual mobility of most Americans, especially those in business.

As a consequence of their extreme individualism, American loyalties are for the most part linked to careers and no/ to the organization. Loyalty to organizations is discouraged by the narrow, bottom-line, cost-cutting philosophy of many American business firms.

## a. When Working with American Business

1. Remember that American business works in a short time frame. Its executives and managers want immediate results and are not as interested in building long-term relationships as Europeans are.

2. In general, when you employ Americans, check their education and previous employment references carefully. Do not assume everyone is honest. In our research, we heard many complaints about falsified records.

3. Be very careful in choosing an American manager. Spend the necessary time and money to investigate the backgrounds of those you consider good candidates. Encourage the person you select to make friends and build networks at your home office.

4. Americans arrive at meetings with an agenda they wish to follow. If you want something discussed, be sure it is placed on the agenda ahead of time. Bring a short written statement to circulate.

5. Be prepared for the problems of compartmentalization in American business. Do not assume information will be shared.

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## b. When Working with Individual Americans

1. Because the United States is a mix of many ethnic groups, you must determine whether the person you are dealing with is monochrome or polychrome so that you can then adjust your strategy accordingly. Most Americans are monochrome: they do one thing at a time, they don't like interruptions/ and they have a strong need to finish whatever they are working on. They also compartmentalize information and do not share it freely. Even members of minority ethnic groups tend to adopt the monochronic behaviors of the majority culture in their business dealings.

2. Americans are individually oriented and concerned with their own careers. Their loyalty is first to themselves and then to their employer or organization.

3. Americans want to be liked and accepted. They prefer people who don't make waves and are good team players.

4. Equality and egalitarianism are important to Americans. They resent people who pull rank or seem to consider themselves superior,

5. Most Americans are open, friendly, casual, and informal in their manners. They do not mean to insult you if they call you by your first name.

6. Americans like to come right to the point. They are uncomfortable with indirection and subtlety.

7. Learn all about the Americans you work with: their background, education, and hobbies.

8. Keep in mind that appearances are important to Americans.

9. Be open to diversity.

10. When dealing with American employees, give specific (preferably written) instructions, avoid vagueness and indirection, be lavish with praise and recognition, and do not discriminate against or disparage anyone, especially women and minorities. If you need to correct an American employee, first seek guidance from your American staff. To be effective, correction of a subordinate must be based on knowledge of that person.

# VIII. Public Relations, Corporate Image, and Advertising

In the United States there is a difference between a person's facade and her or his image- Facade is what people present as their public exterior; it's composed of their personality and their Personification of cultural values. Image is artificial and imposed and is, in business, the product of public relations and advertising. The image can be a product image, a corporate image, or the image of the company's top official. Many American companies are closely identified in the public mind with the person who runs the company, such as Lee lacocca with Chrysler and Mary Kay Ash with Mary Kay Cosmetics. The product, the corporation, and the CEO should all project a consistent image, and this is the job of the company's advertising agency.

Americans are very image-conscious. They think in terms of how their actions wil! affect their own personal image, the image of their product, or the image of their company. When Americans have to make a decision, they consider how the decision will make them or their company look. The American preoccupation with image leads some foreigners to decry the shallowness of Americans.

Corporate reputation can be the determining factor in public acceptance of a product if the product is similar in quality and price to a competitor's. Dependability, performance, quality, and price are all part of a company's image. Sales in a competitive market are directly affected by how well a company communicates its image of dependability and high quality to the public at large.

The American communication style is like a newspaper headline: short and to the point. Americans prefer digests to long articles and detailed reports. They often announce at the beginning of oral presentations what they are going to talk about and when the discourse will end. Short, punchy presentations with humor are preferred (except, perhaps, for technical, scientific, or academic papers). In the U. S., starting a speech with a joke is common, but it would be a major mistake in West Germany. Conversely, beginning a speech with a presentation of the historical background of an issue—which is done frequently by German speakers—would bore an American audience to tears-Because many Americans have a narrow professional focus, they are not interested in general or background information, but just in what they need to know right then. Germans want lots of background information, historical context, and examples. The French, of course, prefer elegant, elaborate presentations that display wit and savoir-faire.

As we discussed in parts 2 and 3, the function of German advertising is to transmit information white French advertising works to release a positive emotional response. The function of American advertising is to hype the product.

As we have noted Americans often exaggerate in both their written and their oral communication. This is particularly true in advertising, which is based on hyperbole, or "hype. " Although ads in the United States may contain information, it is seldom detailed and is usually a bolster for the claims of product superiority. Exaggerated claims that a product is the best, newest, most fashionable, or finest are effective in the U. S. but would be both offensive and illegal in West Germany and would win no awards in France.

Most of the money spent on advertising in the United States goes to print ads. Local advertisers all over the country spend millions for newspaper ads in their own areas, from very small ones in weekly hometown newspapers to full-page ads in the New York Times. Because of the complexity of the American market, a lot of money is spentannually to analyze and conduct market surveys so that advertisers can target their ads for a specific group. In the U. S. the CEO often takes a personal interest in a company's image and advertising; American ad agencies are thus accustomed to working with the CEO and do not feel secure unless the CEO is involved. This is not true in Europe, where the advertising department of a company is usually the only group handling advertisements.

Americans like idealized images. The women in them are usually young, healthy, and beautiful, and the men are young, strong, and handsome. Children are clean and smiling. Even ads directed toward older population groups show young-looking though gray-haired people.

U. S. markets are segmented not only by age, gender, and Ticome but also by region and ethnicity. There are fast-growing ethnic groups who will exert a tremendous economic influence in the future, such as the American Hispanic population (there are now over 250, 000 Spanish-owned businesses).

The importance of getting to know local and regional customs and buying habits in the United Slates was emphasized to us by a European advertising executive: "Marketing, selling, distributing, and advertising have to be in the hands of local people. You can't just come in and say, 'Do it my way. '" Another advertising executive addressed the same point: "You must be very French in France, very German in Germany, and very American in America. "

# IX. Characteristics of Successful American Business Executives

The kinds of people who succeed in business in the United States are goal-oriented, concerned with individual achievement, and interested in the development of their own careers. They also tend to be pragmatic, assertive, and relatively egalitarian; at the same time they need constant feedback, evaluations, praise, and rewards—something they would not get in German or French business. Unlike business in France or West Germany, there are powerful American executives who are very young; Europeans favor older, more seasoned top executives. Women are found at top levels in some American businesses but are rare in Western Europe.

Decision making in American business is usually "top-down"— which means American executives often make decisions without consulting subordinates. The result is that decisions a re often made without crucial input from various levels within the organization. In a compartmentalized business organization it is very difficult to get vital information to the decision makers. This is certainly true in Germany and to a lesser degree in the U. S.

Many American businesspeople are driven to compete for promotion and will sometimes sacrifice social and family life to work, a situation rare in West Germany and France, where weekends and holidays are sacred and work is not always the dominant force in one's daily life.