

The September 25th 2003 issue of People Management magazine, published by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, included a review of the World of Difference video by Peter Honey, well known not only as an expert occupational psychologist but also as the co author of the Honey and Mumford Learning Styles questionnaire and several books including '101 Ways To Develop Your People.' The review, which credited Nigel Ewington and David Trickey as co-authors, was very comprehensive. Below we print an extract of the main points:

"The video shows the faux pas and increasing frustrations of a British I.T. project manager, Gavin, with no previous experience of working abroad, as he wrestles with cultural differences in a multinational team. As you might imagine, poor Gavin fails to relate to his new-found colleagues and has to be taken aside by a perceptive member of the team. One of the many strengths of the video is that it does not confine itself to working situations but also shows some of the stark cultural differences that also emerge in social settings.

This comprehensive pack contains a 40-minute drama video, a trainer's manual and a self-study workbook/ CD Rom. The whole concept and approach is based on the assumption that people who have International dealings need certain skills, attitudes and areas of knowledge. The authors sensibly argue that these competencies have to be developed consciously; otherwise you risk a 'take-me-as-you-find-me' approach that will lead to communication breakdowns and compromise the organisation's ability to fulfill its global goals. The workbook is packed with concepts and excellent tables summarizing the tensions between various poled positions and dimensions.

Diversity is a funny thing; on the one hand it is endlessly fascinating and on the other, very inconvenient and disruptive. Oh that all of us were the same; yes the world would be a boring place but it would be far easier for people from different cultures to stand some chance of getting on the same wavelength.

The topic is complex and the materials reflect this; no wonder too many of us take what we assume is the line of least resistance and then expect everyone to be like us. This excellent package clearly demonstrates the perils of ignoring differences."