

# Preparing to Overcome Cultural Barriers

## Power

- \* What sorts of people will be chosen to represent their side? Will they be chosen on the basis of expertise and experience or personal connections and status?
- \* How will internal decisions get made? Will it be done through the use of authority or by consensus?

## Values

- \* Is their culture more collectivist or more individualistic?
- \* How much weight is placed on relationships as opposed to formal contracts?
- \* What is it that causes people to implement agreed terms? Trust? Reputation? Fear of reprisal? Perspective of additional gains in the future? etc.
- \* What causes offense and what does not?

## Substance

- \* What is negotiable and what is non-negotiable?
- \* Once made, what kind of agreements are treated as binding?
- \* Are agreements reduced to writing or kept more informal?

## Process

- \* What are acceptable "moves" in the game?
- \* How important are protocol and other formalities?
- \* Is communication direct or indirect?
- \* What does "yes" mean? What does "no" mean?
- \* How important are non-verbal cues?
- \* What are the norms concerning truth telling?
- \* How are disputes about implementation handled?

According to: Michael D. Watkins, *Diagnosing and Overcoming Barriers to Agreement*, Harvard Business School, Note # 9-800-333, Rev. May 8, 2000