Culture is the combined values, norms, and material culture of a group of people that live near each other and have similar goals.

Often cultures come in conflict!

Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own ways or culture are the BEST way to do things and one sees one's culture as BETTER than another.

On a larger scale, this is called nationalism. History is full of leaders with nationalistic ambitions.

Ethnocentric ideas can affect one's performance in the business world.

Cultural relativity suggests that there are no absolute standards and that society's customs and ideas need to be view in the context of that society's culture.

Multicultural socialization leads to acceptance of others cultural ideas and a decrease in ethnocentrism.

The lack of cultural sensitivity grows out of isolation from other cultures and out of ignorance. These differences can run very deep and can include ethnic, class, social, and religious differences.
To be an effective citizen and effective in business one must be aware of one’s own cultural frame of reference and others’ cultural frame of reference.

Language, the vehicle of cultural transmission, is a major barrier to eliminating ethnocentric thinking and cultural communications.

Individuals must be aware of differences in power and its distribution in a society, individual vs. collective goals, masculine vs. feminine orientations, uncertainty, and long-term and short-term orientations between cultures.

There are often “hidden” norms that include how different cultures deal with:

- time
- space
- touch
- context (ratio of non-verbal and verbal communications in messages)
  - low context – get right down to business
  - high context – based on informal chit chat and “getting to know the other person”
- friendship
- agreements (formal and informal)

Businesses need to be aware of “culture shock” when navigating between cultures.
Ways to mitigate these cultural gaps include:

- increased cultural awareness
- improved cultural communications
- country specific training
- executive training
- language courses
- host-country workforce training