



Using the Cultural Orientation Indicator® to Drive More Effective Elicitation Strategies Across the Globe

By Professor Paul Kinsinger, Thunderbird School of Global Management
with contributions from Julia Dorfmeister and Yeong Lee Khoo, Principal Consultants at
the Thunderbird Learning Consulting Network

Does your company have customers from other countries? Suppliers? Competitors? Are you increasingly operating in a global competitive intelligence environment?

Of course the answer is “yes” for virtually every company these days. And one result is that CI practitioners working for such companies find themselves having to elicit intelligence from people all over the world. This is tough enough, even for CI’ers who are truly global citizens, but it can be a tall order for those used to working primarily within their own cultural environs.

One answer is to reach out to a local CI outsourcer who can be your “feet on the street” and provide your key cultural interface in another country. Indeed, this is a proven strategy for CI professionals who are less familiar with a given market or foreign competitor. This can be expensive and occasionally unreliable, however.¹

Moreover, as workforces become increasingly diversified—especially for global companies—improving “in-house” capabilities to collect intelligence across cultural divides is becoming a valuable human capital asset for CI’ers of any stripe. Are you comfortable engaging in a CI-gathering conversation with that Indian service provider your competitors use? With the Chinese suppliers who manufacture their products? With the US or European end-use customers from several of your competitors?

For those of you who say, “Hey, I can’t get access to those people anyhow...not allowed. I have to use my sales guys, my purchasers, and other operations folks to reach out to these sources.” Well, how good are the people you’re counting on to serve as your eyes and ears in eliciting your key intelligence needs across cultures?²

There are, of course, now several books and articles that address cultural issues around doing business globally, and indeed, the body of knowledge has grown more sophisticated since the days of, “Don’t eat with your left hand” or “Here, a signed contract is only the beginning of a negotiation.” There’s even the beginning of an intriguing body of knowledge around the science of truth-telling that will have important

¹ See, for example, Erik Glitman, [Outsourcing Competitive Intelligence](#), Competitive Intelligence Magazine, V10, Number 2, March-April 2007, pgs. 34-35

² See Karen Rothwell, International CI Requires a Softer Approach, Competitive Intelligence Magazine, V11, Number 5, Sept.-October 2008, pgs. 46-47



implications for human elicitation techniques.³ But, there's not much that provides specific insight into the cultural aspects of, or issues associated with, eliciting CI across cultures.

That's why we at Thunderbird, one of the world's leading global business education providers, have found The Cultural Orientation Indicator®, a statistically validated assessment tool created by the Training Management Corporation, to be so valuable. Designed to give users a detailed framework for understanding work style preferences across ten key human dimensions, results from the COI assessment can be applied to improving a CI professional's abilities across the spectrum of core CI competencies like diagnostics, elicitation, synthesis and analysis, and communication. TMC has also created COI's for several countries showing specific overall cultural preferences—another aspect of the tool that we believe can be used to improve CI'ers' capabilities to elicit intelligence across cultures. How does it work? Let's take a look.

Introducing The Cultural Orientations Indicator®...

TMC refers to the Cultural Orientations Indicator® as “a web-based self-reporting tool for the development of culturally competent managers and leaders. Through the reliable assessment of an individual's cultural preferences and comparative analyses, individuals acquire the awareness and knowledge necessary for building effective skills and behavioral adaptations for multicultural management and business.” The COI® generates an analysis of cultural gaps by “comparing your COI® cultural profile with national and regional cultural profiles,”⁴ and it reveals similarities and differences as well as potential culture-based risk and success factors. On the basis of these results, individuals can develop effective cross-cultural management and business strategies.



What does a COI profile look like?

As you can see, the [COI](#) incorporates 10 dimensions of culture, which each meet three criteria:

1. Each dimension recognizes an important aspect of business and social life. 2. Each dimension represents components found in every socio-cultural environment. It is a basic orientation and shared rationale for behavior.

³ For example, see *Emerging Cognitive Neuroscience and Related Technologies*, the National Academies Press, 2008

⁴ See TMC's website at <http://www.tmc.com>, where you can find more about the COI at http://www.tmc.com/channel.aspx?page_id=A110.



3. Each dimension has practical value to anyone who needs to reconcile, integrate or transcend cultural difference in order to obtain a desired outcome.

...and its Ten Dimensions of Culture...

Each of the ten dimensions measured by the COI contains at least one cultural continuum, which allows the tool to identify the directionality of hidden values, expectations, drivers of social phenomena and behavioral patterns.

The ten dimensions are as follows:

Environment: How individuals view and relate to the people, objects, and issues in their sphere of influence. The range is from those who want to *control their environment* on one end, such as Americans, to those who *value harmony and constraint* above all, on the other, such as many Asian cultures.

Time: How individuals perceive the nature of time and its use. This has three axes—one regarding **focus**, such as those who prefer to focus on one thing at a time to those who are multi-focused; a second that measures those who see *time as fixed* versus those who see it as *fluid*; and a third that captures a person's predilection for viewing things in the *present, the past, or the future*. For example, many Americans are single focused, fixed time, and future oriented, which is why they often face challenges with Latin Americans, for example, who are multi-focused, see time as a fluid thing, and for whom the past is a key driver.

Action: How individuals view actions and interactions. This dimension measures one's penchant for "*doing*" versus "*being*." Again, Americans are very doing-oriented, while many other cultures, especially in the Middle East, are being-oriented.

Communication: How individuals express themselves. This dimension measures communication styles and predilections across four indicators: *context*, which refers to how much the context of a situation drives the conversation (Americans typically say what they mean, which is low context; in a high context culture, such as Japan, you are supposed to surmise things from what's not being said); *direct versus indirect* communication styles (Americans are typically direct; Japanese are indirect); *expressive* styles, which means using facial and hand gestures as part of communicating versus an *instrumental* style, in which a person is far less demonstrative when communicating; and how much *formality* is required to communicate in a given culture. Americans are typically low context, direct, expressive, and informal in their conversational approach; on the other end of the spectrum, Japanese are high context, indirect, instrumental, and very formal in business communications.



Space: How individuals demarcate their physical and psychological space. Americans typically treat their physical and psychological space as *private* and guard it against strangers; other cultures are conditioned to a more *public* approach to both aspects. Hence, Americans are uncomfortable with customs in the Middle East in which men kiss each others' cheeks in greeting and hold hands when walking together.

Power: How individuals view different power relationships. Western cultures typically value *equality* between people, especially in the US. In many other cultures, especially in Asia, age and status associated with it and position are venerated, and *hierarchy* is paramount.

Individualism: How individuals define their identity. This dimension ranges from those on one end, such as many Americans, who see themselves as *individuals* first and as members of a community second, to those on the other end of the spectrum, such as many Asians, who see their interests as tied first and foremost to being *members of a community*.

Competitiveness: How individuals are motivated. This dimension measures what motivates people in regard to others; many Americans, for example, are motivated by *competitive factors*, such as getting ahead and succeeding personally. In other cultures, the prevailing cultural emphasis is on succeeding through *cooperating with others* and moving the larger enterprise ahead.

Structure: How individuals approach change, risk, ambiguity, and uncertainty. This dimension ranges from those who like to work within orderly confines, to those who flourish in flexible situations. Many Americans are pre-disposed toward *flexibility*, while many Japanese prefer *order*.

Thinking: How individuals conceptualize. This dimension measures how people think, from *inductive to deductive* reasoning to *linear to systemic* patterns of data collection and analysis. Many Americans are inductive, linear thinkers who like short, relevant statements and anecdotal examples, to Germans, who like theoretical concepts and abstractions.

...while Being Wary of Stereotypes

Of course, as TMC articulates, "it is important to remain wary of stereotypes." Just as there are Americans and Australians who are fluid time-oriented and are indirect communicators, so too are there Brazilians who attend meetings at the time agreed upon, and Japanese who are direct communicators. As TMC says, "by assigning particular cultural orientations to national cultures, a generalization is created and is only a starting point for further inquiry, which is subject to review, validation and change. The key



differences among cultures are the emphasis and the expression given to one over the other depending on the situation.”

Harnessing the COI for CI Purposes....

As the informed reader would certainly realize, the COI is particularly applicable to those who are engaged in such corporate activities as:

- Global Management and Leadership Development
- Multicultural Teambuilding and Team Development
- Global Diversity Initiatives
- Mapping Cultural Difference through Aggregate Data Analysis
- Cultural Integration Initiatives (Mergers, Acquisitions and Joint Ventures)
- Executive Coaching
- International Assignee Preparation

Thunderbird would like to add one more activity to this list—pursuing excellence in global competitive intelligence.

...and Starting With Collecting Intelligence From Primary Sources

Anyone who’s been around CI for a while knows something about techniques and approaches for eliciting intelligence from primary sources. Indeed, some CI consultancies specialize only in primary source intelligence, utilizing their deep network of contacts throughout targeted industries, an aggressive outreach strategy, and the practiced application of several tried-and-true techniques. Most of these techniques have emerged from an amalgam of specialized avenues: national security intelligence spotting and recruitment practices; investigation and witness questioning approaches used by law enforcement personnel and in the legal profession; inquiry techniques from the world of psychology; investigative questioning as taught by schools of journalism; and the art of networking that is innate in all of us and practiced to a fine point by some.

There are several time-honored elicitation approaches that play to basic human instincts:

- Trading information, or what I call, “give to get.” This is the basic currency of almost any free exchange of information, whether it’s about the market, a gambling tip, or a great restaurant.
- Leveraging people’s instincts to instruct and explain. We all know people who seem pre-disposed to want to tell you everything they know, and will do so if prompted in the right way. People who fit into this category often have a need to have their “inner teacher” activated.



- Leveraging people’s instincts to want to correct information they know to be wrong. Some people live in a more black and white world than others; believe in the facts as they know them; and have a need to state things “for the record.”
- Playing to people’s expertise, which activates their response to flattery. Most people appreciate being recognized for their particular expertise, access, or achievements.
- Sympathizing with complaints, which allow people to air grievances. Complaints have to be filtered carefully, of course, since people will also allow their personal biases to color the facts and insights they pass on, but good listening skills can help control for this.
- Asking for help and guidance, which play to the desire on the part of some people to be good Samaritans.

While many CI professionals are truly gifted at several of these techniques, others will say that they need practice to be effective, especially at all of them. That might be true in our professional milieus, but I’d guess that nearly all of us have great real world experience with these techniques in that most delicate and challenging of all human interactive arenas—dealing with our families. Think about the times when diplomacy or family politics have required you to be very creative about learning something from a relative. People who have worked inside a large organization for a long time have probably also had many occasions to practice these different techniques.

A Four-Step Process for Global Elicitation Excellence

The **first step** in our process for building global elicitation excellence is to create an elicitation techniques grid for the global sources of intelligence you hope to target. If you know your sources personally, then map their personalities against various elicitation techniques in a way that helps you target them most effectively. We use a simple grid with the names of sources down one side and the various techniques across the top. You can gain more value from the grid by color-coding the cells or annotating them with commentary about the source. If you don’t know much about the people you are targeting, then tap into others who may know them (your key sales guys in that region) or do some second-hand personality analysis on them from any internet hits you get (such as social network sites).



Exhibit One: Elicitation Techniques Grid

<i>Name</i>	<i>Trading Information</i>	<i>Playing Dumb</i>	<i>Saying something wrong</i>	<i>Using Flattery</i>	<i>Sympathizing with complaints</i>	<i>Asking for help or guidance</i>
Anca Nakar	Only sometimes; usually she's weary of this	Loves to "teach" you	An engineer by training; always thinks in right or wrong	Does not work!	Sometimes, if she's really angry with her work situation	No. Thinks dumb is as dumb does
Monica Petrone	She likes to trade, but isn't that good at what she can reveal	Sometimes; needs lots of prodding	Won't correct you; won't want to hurt feelings	sometimes	Loves to "whine" about things...always spills a lot	A good Samaritan; will always offer help
Mr. Yue Chan	Will trade information; best way to get to him!	He will try to help you with information you need	He will provide his opinion but won't always correct you	Sometimes this works!	Will sympathize with your situation	He will help you if you ask!
Dr. Joerg Mueller	Likes to exchange views on things, but won't share details.	Doesn't work on him at all.	He usually tells you when something is wrong.	Not that comfortable with it.	Not a complainer. Thinks it's time and energy wasted	He will help if it fits into his 9-5 schedule.
Vijay Sangal	Won't work! Too egotistical; has to be focused on him.	Loves to teach you!		Usually works	Doesn't like to complain	

Mapping Yourself n the Elicitation Grid

Its one thing to have a good feel for how to approach your sources, but it's another to do so through a sober appreciation of which techniques you are good at. The **second step** in our process is to fundamentally understand which of the techniques outlined above (as well as others) you are most comfortable with and why. Here, the use of some basic assessment tools such as Myers-Briggs and Belbin-Kolb could help you get started. For example, if you are an introvert by nature, triggering a source's urge to instruct or sympathizing with complaints plays to your strong suit. On the other hand, if you are an extravert, triggering a source's urge to correct or using the flattery card might be your best approach. We all have some default positions that derive from our basic personalities, and the better we understand these, the more likely we are to be able to leverage them.



Exhibit Two: A Personal Elicitation Techniques Grid

Name	Trading Information	Playing Dumb	Saying something wrong	Using Flattery	Sympathizing with complaints	Asking for help or guidance
"Your Name"	I'm not sure enough to do this confidently	I'm good at this	I'm pretty good at this, too	I'm great at this	I could be better at this; don't have enough patience	I just can't do this...runs against the grain

Adding in COI Country Profiles

Now you're ready to add the COI filter, and our **third step** is to utilize the COI country profiles to help with your task of sizing up sources from other cultures. If you know your targeted source personally or have some second-hand information about them, then the COI for his or her country will help you gain further insight into how to conduct an intelligence-gathering conversation. If you don't know them personally, the COI can point you to some clues about how to work with them. Again, keep in mind that just as your personal COI assessment may differ from your country's predominant norms, so, too, may that of your targeted source.

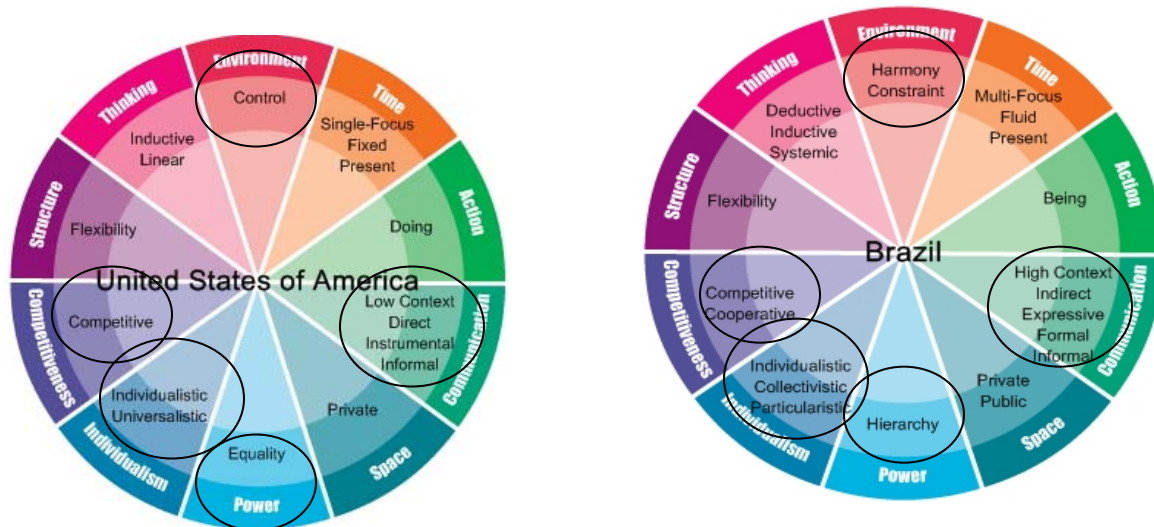
Of course, all ten COI dimensions discussed above are applicable to one aspect or another of elicitation, but our experience at Thunderbird is that the most critical dimensions for focusing on the acquisition or exchange of intelligence are **environment, communication, power, individualism, and competitiveness**. Let's look at why.

- **Environment:** A potential source from a culture in which control is more prevalent than working in harmony will likely perceive information as something that he or she has a personal right or responsibility to wield or withhold in the pursuit of a goal. On the other hand, someone from a culture that is predominantly harmony-oriented might be more inclined to see the same information as something that is the responsibility of a larger group and may not feel that he or she has sufficient authority to discuss.
- **Communication:** A potential source from a low context, direct, and informal culture such as the US would likely be open to a direct, straightforward approach that made clear what was in it for them personally. On the other hand, a potential source from a high context, indirect cultural preference would probably require a much more low-key approach based fundamentally on establishing a level of comfort first and perhaps demonstrating the value of an exchange for the organization the source worked for.
- **Power:** Approaching a source from a culture with a preference toward hierarchy would put a premium on confining questions to that person's precise role in his or



her organization and span of responsibility, whereas a source from a culture of equality would likely feel empowered to respond to a wider range of inquiry.

- **Individualism:** Potential sources of intelligence from cultures that trend toward individual versus a collective preference are probably more approachable via avenues that appeal to what’s in it for them and to techniques that play to the ego. Those whose cultural preferences are collectivist, on the other hand, might be more open to avenues that make clear the potential value of the conversation for their organization or business unit, rather than themselves.
- **Competitiveness:** Here, too, potential sources from cultures that trend toward competitiveness are more likely to see valuable information as a personal differentiator and would perceive being “in the know” and “right” as competitive factors. On the other end, sources from cultures that trend toward more cooperative preferences might be more open approaches that play to helping their overall organizations.

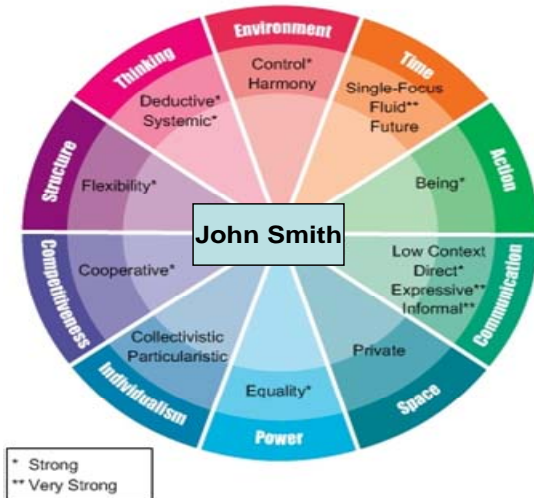


In these COI country profile graphics, you can see how different Brazil is from the US in each of the five dimensions most applicable to elicitation approaches.

A **fourth step** would be to take your own COI assessment and gap analysis and then map it to the country profile of the source in question. An acute understanding of your own profile will help you match up with the profiles of your sources from other cultures, as you will see demonstrated in the case examples below.



Case Studies: The COI in Action



So, let’s look at some practical applications of the COI in gathering CI on the global stage. Germany, Austria and Switzerland represent the heartland of German-speaking Europe and lie at the crossroads of European culture. Although these countries have been linked throughout history, German-speaking Europe is not one monolithic culture but composed of many regional cultures and dialects. Religious upheaval, and the subsequent north-south split between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism has added to the regions complexity. Throughout Europe’s history each of these three countries had to re-define itself

not only geographically but culturally, explaining the need for separate national identities. German-speaking Europe’s history and socio-political past is reflected in three COI profiles that show many common characteristics as well as differences in preferences.

A better understanding of how people prefer to communicate is a key to smarter elicitation. In general, the Germanic communication style is formal, low in context and direct. In order to make a good first impression, acknowledge your contact’s status and accomplishments by addressing them with Mr/Mrs/Ms, followed by their academic or work title, and their last name. Being offered to address someone by their first name and using the informal “you” is not typical for the first few encounters, and when offered, is a sign of friendship and trustworthiness.

A low context and direct communication style emphasize the general Germanic view of “time”. The content of a message should be conveyed in an explicit and succinct manner. Written communication is generally preferred, because it reduces the likelihood of ambiguity. A subtle but not unimportant difference between the three countries is that although all three cultures prefer direct communication, Austrians and Swiss tend to take a more indirect and diplomatic approach when dealing with negative feedback or disagreements.

Germany, Austria and Switzerland each have a generally fixed approach to time and they prefer to focus on one issue at a time before moving on to the next topic. What does this mean for the CI professional trying to elicit information? Be on time, stick to the agreed upon topics, don’t digress, and end the meeting on time. There is no translation for the English expression “fashionably late”!



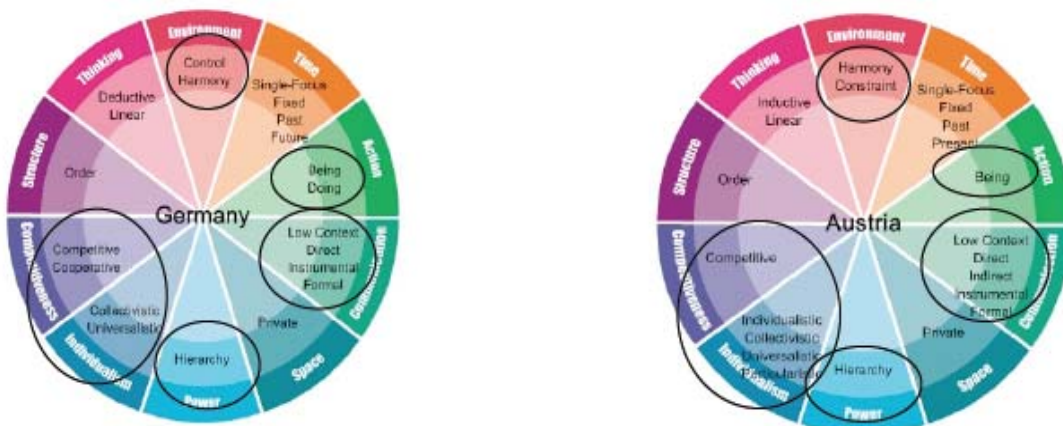
The physical boundaries that are set in all three cultures also pertain to the way information gets shared in these societies. All three cultures have a strong sense of separating their work life from their private lives. Even within these separate spheres, information is usually only shared if is pertinent to a certain situation or required to address a specific topic or issue.

With the cultural background and the work life preferences of these three countries in mind, how does this side by side comparison between these similar cultures show how subtle differences in the COI can impact the likelihood of one elicitation technique being more or less successful than another? Let's go ahead and take a look at how these variances could be reflected in the ETG, and how these additional insights can help you adjust your approach to get to the answers you need easier and faster.

Please meet Dr. Joerg Mueller, Germany and Dr. Joerg Mueller, Austria; both men share the same ETG...

Name	Trading Information	Playing Dumb	Saying something wrong	Using Flattery	Sympathizing with complaints	Asking for guidance
Dr. Joerg Mueller	Likes to exchange views on things, but won't share details.	Doesn't work on him at all.	He usually tells you when something is wrong.	Not that comfortable with it.	Not a complainer. Thinks it's time and energy wasted.	He will help if it fits into his 9-5 schedule.

...yet, their COI's reveal subtle differences that could potentially affect how you would try to elicit information from them.



Taking a closer look at the way Dr. Mueller, Germany and Dr. Mueller, Austria tend to view "Trading Information", the COI's of Germany and Austria reveals that both



cultures have a hierarchical orientation, and therefore, information in organizations tends to move vertically rather than being shared more freely.

The varying preferences in the Competitiveness and Individualism dimensions can give you a clue about the underlying reason on *why* Dr. Mueller, Germany and Dr. Mueller, Austria might not share any detailed information. While Dr. Mueller, Germany might not actually know any details because they are not necessary for his level of responsibility, that does not mean he would not be willing to direct you to a colleague who has the knowledge you are looking for. With this in mind, there is a good chance that “Trading Information” with Dr. Mueller, Germany will get you to the pieces of missing details you are looking for.

Dr. Mueller, Austria on the other hand, might not share with you any detailed information due to a higher level of competitiveness in Austrian organizations and a more individualistically-driven culture compared to Germany. In Austrian companies decisions are still made primarily at the top, and employees may not know how their projects relate to the rest of the company. Dr. Mueller, Austria might either not want to trade any detailed information he has, or, unlike his German counterpart, he might not know where you could get it from.

So how about triggering the Muellers’ potential *urge to correct* by “Saying Something Wrong”? The example ETG of our two sources show that both men coming from cultures that prefer a low context, direct, instrumental and formal style of communication, which indicates that they will most likely tell you if something you said is incorrect. This in itself can be helpful to you, if you are looking for an absolute statement. Yet which one of them, based on their respective cultural backgrounds, would be more likely to not only tell you what is wrong, but also reveal what is right?

Referring back to the COI, Germans are driven to shape their environment and establish and meet high standards, displaying a control orientation. The harmony orientation is evident in work and social settings, with an emphasis on building a strong sense of responsibility to others while also developing a collegial group dynamic. Dr. Mueller from Germany considers it important to identify a problem or conflict, and address it immediately; therefore potentially being more inclined to correct any statement he knows to be wrong.

Dr. Mueller from Austria, compared to his German counterpart, puts a higher emphasis on avoiding potential conflict to maintain harmony in his work and private life. He prefers subtle ways of conveying messages, showing constraint which, when combined with a more indirect communication style, makes him more likely to avoid confrontation. Dr. Mueller, Austria might let you know if your statement is incorrect, but there is a good chance that this would make him uncomfortable, and therefore, trying to avoid speaking to you in the future.



These examples shows how our personal susceptibility and comfort level of how we give or get information can often be accounted to the cultural norms and values we have grown up with, accustomed to and comfortable with.

Chinese from China vs. Chinese from Southeast Asia

Chinese from the Southeast Asia countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have different ways of eliciting intelligence information from their counterparts compared to Chinese from Mainland China or Taiwan. Most of the Chinese in Southeast Asia live in a multi-racial society with Chinese, Malays, Indians, and various indigenous cultures. Over the last century or so, these political and socio-cultural differences shaped the Chinese from the Southeast Asia region into forming a slightly different COI profile than the Chinese from Mainland China or Taiwan.

Let's take a look at the case of elicitation techniques between Mr. Chan in China and Mr. Chan in Singapore! Even though these two men shared the same Chinese ethnicity, they have different COI profiles due to the different living environments.



Name	Trading Information	Playing Dumb	Saying something wrong	Using Flattery	Sympathizing with complaints	Asking for guidance
Mr. Yue Chan	Will trade information; best way to get to him!	He will try to help you with information you need	He will provide his opinion but won't always correct you	Sometimes this works!	Will sympathize with your situation	He will help you if you ask!

To better elicit information from Mr. Chan, China and Mr. Chan, Singapore, you can try a few different approaches by looking at their individual COI profiles. Chinese in Singapore are generally less collectivistic than Chinese in China. Their communication



style also tends to be less indirect. Referring to the ETG above, to approach Mr. Chan in Singapore for information, one will have a better success rate when trying to ‘trade information’ while at the same time, being direct and open about your motives. In China, any information a source shares with you might need to be approved by his/her peers at work due to the strong collectivistic nature. In Malaysia or Singapore, having a good relationship with your source might be sufficient to position you to elicit information.

The other approach you can try to elicit information from both Mr. Chans is by saying something wrong (refer to the ETG above). According to both men’s COI profiles, they are both indirect and high context in their communication style. However, Mr. Chan, Singapore is more likely to correct you and provide you with the ‘right’ information because he is less indirect and does not live in a constrained and orderly society like Mr. Chan, China does.

Even though Southeast Asia Chinese live in a more open, harmonious, and less controlled environment, they are still very respectful of the hierarchical structure at work, just as is the case in China. In a power distance society like China, one can expect key information to be controlled at the top management level. You might need to target and access your touch points from the top level in order to get information.

The Next Phase: Style-Switching

Ultimately, of course, many CI professionals would aspire to being top-notch intelligence collectors, capable of working a large and rich vein of personal sources for that kind of insight that corporate executives put the most faith in. Indeed, we all know people who we consider supremely deft at this—capable of sizing up situations quickly, of connecting to almost anyone, and, frankly, of learning virtually anything they want from others. We see them as talented or charismatic, with the “gift of gab;” often, we call them, “people people.” And while they may, indeed, have a number of characteristics that make them extremely effective at elicitation, the one thing many probably share is that they can “style-switch”—i.e., the ability to draw upon a broad personal inventory of social and emotional intelligence skills and use them to adapt seamlessly to different people and situations.

Can all of us aspire to this? Possibly, but for many, this would require the kind of dedication to lifelong personal development and growth that would too often be intruded upon by the real world. Are there some practical steps we could take that could be blended into the competing factors we all must balance in our lives? Yes, and here’s where a **fifth step** in our process comes in—and it loops back to step four and one’s own COI assessment and the personal de-brief that comes with it. This will give them further awareness and knowledge of their own cultural preferences, as outlined above. Again, while the COI illustrates broad country cultural trends and preferences, many of us will actually test out counter to those trends individually.



In conclusion, style-switching requires awareness and specific knowledge about one's own and other's communication preferences of which the COI can practically inform. In addition, it takes practice for any CI professional to refine the skill of adapting behaviors and switching preferred styles of behavior to those that will enhance rapport and facilitate trust in the context of cross cultural differences.