

Working across cultures: South Korea

Getting the chemistry right

Our client

Based in Oxfordshire, Basildon Chemicals specialises in manufacturing and formulating silicone emulsions and compounds, principally for use in the Personal Care, Pharmaceutical and Food industries.

The business was recently acquired by the KCC Corporation of South Korea, one of the world's fastest growing primary silicone manufacturers. Headquartered in Seoul, KCC is a global leader in coatings and speciality chemicals, employing over 4,600 people across 17 countries and generating a turnover of \$2.6 billion per annum.

The brief

Korean ownership signals an exciting new era for Basildon Chemicals; it also means that UK-based management and staff have regular interaction with their Korean colleagues. The future success of the business will depend on effective communications between UK and Korean staff working both face to face and in virtual teams. Aware of broad differences between the two cultures, the company was keen that UK staff at all levels received cross cultural training in order to develop the best possible understanding of their Korean counterparts

Solution

Following a comprehensive briefing from the client, **expatknowhow** designed two bespoke workshops, one for senior managers and one for associate staff; the objectives for both workshops were very similar – to introduce staff to Korean culture, business etiquette and protocols with a view to fostering strong and effective working relationships. Aside from generic information relating to KCC and to Korea however, specific areas of content were tailored to take into account the differing requirements of the respective audiences. The senior management version was, for example, adapted to include modules on communication in virtual teams.

The workshops were held on-site at Basildon Chemicals UK offices, taking place over the course of 3 days.

Outcome

Feedback from participants in both workshops has been extremely positive and our client is confident that the foundations for a strong, cross cultural relationship are in place. *"I am now more aware of several specific personal interactions that could have caused offence". "Well researched - informative and useful training. "Very good and clear advice which will be applied in the future".*

Senior managers, Basildon Chemicals

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