



## **Offshoring Management: Why should you care about culture?**

Here is an example of what I hear frequently from managers in the U.S. responsible for offshoring. "We had a telecon with the entire team working for me offshore and I allocated the tasks and set deadlines for each member of the team; at the end of the meeting, I asked "Are there any questions? Did everyone understand what each of you are supposed to do?" No one said anything; I concluded the meeting and went on to other things; only one week later when we had our next review meeting I found out that half the people had not gotten even the basics of what I had said and obviously had failed to make any progress; it is so frustrating; we lost valuable time on this project"

This is an example of failed communication due to cultural differences. Contrary to US culture, silence does not mean acceptance in other cultures. Since you set the deadline, they would make heroic efforts to meet the deadline rather than appear disrespectful to your wishes, especially if this is the start of a new relationship.

Another cultural behavior is respect for authority; for example if someone of a higher rank is present in the meeting, it is rare to get contrarian input from one of the team members. Despite hard work by the offshore team, these behaviors can adversely affect your project schedules. Due to western influence things are changing in India and other countries, it is to your advantage to understand cultural norms offshore and how they can affect your projects.