

BaFa' BaFa'TM (Tier 3)



½ Day or 1 Day (minimum 12 participants, ideal group size 18 – 36)

Description

In BaFa' BaFa' participants come to understand the powerful effects that culture plays in every person's life. It may be used to help participants prepare for living and working in another culture or to learn how to work with people from other departments, disciplines, genders, races, and ages.

BaFa' BaFa' initiates immediate, personal change. This simulation makes participants personally aware of the issues around culture differences. Participants feel the alienation and confusion that comes from being different. BaFa' BaFa' shakes participants out of thinking in stereotypes of anyone who is different. They learn the value of all faces in the workplace in a safe, stimulating environment.

Prerequisites

- None

Objectives

Some of the outcomes related to BaFa' BaFa' include:

- Build awareness of how cultural differences can profoundly impact people in an organization.
- Motivate participants to rethink their behavior and attitude toward others.
- Allow participants to examine their own bias and focus on how they perceive differences.
- Examine how stereotypes are developed, barriers created, and misunderstandings magnified.
- Identify diversity issues within the organization that must be addressed.

Approach

After an initial briefing two cultures are created. The Alpha culture is a relationship oriented, high context, strong “ingroup/outgroup” culture. The Beta culture is a highly competitive trading culture. After the participants learn the rules of their culture and begin living it, observers and visitors are exchanged. The resulting stereotyping, misperception and misunderstanding becomes the grist for the debriefing.

BaFa' BaFa'TM (Tier 3), continued

What's the Underlying Premise and Philosophy of BaFa' BaFa'?

The whole point of the BaFa' BaFa' experience is to help participants understand that having a diverse work force contributes to the bottom line of the organization in very direct ways. Here is how it works: BaFa' BaFa' is based on the assumption that cultural differences develop because different peoples have invented different ways of solving common problems. This assumption seems fairly obvious when considering the differences in something as basic as our languages.

Other differences are not so obvious. The distance we stand from another person when speaking, proprietary attitudes about personal space, relationships with superiors and subordinates, the way men treat women, and whether one views rules as absolute or relative: all reflect ways that various cultures have solved problems.

Why Is BaFa' BaFa' More Effective Than So Many Other Programs?

In many diversity programs, as well as those designed to train people to go overseas, we have identified differences-then tried to get people to tolerate those differences. Emphasizing differences, even when we try to teach tolerance of those differences, often causes hostility, creates greater distance and greater misunderstandings.

Presenting our cultural differences as a reflection of the way we solve similar problems promotes a sense of our common humanity. We then begin to realize that we are all in this together, and that we all have to face similar challenges. Instead of looking upon cultural differences as things to be tolerated, we can relate to each other as cultural problem solvers. Understanding this basic notion allows us to view cultural differences as a rich reservoir of solutions to real world concerns. Solutions that will directly improve the bottom-line.

Can BaFa' BaFa' Be Used For More Than Just Cross-Culture Training?

Absolutely, yes! Many of the things that play out across national and ethnic culture boundaries play out across cross-functional ones as well. As a result, BaFa' BaFa' can be used as a tremendous teambuilding activity intended to help participants incorporate new team members or build stronger cross-functional relationships.