

Integrating Foreign Workers

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Presentation outline

- What do foreign workers need to learn in order to integrate into Canadian organizations?
- How do we bridge the gap?

What is the issue?

- The issue is
cultural / group differences.
- Foreign workers try to get their work done thinking that Canada operates according to the same unwritten rules as their home country.
- When they come from countries that are very different from Canada, this approach does not produce the expected results because of cultural differences.

Cultural Differences in the Workplace

Dress code, Org chart, Office layout, Presentations

Concept and use of time, time consciousness

Communication: Negotiation, persuasion, feedback

Relationships between men and women

Education, approach to problem solving

Manager / partner - employee relationships

Giving and receiving feedback, teamwork

Career management

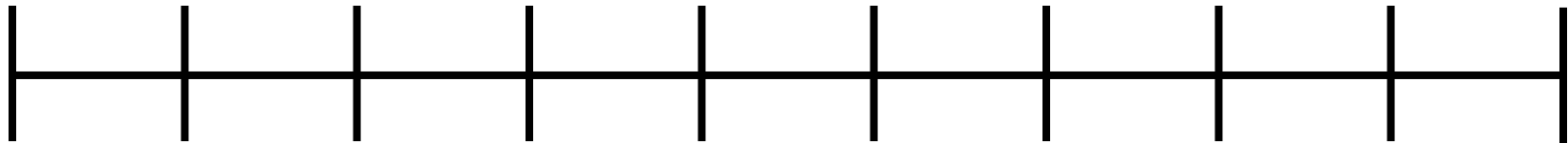
and many more....

What is the issue?

I prefer working for managers who

**give me enough freedom
so that I can determine the
best direction for myself**

**give me clear directions
so that I know what
they want me to do.**

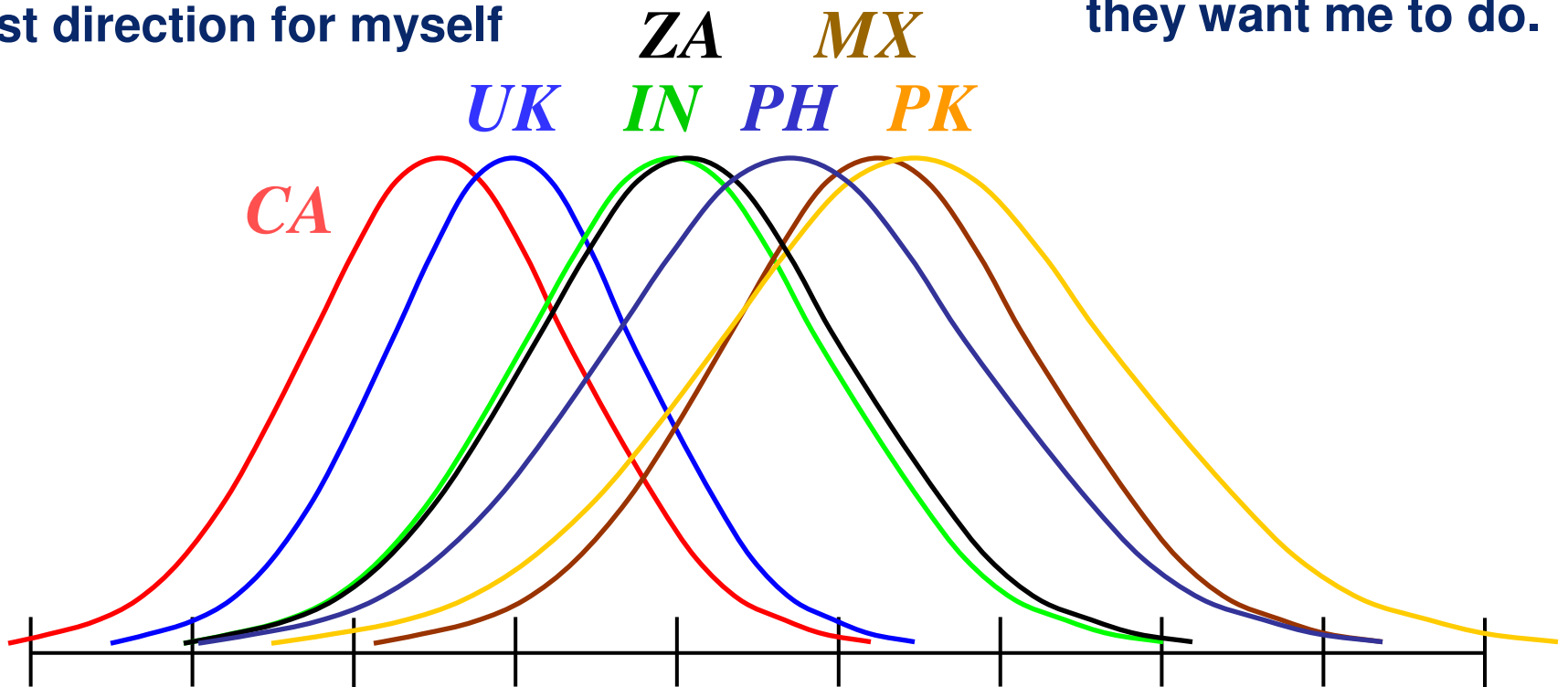


The real issue

I prefer working for managers who

give me enough freedom
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give me clear directions
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What do immigrants need to learn?

Foreign workers need to learn:

- How to “canadianize” their technical skills
- How to “canadianize” their soft skills
- How to deal with culture shock
- How their life partners can find a job

What do immigrants need to learn?

Adapting their technical skills to Canadian labour market requirements:

- Learn Canadian-specific:
 - Software
 - Programming language
 - Drugs
 - Tax laws
 - Etc.

What do immigrants need to learn?

Learning new soft skills:

- Communication skills: verbal and non-verbal
- Time management
- Writing reports / executive summaries
- Making public presentations
- Giving feedback
- Manager-employee relationship

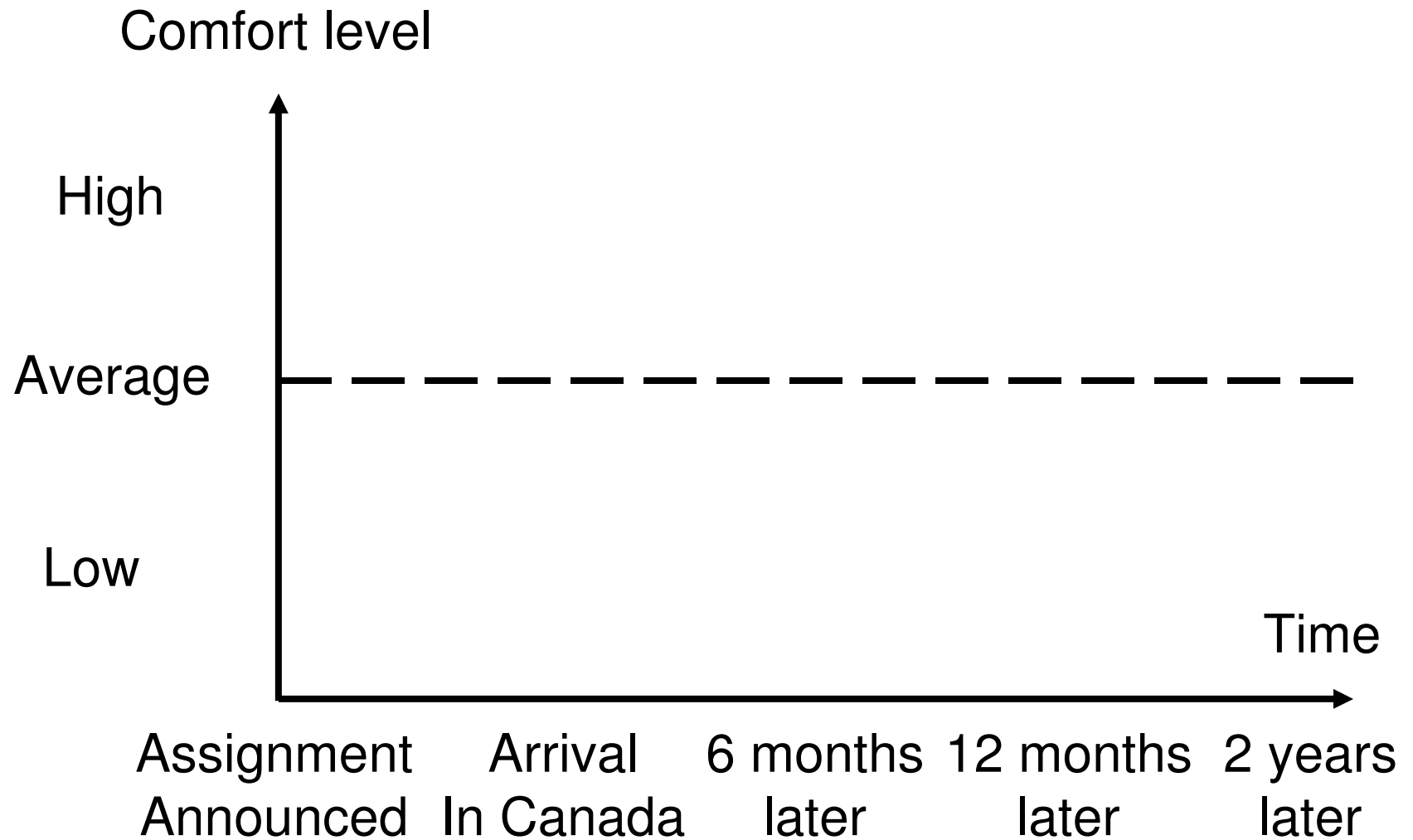
What do immigrants need to learn?

Learning new soft skills:

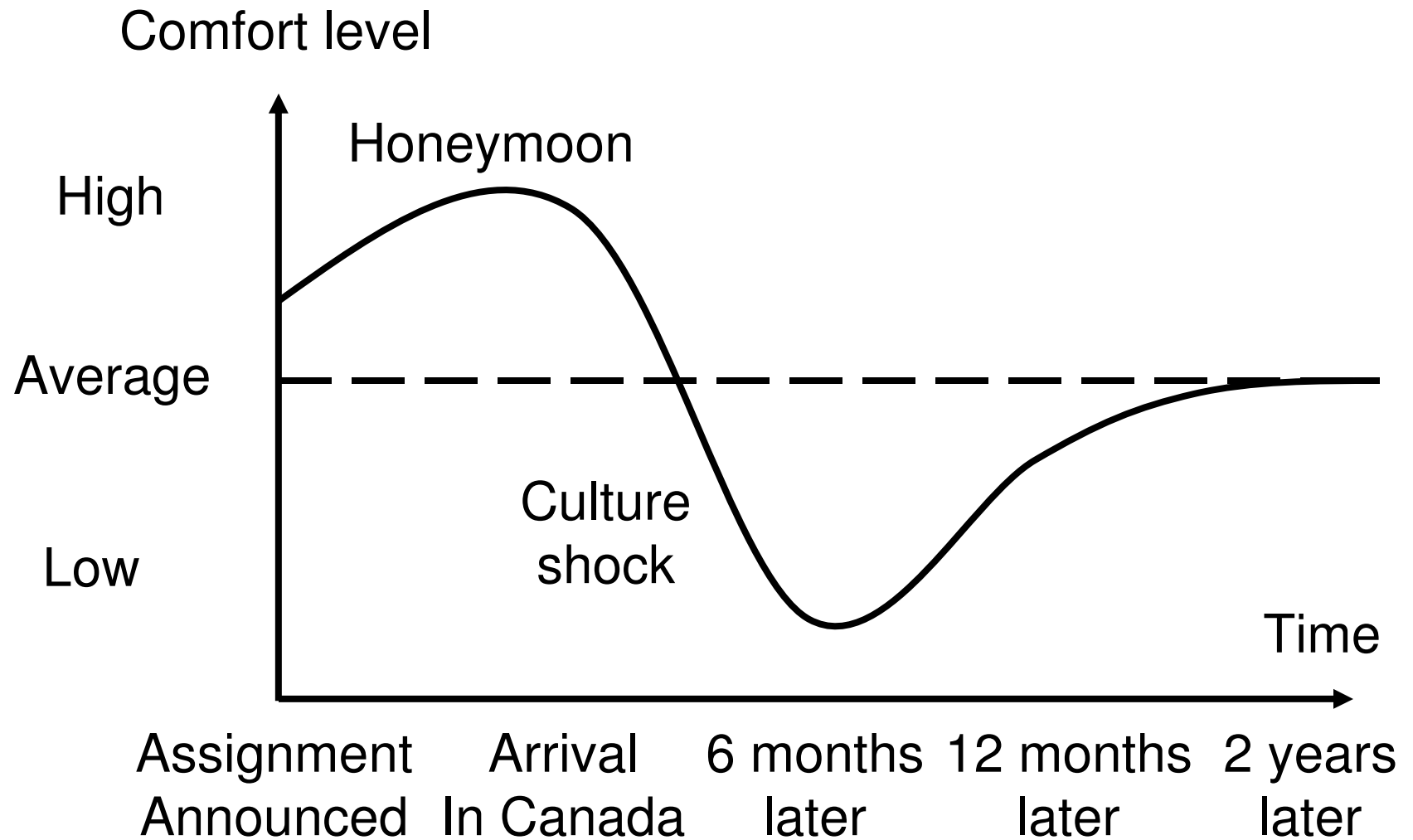
- Prioritization
- Team work
- Client relationship management
- Influencing people
- Networking
- Leadership

Teaching them these skills is the hard part!

Dealing with culture shock



Dealing with culture shock



Helping life partners find jobs

Life partners often want to find a job that matches their skills and experience and face challenges at every step of the job search process:

- Resume writing
- Interviewing
- Probation period

Bridging the gap

- In Canada, the responsibility for bridging the gap is shared 80/20
 - In the U.S., it is 90/10
 - in France and Germany, it is 99/1
 - In Japan, there are no foreign workers.
Japanese do not expect outsiders to become Japanese
- Foreign workers need to make the first step; Canadians are happy to reciprocate

Bridging the gap

- Compare two professional service firms that are both trying hard to attract diverse people, both in Canada and overseas:
 - A is trying to create an inclusive environment by focusing the majority of its efforts on its employees
 - B is trying to help its new hires understand and adapt to its current workforce by focusing the majority of its efforts on new hires

Bridging the gap

- B is getting better results than A:
 - A significant fraction of A's employees respond negatively to the efforts of the organization
 - Many people hired by A think that they do not need to adapt to the organization
 - The failure rate of foreign workers is higher in A than in B
 - The number of international new hires was higher in B than in A

Bridging the gap

- 80% of the organization's efforts to bridge the gap should be focused on helping foreign workers integrate
- 20% should be focused on helping employees understand the challenges of foreign workers and help them integrate
- Work on foreign workers first, employees second
- Focus on managers just above the glass ceiling

Bridging the gap

- One approach that lead to significant success in one organization consists in a combination of several action steps:
 - Use of tools that help specific audiences understand the impact of cultural differences
 - Mandatory group training for foreign workers
 - Buddy system
 - Cross-cultural coaching

Bridging the gap

- Cross-cultural training for all HR professionals, particularly those involved in recruiting
- Shorter, targeted training and coaching sessions for middle and senior managers delivered on demand (pull rather than push)
- Career management coaching and training for foreign workers delivered on demand (pull rather than push)

Conclusions

- Foreign workers don't just look different or speak a different language, they think differently and have different values.
- Cultural differences create both challenges and opportunities.
- The challenges come first!
- If your organization brings foreign workers in positions where they supervise Canadian employees or interact with Canadian clients, you may consider preparing them.