

# managing worldwide skills

N°16-2 – March 2016

## Editorial

As an executive or as an employee, the question “[how easy or difficult is it to work in a matrix organization?](#)” appears to have a strong correlation with 4 cultural dimensions:

- Power distance
- Polychronicity vs. Monochronicity
- High vs. Low context communication
- Search for Autonomy

In a matrix environment, the rules of the “corporate game” change drastically. Monika, our Polish consultant based in Wroclaw, explores the impact on behaviors in a typical Polish workplace.

Still on Poland, but a different subject: [Your company is considering building a new entity in Poland, strengthening a business partnership, transferring some activities there,.....](#) If so, read carefully what Aldona, our Polish consultant in Paris, has to say on the topic. Hopefully, you won't find it “ubuesque”.

**Laurent Lepez, Managing Partner**

### Mini bio: **Monika Chutnik**



Monika designs and delivers Leadership, Culture & Professional Development trainings and workshops for managers and employees. Throughout her 10+ years experience in education and training, Monika worked with groups and individuals, face-to-face and virtually. Matrix management is one of the subjects she loves.

## " Matrix and Polish culture: changing the game"

by Monika Chutnik, Senior Consultant

An increasing number of Polish companies assume matrix organizations are the best working structure for their business. In most cases, this idea is a consequence of a decision taken in their headquarters abroad. First immediate change: the reporting line becomes only a part of the actual responsibility lines. A frequent case would be a Polish department manager on site, reporting to his local boss as well as to various product or project or functional managers in several countries in Europe, US, or Asia.

Young employees starting their working lives in such an environment quickly get used to the double or more responsibility lines. It might be different if someone had already worked for a standard Polish company before, and then moved into a matrix environment. From a manager's point of view, the possibility to have a full say about his employees and to execute the tasks based on a [straight reporting line was comfortable](#). Now, it has to be replaced by a playground of influences, where many others have something to say about 'his own' people. From the employee's perspective, the situation becomes much more complex too. One is no longer able to rely completely on the 'almighty manager' who, on the one hand, might be punishing but, on the other hand, would also be there to take care of the individual and team.

Matrix organizations strongly influence the traditional way of doing business. They affect attitudes, requirements, and the motivations of both employees and managers. An employee needs to adopt a more active communication strategy, to be more aware of the broader context of all actions taken and understand the dependencies in structures. Being able to proactively discuss areas of influence and tasks assigned from different sources is also needed. This breaks the old-fashioned thinking of the relatively passive approach to work, 'waiting for what comes from the boss'. In most cases, [communication becomes more based on a partnership](#) rather than simply giving and receiving orders. The managers get closer to employees, and they might even be resembling them in a way; the power distance is less noticeable..tbc

Dear reader,

If you wish to read the full article or the whole newsletter further, please feel free to contact us through our website. We will be happy to send it to you in the next 10 minutes.