

How to enable your Asian employees to contribute to their full potential

Joy Chen



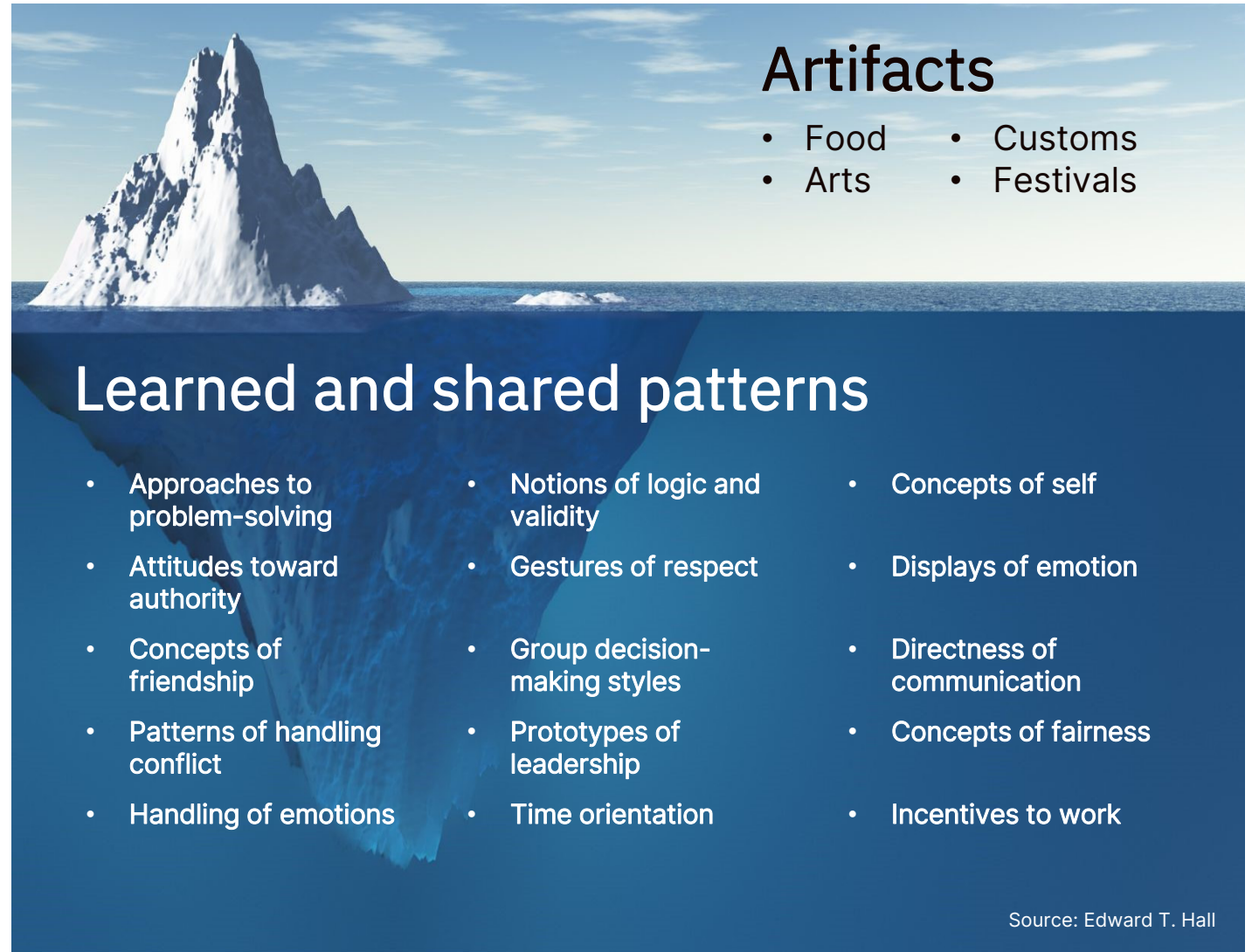


He must not have any ideas.

Not a leader.



What is culture?



Artifacts

- Food
- Arts
- Customs
- Festivals

Learned and shared patterns

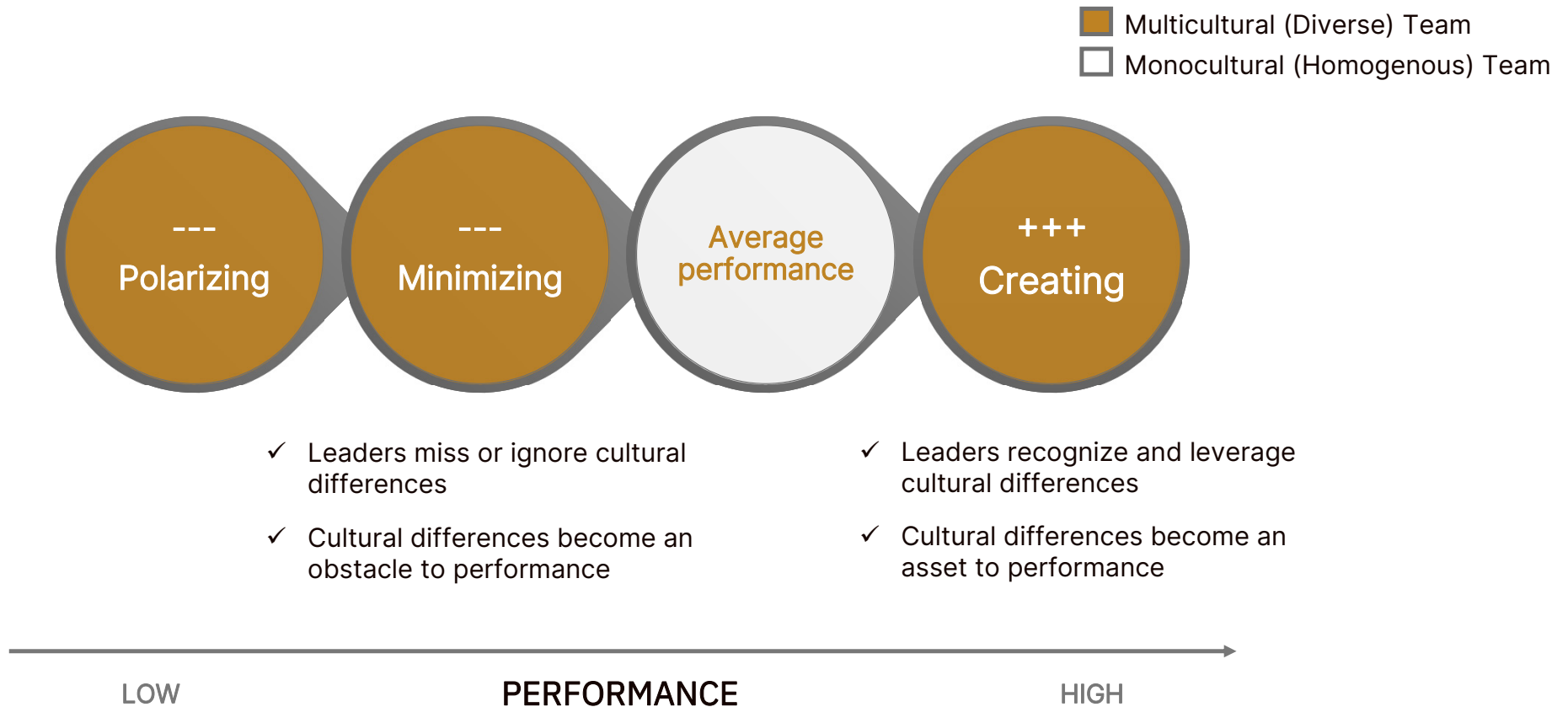
- Approaches to problem-solving
- Attitudes toward authority
- Concepts of friendship
- Patterns of handling conflict
- Handling of emotions
- Notions of logic and validity
- Gestures of respect
- Group decision-making styles
- Prototypes of leadership
- Time orientation
- Concepts of self
- Displays of emotion
- Directness of communication
- Concepts of fairness
- Incentives to work

Source: Edward T. Hall

Speaking = thinking?



Measuring the performance of diverse teams



Source: DiStefano and Maznevski, "Creating value with diverse teams in global management," Organizational Dynamics, Vol 29, Issue 1.

What minimizing looks like

A leader who...

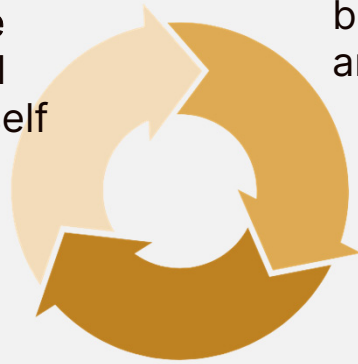
- Genuinely respects all team members and aims to create inclusion
- Unaware of the cultural basis of own ideas and actions
- Is interested in cultural differences -- customs and festivals -- but doesn't fully grasp the "differences that make a difference" to team performance
- Unintentionally enforces personal cultural norms, overshadowing other cultural expressions on the team
- As a result, team is culturally homogenous, even if it is demographically diverse



How minimizing locks in groupthink and impedes cultural understanding

Cultural Native

Authentic
IS Effective
Be your full
authentic self

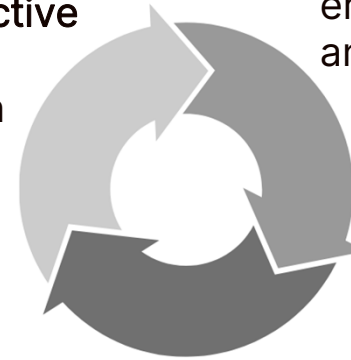


Repeated validation
boosts confidence
and belonging

Continuous reinforcing of
perspectives and influence

Cultural Non-Native

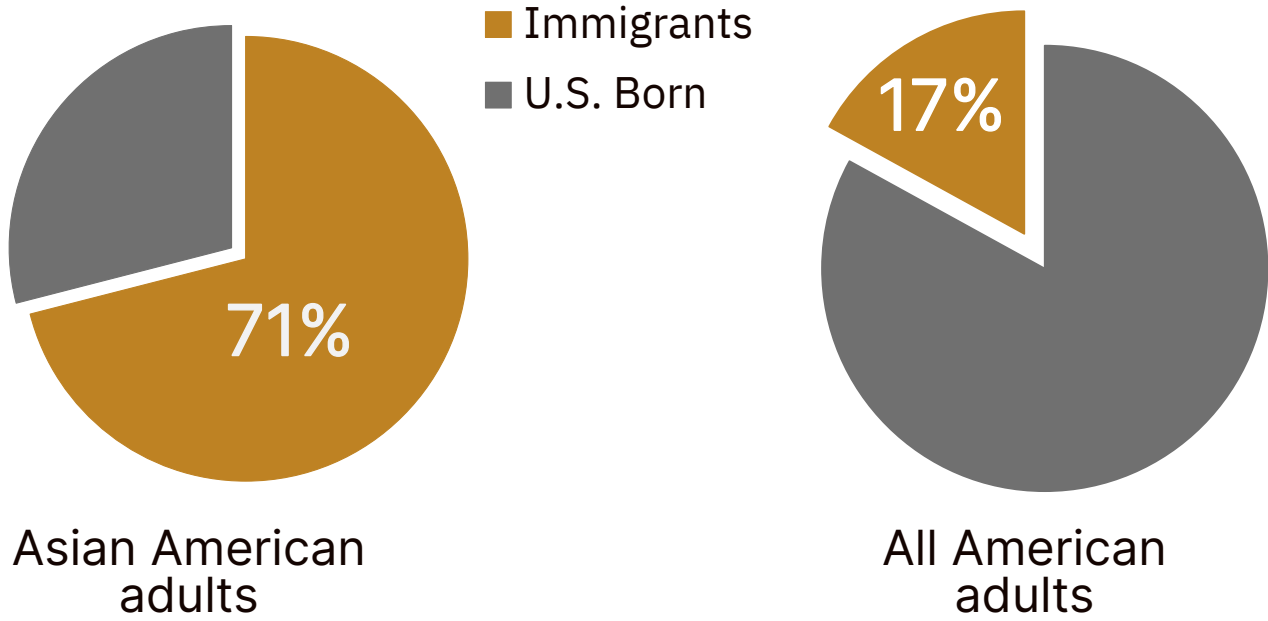
Authentic
OR Effective
Fit in by
giving in



Repeated sidelining
erodes confidence
and belonging

Continuous suppressing of
perspectives and influence

71% of Asian American adults are immigrants 17% of all American adults are immigrants



Source: Pew Research Center, 2021.





A barometer of team effectiveness:

Are your Asian team
members speaking up?



5 steps to enable your Asian employees to contribute to their full potential

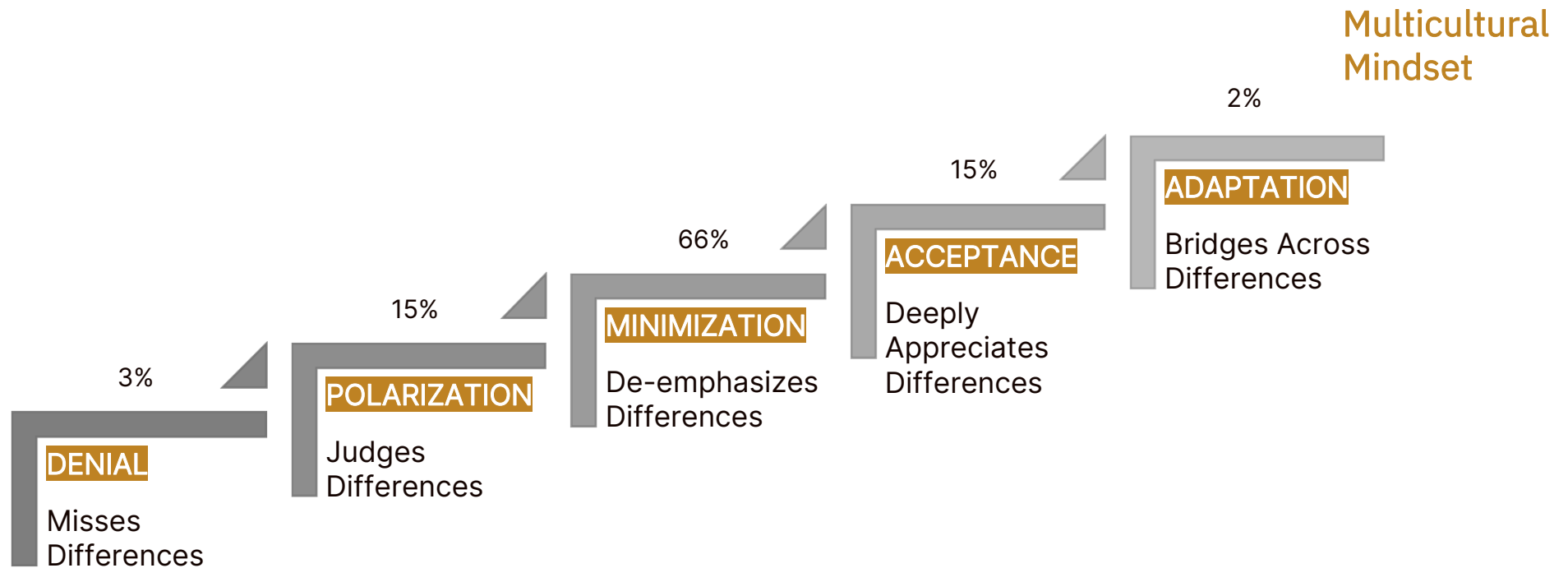




1.

Equip leaders to
lead effectively
across all cultures

The continuum of multicultural effectiveness



Monocultural
Mindset

Source: Intercultural Development Inventory

The continuum of multicultural effectiveness

	Denial	Polarization	Minimization		Acceptance	Adaptation
			(Native)	(Non-Native)		
Approach	Disinterest, Avoidance	Fear/Anger	Tolerance	Survival	Curiosity	Flexibility
Behavior	Benign intent, misses differences	Uncritical toward own cultural practices, overly critical of others'	Assumes commonalities	Assimilate or be marginalized	Deeply appreciates differences, limited ability to adapt	Regularly shifts perspective and behavior to achieve goals, will make mistakes
Individual Outcome	Limited experience and skill for understanding differences	Tendency to overconfidence, damaged work relationships	Continuous reinforcing of authentic voice	Continuous marginalizing of authentic voice	(Similar to Minimization)	Enable all to be effective and authentic
Organizational Outcome	Low diversity	Team fragmentation	Diminished productivity and innovation		(Similar to Minimization)	Innovation, agility, high performance
Development	Recognize the influence of culture	Decrease judgment, locate commonalities	Grow cultural self-awareness and other-awareness		Adapt behaviors	Lead and guide others to bridge cultures
%	3%	15%	66%		15%	2%

The continuum of multicultural effectiveness

	Denial	Polarization	Minimization		Acceptance	Adaptation
			(Native)	(Non-Native)		
Approach						
Behavior		Uncritical toward own cultural practices, overly critical of others'	Assumes commonalities	Assimilate or be marginalized	Deeply appreciates differences, limited ability to adapt	Fluidly shifts perspective and adapts behavior to achieve goals, will make mistakes
Individual Outcome						
Organizational Outcome						
Development						
%						

The continuum of multicultural effectiveness

	Denial	Polarization	Minimization		Acceptance	Adaptation
			(Native)	(Non-Native)		
Approach						
Behavior						
Individual Outcome						
Organizational Outcome			Diminished productivity and innovation	(Similar to Minimization)	Innovation, agility, high performance	
Development						
%						

- Assess the current multicultural effectiveness of leadership teams
 - Empower leaders with the cultural knowledge and skills to leverage cultural differences
 - Enable leaders to effectively engage, motivate and mobilize colleagues and clients of every background
-





2.

Equip Asians with professional development that meets their needs



1. Professional development was the #1 predictor of employee satisfaction and belonging.
2. Companies have consistently struggled to provide targeted professional development for Asian American employees.

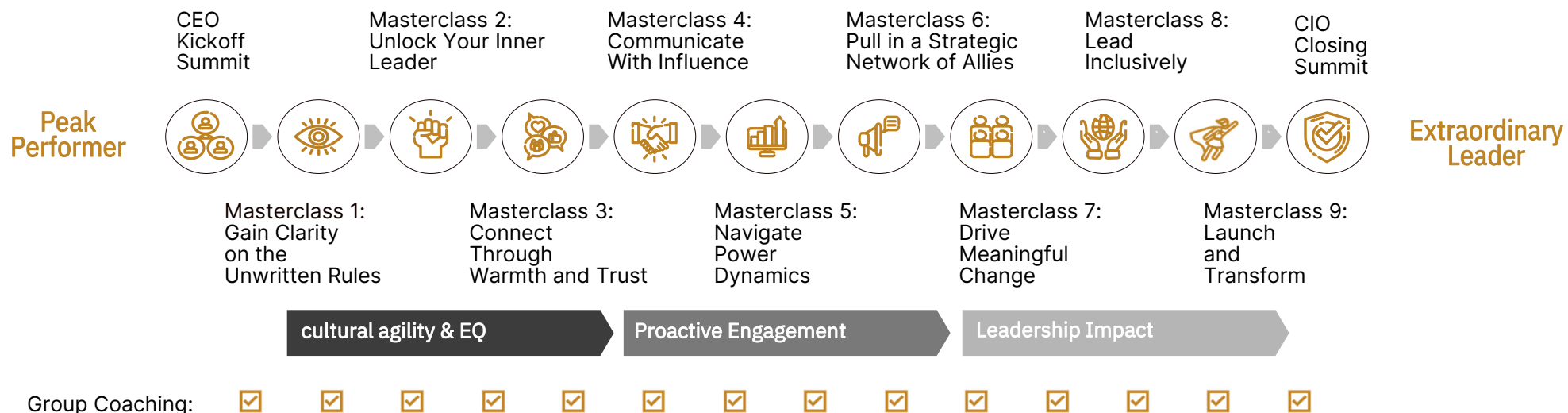


Asian Corporate
Survey 2020

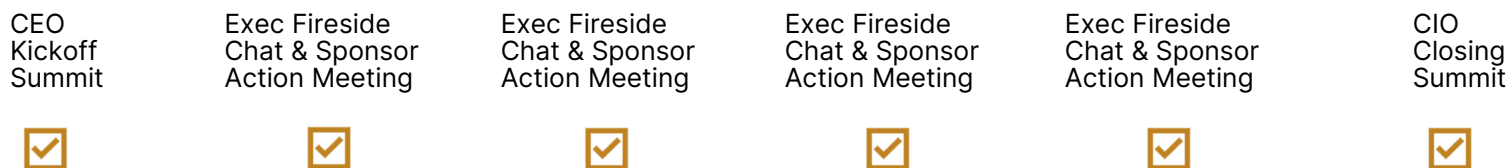


Asian Leadership Accelerator Roadmap

LEARNER TRAINING PROGRAM



SPONSOR/MANAGER TRAINING PROGRAM





Empower Asian employees to be fully effective *and* authentic

- With everyone
- Everywhere



3.

Promote fair
career pathways
for Asian
employees

Traits associated with an ideal American leader:

Assertive
Dominant
Charismatic



Traits associated
with Asians

Traits associated with an ideal American follower:

Highly Competent
Hard-Working
Docile



Traits associated
with Asians

Source: Kim et al, Journal of Business and Psychology, 2022.




“

Journal of
Business
and Psychology

“Once Asian Americans *are* in leadership roles, they are often viewed as equally effective as their White American counterparts.”

”

Source: Kim, Yourie, Winny Shen, Rochelle Evans and Frank Mu, Journal of Business and Psychology, 2022.



**Promote qualified Asians
to leadership and Board roles**



4.

Shift teams from demanding “culture fit” to embracing “culture add”



Common dynamics on minimizing teams

- Loudest voices “win”
- Others silenced and demotivated



Values for effective multicultural teams

- We each see things others don't
- Every teammate is important
- Differences are opportunities for mutual learning
- Within team, no winners or losers
- We will succeed together



- Shift team processes to enable, value and integrate the full contributions of every member
 - Establish more 1:1s for Asians with leaders; foster stronger emotional bonds for Asians with teammates
 - Celebrate and reward multicultural champions
-





5.

Leverage Asian employees to power domestic and global market growth

Asians are America's fastest-growing consumer and business group

% Change '00-'19








Source: Budiman, Abby and Neil Ruiz, "Key facts about Asian Americans," Pew Research Center, April 2021.

- Tap Asian employees' cultural/linguistic skills to access America's fastest-growing business and consumer markets
 - Leverage Asian employees' networks to capture opportunities across global markets
-



5-Step Roadmap

Enable your Asian employees to contribute to their full potential

	1	2	3	4	5
					
What	Equip leaders to lead effectively across all cultures	Equip Asians with professional development that meets their needs	Promote fair career pathways for Asian employees	Shift teams from demanding “culture fit” to embracing “culture add”	Leverage Asian employees to power domestic and global market growth
Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When leaders overlook cultural differences, these differences impede innovation and productivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ineffective training can impede Asian career progression and reinforce stereotypes of Asians as poor leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stereotypes of Asians as poor leaders cause organizations to underpromote and underinvest in them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groups tend to favor those who fit established norms, thus marginalizing Asians, introverts and others with divergent views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asians are often relegated to back-office technical roles with limited leadership potential
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the current multicultural effectiveness of leadership teams Empower leaders with the cultural knowledge and skills to leverage cultural differences Enable leaders to effectively engage and mobilize colleagues and clients of all backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable Asians to see cultural roots of own behaviors, and learn and leverage the unwritten rules of the Western corporate game Equip Asians to shift perspective and adapt behaviors to be fully effective and authentic in every situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote qualified Asians to leadership roles and thus debunk biases and expand innovation Strategically appoint Asians to Board roles to gain access to new markets and fresh perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift team processes to enable, value and integrate the full contributions of every member Establish more 1:1s for Asians with leaders; foster stronger emotional bonds for Asians with teammates Celebrate and reward multicultural champions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tap Asian employees’ cultural/linguistic skills to access America’s fastest-growing business and consumer markets Leverage Asian employees’ networks to capture opportunities across global markets

The Multicultural Leadership Institute

In today's rapidly shifting business arena, the ability to lead across cultural boundaries is more than a skill—it's a strategic necessity. Modern leaders are called to motivate diverse team members and sell to clients from all backgrounds, often relying on digital communication alone.

The Multicultural Leadership Institute is your partner in this journey. We equip your leaders with a nuanced understanding of diverse business norms, the agility to transcend cultural boundaries, and the capacity to build lasting trust within your organization and with your clients.

Led by Joy Chen, former Deputy Mayor of Los Angeles and executive recruiter for Fortune 500 leadership, we combine global leadership expertise with innovative insights from across the social sciences.

Together, we navigate the complexities of domestic and global markets, transforming potential challenges into potent drivers of growth.



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Let's stay in conversation and community



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