Suggestions for Using
"Analyzing Cultural Differences"

Objectives:

- Apply information about cultural programming to specific work relationships
- Identify cultural differences that may be at the root of performance problems or communication barriers
- Gain more information and a new perspective that can help in resolving interpersonal issues on the job

Intended Audience:

- Managers wanting to improve their relationship with, resolve a conflict with, or increase commitment from a specific employee or a group of employees from a similar background
- Managers participating in a managing diversity seminar
- Employees needing to increase effectiveness with customers/clients from other cultures
- Employees wanting to resolve a conflict with someone from another cultural background

Materials:

- Copies of the worksheet *Analyzing Cultural Differences*

Processing the Activity:

- Ask individuals to jot down information about their own cultural programming in each of the 10 areas, then about the programming of one of their employees (or customers/clients or co-workers).
- Individuals analyze differences at the heart of the problem.
- Individuals share their analyses in pairs or small groups, getting input from their partner(s) and responding to the discussion questions.
- Lead a discussion where insights can be shared.

Questions for Discussion:

- What are the most irritating differences?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of your norms, rules, and values? The other individuals?
- What does this analysis tell you that can help you resolve this problem?
- What are you willing to do or expect differently in order to resolve this? What do you need to ask the other individual to do or expect differently?

Caveats, Considerations, and Variations:

- Occasionally, individuals are so emotionally involved in an interpersonal impasse that it is difficult for them to stand back and analyze it more objectively. You can help them by offering some examples of differences that may be operating.
- You can also tailor this to the organization by having participants identify the rules of the culture of the organization and compare those to their own.