

Intercultural behaviour

**Volvo Cars Nederland B.V.
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results in improvement

InterAction
i n t e r i m

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Background

- Metallurgical Engineer (MS)
- Director of Mecco Malaysia
- Director of Nedschroef Holland
- Director of Manuli Holland (Italy based)
- Director of Interaction Interim consultancy

Intercultural Competencies

For business success in the international arena, intercultural competencies are indispensable. Today, knowing how to manage in culturally different business environments is crucial.

Intercultural Competencies

- **1: Intercultural Sensitivity**
- **2: Intercultural Communication**
- **3: Building Commitment**
- **4: Managing Uncertainty**
- **5: International Orientation**

Intercultural Sensitivity

Intercultural sensitivity is necessary in order to understand that one's own preferred way of doing things is but one of several possible approaches

Intercultural Communication

The ability to adjust one's communication style to the communicative needs of people from other cultures.

Building Commitment

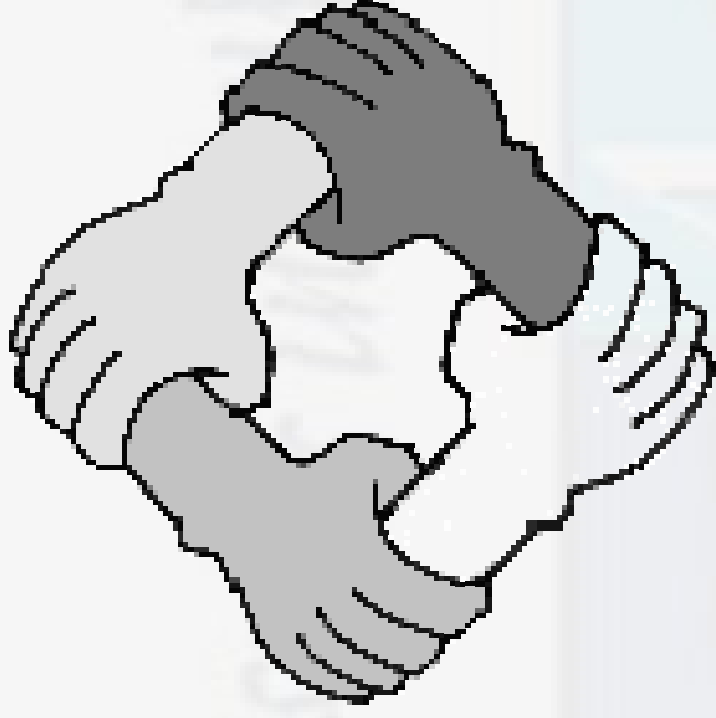
Building commitment is the ability to stimulate interaction and cooperation between people, and to take the lead while at the same time keeping others on board.

Managing Uncertainty

Ability to manage the greater uncertainty of intercultural and international situations. Ability to respond flexibly and work effectively with new people in intercultural situations.

International orientation

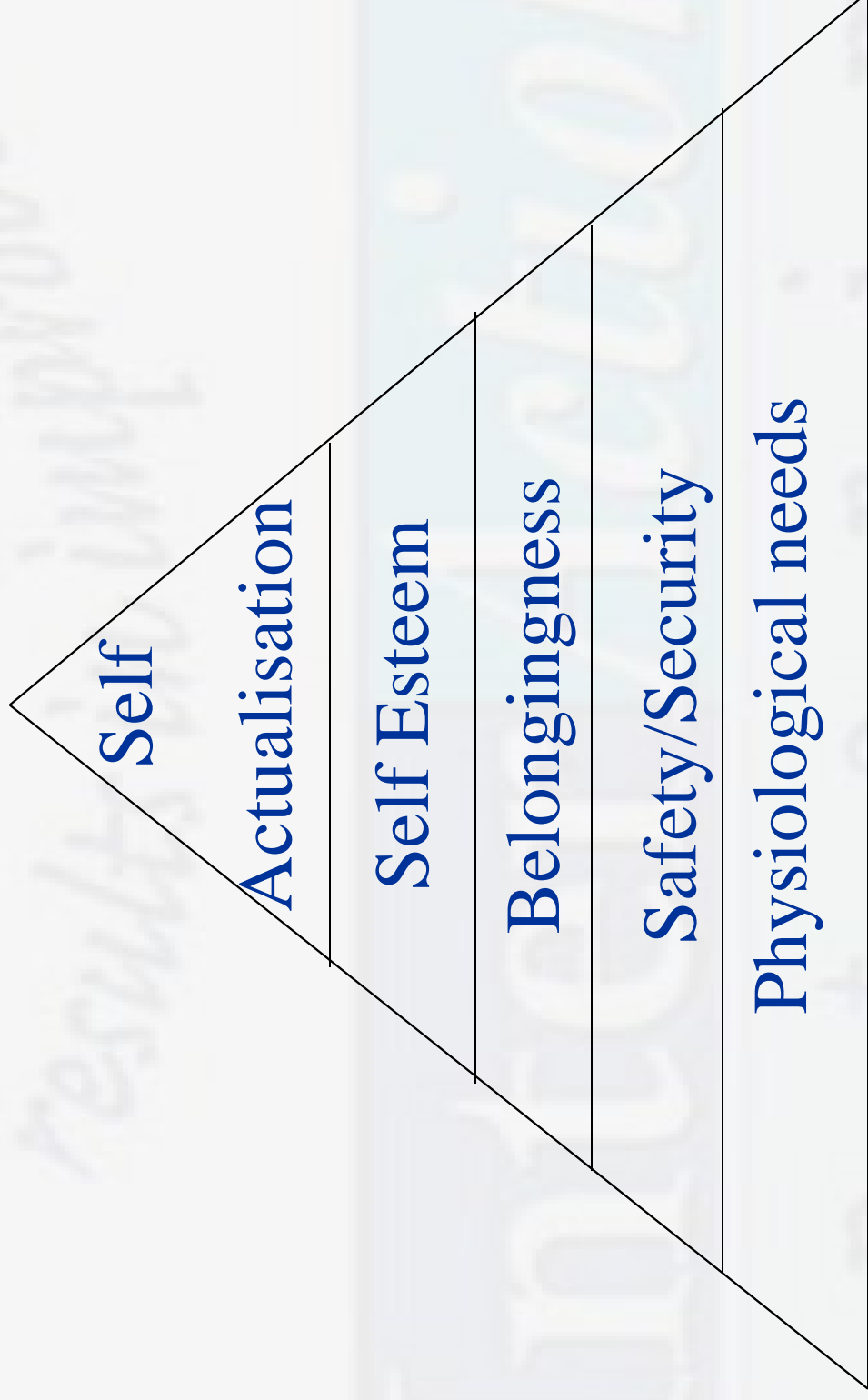
Ability to see the world as a workplace. To actively search for international business and explore international markets. The ability to come to business in various countries in a relatively short period of time.



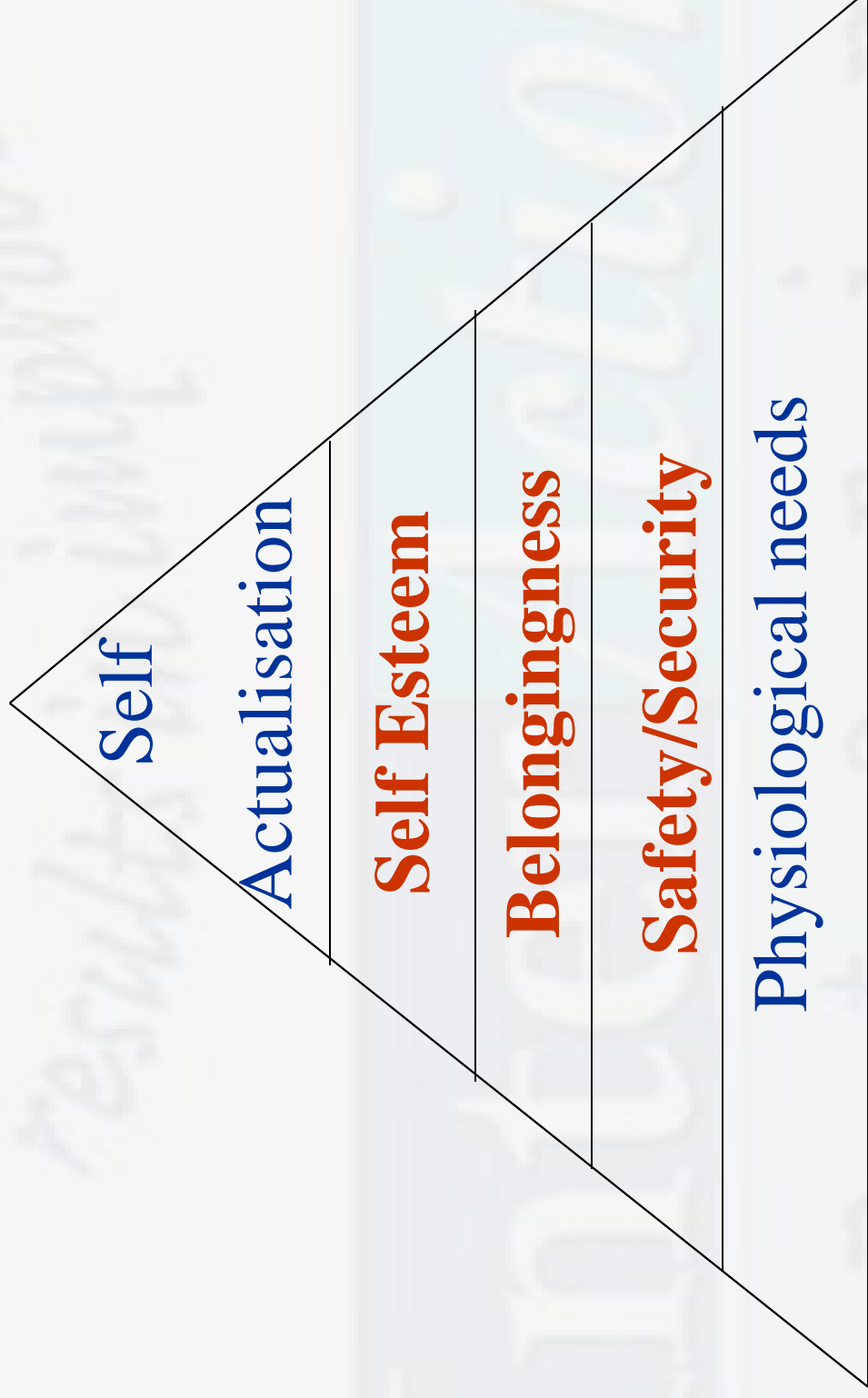
The art of working together
effectively respecting each other
values

What happens when the
management behaves wrongly in
intercultural situations?

Maslow Pyramid



Maslow Pyramid



Cases

1. Japanese way of doing business
2. Yes, Yes or Yes
3. Supply problems and Feng shui
4. Another time Feng shui
5. Quality problems in a warehouse
6. The car of the Boss

Cases

7. It is raining?
8. Loosing face
9. Culture and Sexes
10. The washroom issue
11. Prayer time
12. Social life

Japanese way of doing business

Bottom up understanding and agreement instead of top down introduction.

Preparation (although it takes time) is the key to success.

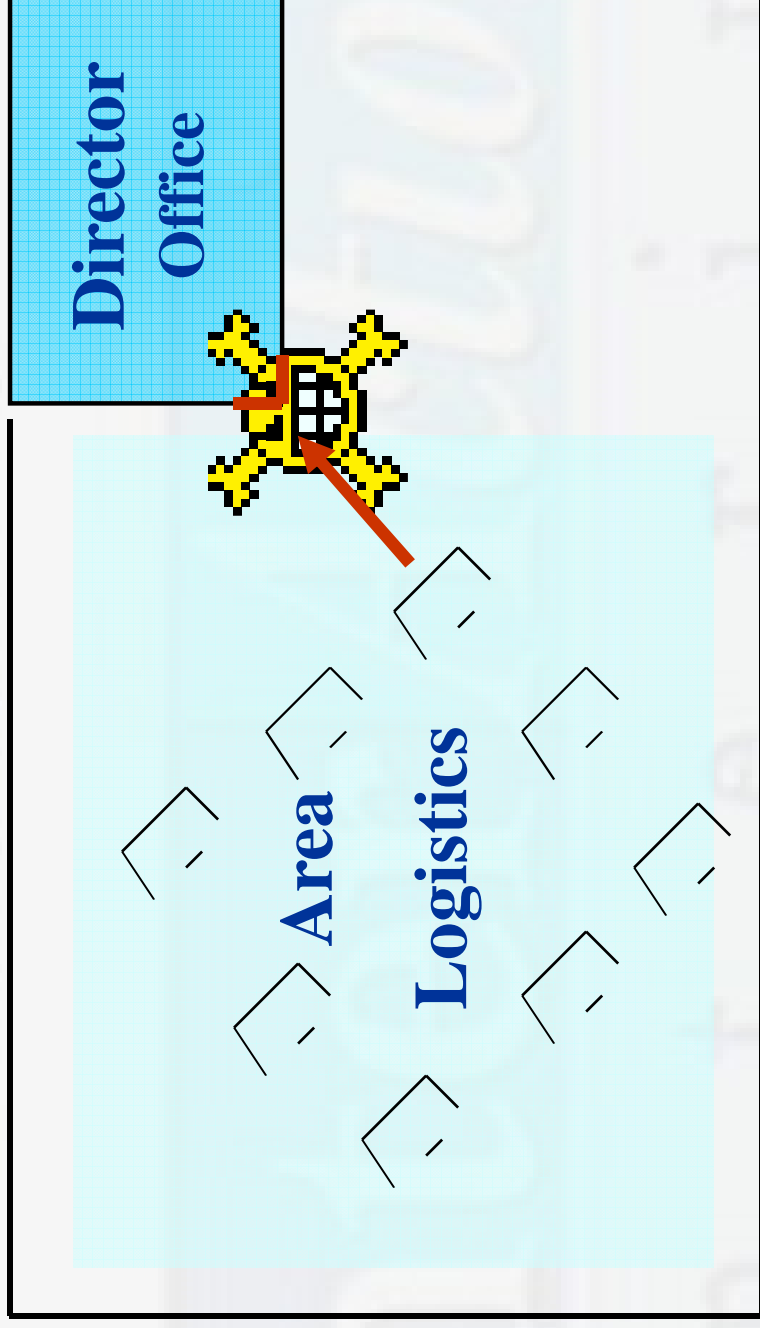
Yes or?

The meaning of YES =:

- **I agree**
- **I understand the question**
- **I disagree but don't want to offend you**

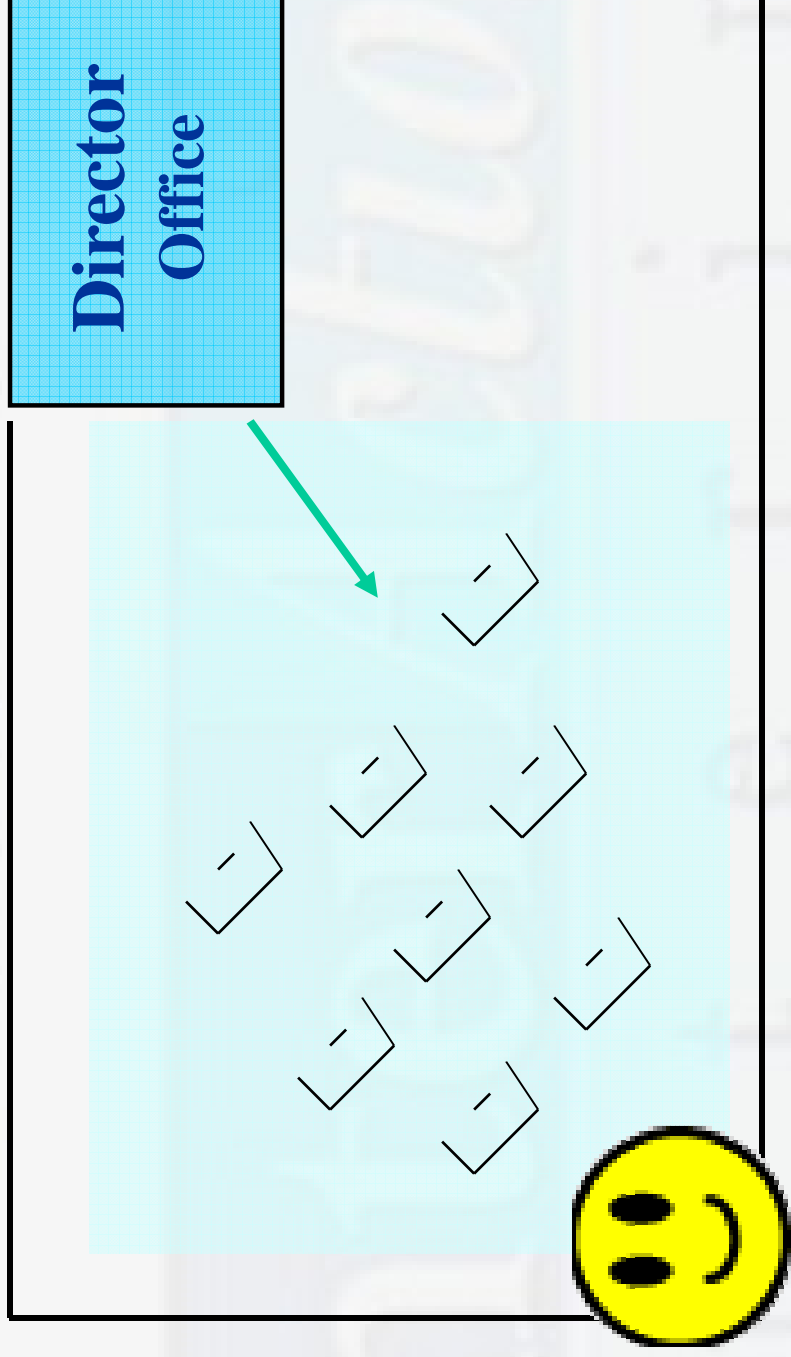
Feng Shui

- Supplier problems



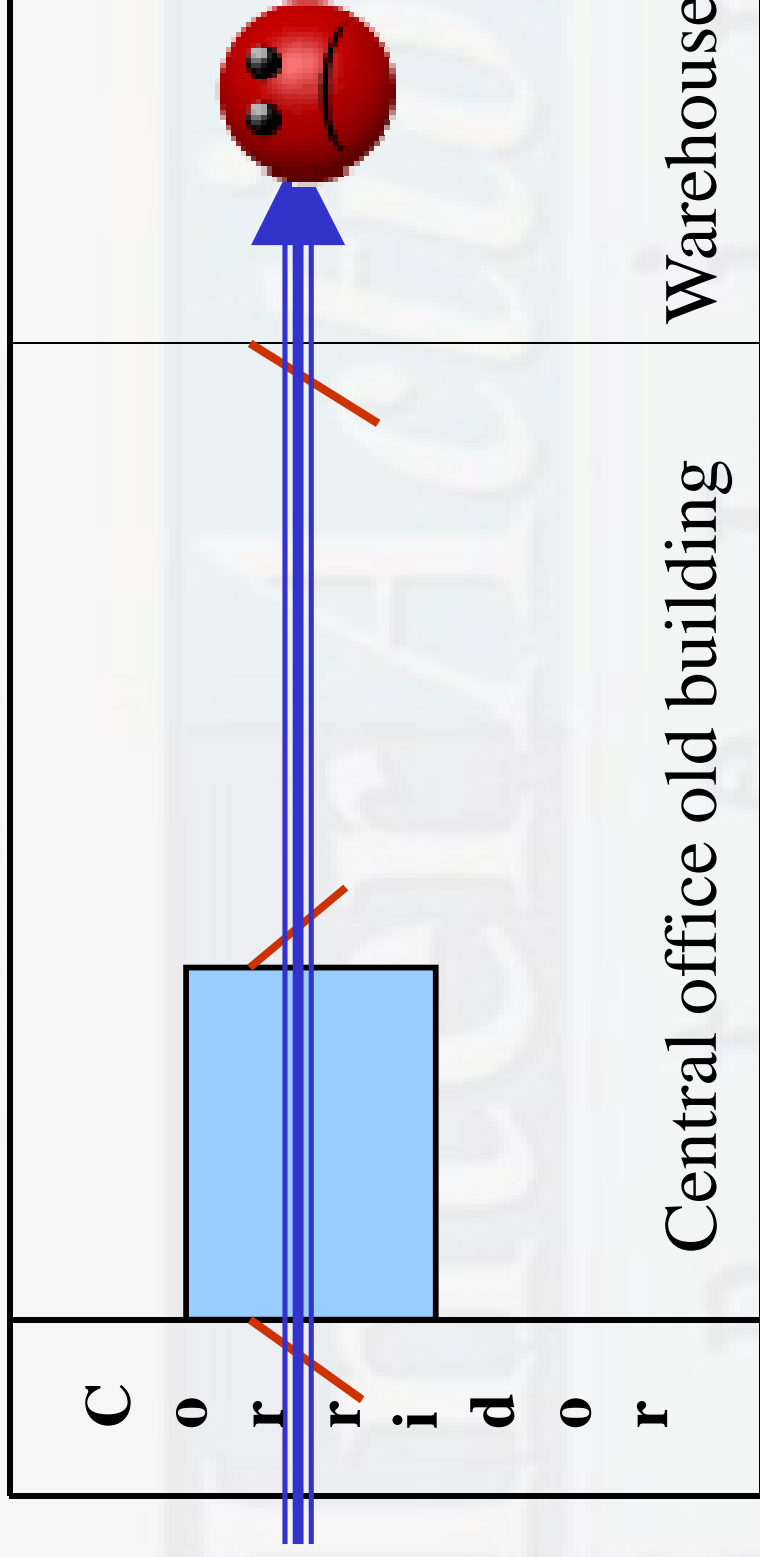
Feng Shui

- Supplier problems solved



Feng Shui

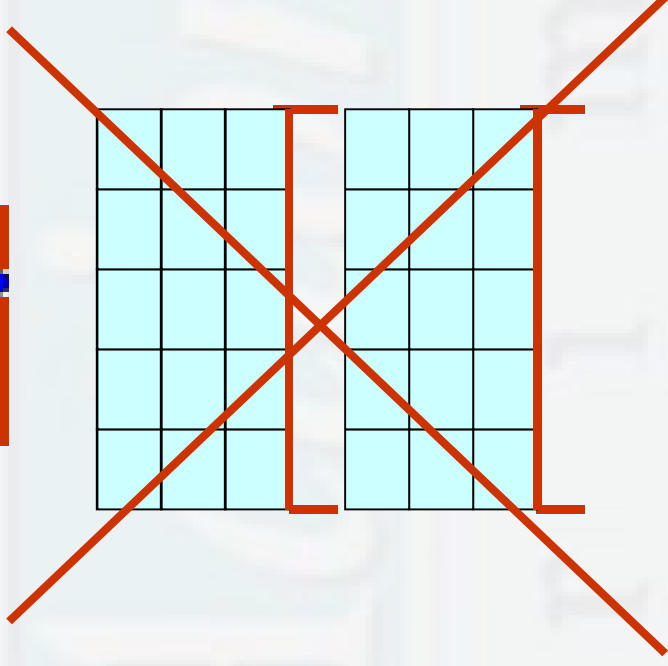
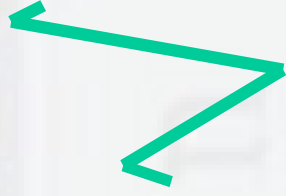
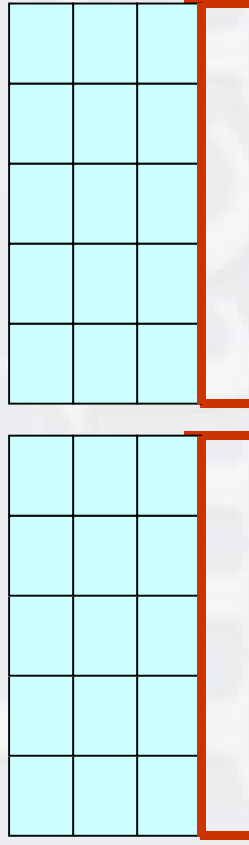
- Director Office



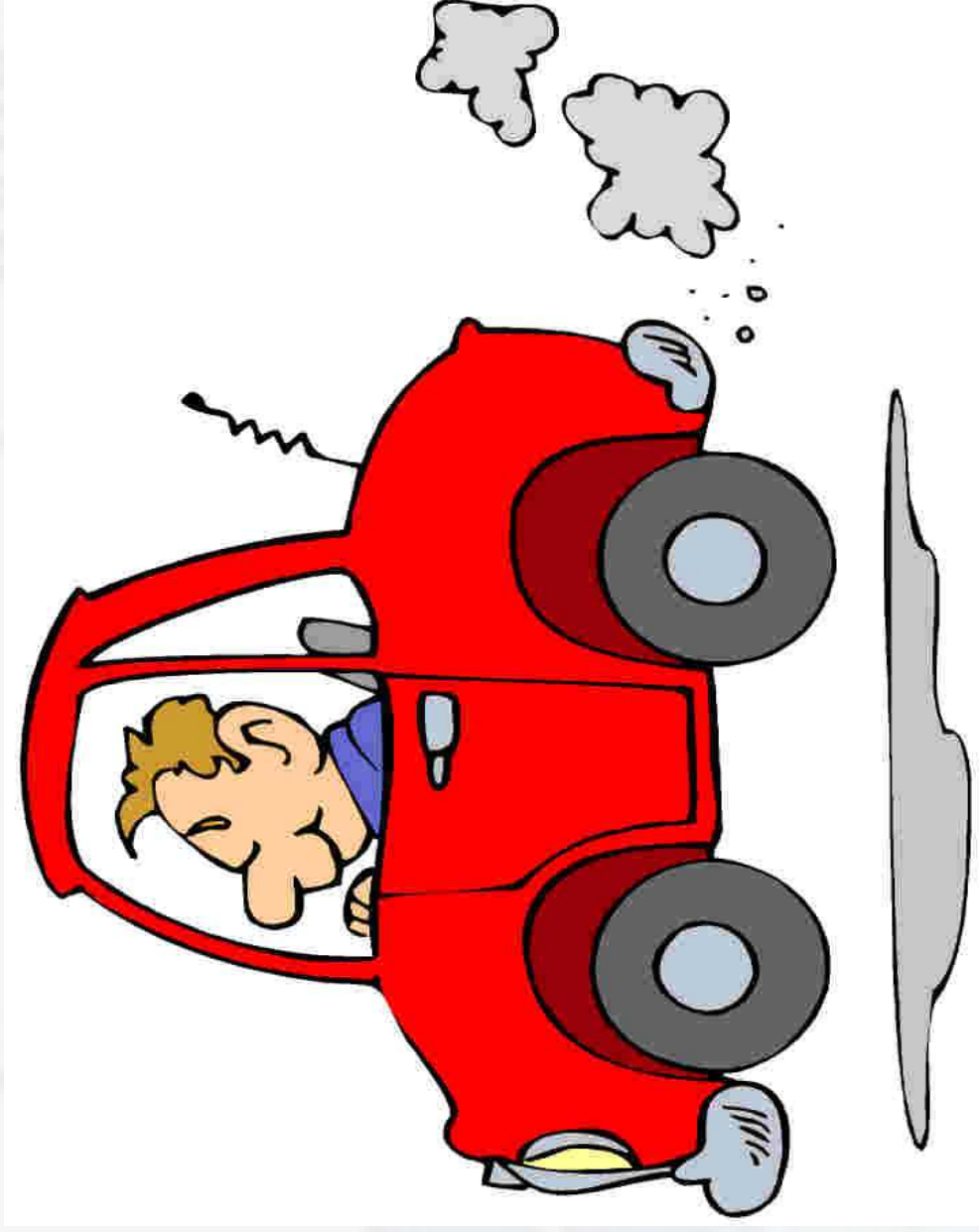
Quality Problems

- Repeated customer complaints about damaged goods/packing by stacking
- Written instructions:
 - Workers couldn't read, were not use to or not willing to read

Quality Problems



The car of the Boss: Good enough?



The car of the Boss: The Best!



The car of the Boss

The Boss of the company we are working for, should drive the very best car.

We want to show proudly to our friends: “That is the car of **my BOSS** (and **my company** is doing well)”!

Quality problem due to water impact

Asia:

Just some drops

Europe:

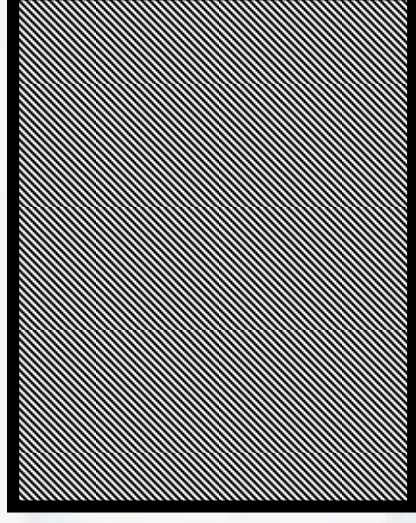
Rain

A normal shower

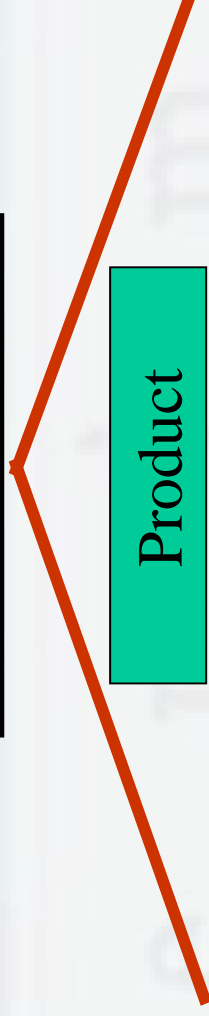
Pouring as hell



Product



Product



Management style

You are the manager of a factory and you see an operator doing nothing.

What do you do?

1. Nothing
2. You instruct him to start work again
3. Other possibility

The risk of loosing face

A management issue

To fill-in a vacancy for a production team
-leader two candidates are considered:

1. An experienced person with a very good track record and
2. A young one, with no experiences

And what if no:1 is a female?

Washroom issue

The new factory was equipped with high standard washroom facilities.

The next day we found footprints on the toilet seat. Because we didn't realize the majority of the workers were Asians.

**They were used to do their needs in
squad position**

Management dilemmas

Muslims are obliged to pray. Do you advise the management to allow a production stop for this purpose?

And if the majority is Muslim?

What about social life?

- My Malaysian neighbours push their child to read and write at the age of 3
- My Indian neighbours (higher caste) don't allow us to talk to their servant
- My Chinese neighbours believe in “their Holy Ghosts”

I do respect their habits and believes but I'm looking for somebody to share my thoughts

Conclusions

- Dealing with different cultures requires management skills
- Respect is an important management skill
- There are more solutions to a problem, than your preferred way
- How should I react if I was one of the other culture?