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Intercultural Communication:
Effective Communication with Japanese People

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Abstract

This study investigates what we need to know and understand in order to conduct effective intercultural communication with Japanese people. The study attempts to give insight into the most essential features necessary to pursue this. It covers the following three areas:

In the first area, both the traditional and contemporary Japanese culture and people are discussed. This section focuses on: the values and beliefs traditionally maintained as the cultural norm; the relationship between self and others; changes occurring in Japanese society. In the second area, the components of intercultural communication are examined in terms of features which are cross-culturally applicable. This section aims to find out the cultural differences in communication style by identifying how those features vary from culture to culture and how such variation influences communication style. In the third area, the major characteristics of Japanese communication style are discussed. It examines the bases on which communication style is determined, for example the concept of *uchi/soto* (inside/outside) which is differentiated on the basis of intimacy.

These three areas ultimately aim to assist people with knowledge such as what is important to know of the other culture and which features of communication process we should be paying attention to. Through this study, it is also intended to provide us with a chance to consider how our own communication style can be modified to the way in which a communication counterpart would benefit in terms of avoidance of misunderstanding caused by miscommunication. This will result in the collaborative fulfilment of communication.

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