

IELTS READING MATERIAL 12/11/2019  
Theme: Leadership

## ARTICLE A

1. Gabriela worked for a multinational company as a successful project manager in Brazil and was transferred to manage a team in Sweden. She was excited about her new role but soon realized that managing her new team would be a challenge.
2. Despite their friendliness, Gabriela didn't feel respected as a **leader**. Her new staff would question her proposals openly in meetings, and when she gave them instructions on how to carry out a task, they would often go about it in their own way without checking with her. When she announced her decisions on the project, they would continue giving their opinions as if it was still up for discussion.
3. After weeks of **frustration**, Gabriela emailed her Swedish manager about the issues she was facing with her team. Her manager simply asked her if she felt her team was still performing, and what she thought would help her better **collaborate** with her team members. Gabriela found her manager **vague** and didn't feel as if he was managing the situation satisfactorily.
4. What Gabriela was experiencing was a cultural clash in expectations. She was used to a more hierarchical framework where the team leader and manager took control and gave specific instructions on how things were to be done. This more **directive management style** worked well for her and her team in Brazil but did not transfer well to her new team in Sweden, who were more used to a flatter hierarchy where decision making was more democratic.
5. When Gabriela took the issue to her Swedish manager, rather than stepping in with directions about what to do, her manager took on the role of coach and focused on getting her to come up with her own solutions instead.
6. Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede uses the concept of 'power distance' to describe how power is distributed and how **hierarchy** is perceived in different cultures. In her previous work environment, Gabriela was used to a high-power distance culture where power and authority are respected and everyone has their rightful place. In such a culture, leaders make the big decisions and are not often challenged. Her Swedish team, however, was used to working in a low power distance culture where **subordinates** often work together with their bosses to find solutions and make decisions. Here, leaders act as coaches or mentors who encourage independent thought and expect to be challenged.
7. When Gabriela became aware of the cultural differences between her and her team, she took the initiative to have an open conversation with them about their feelings about her leadership. Pleased to be asked for their thoughts, Gabriela's team openly expressed that they were not used to being told what to do. They enjoyed having more room for **initiative** and creative freedom. When she told her team exactly what she needed them to do, they felt that she didn't trust them to do their job well. They realized that Gabriela was taking it personally when they tried to challenge or make changes to her decisions and were able to explain that it was how they'd always worked.
8. With a better understanding of the underlying reasons behind each other's behavior, Gabriela and her team were able to adapt their way of working. Gabriela was then able to make **adjustments** to her management style so as to better fit the expectations of her team and more effectively motivate her team to achieve their goals.

## Task 1: Are the sentences true or false?

1. Gabriela's management style worked well with her team in Brazil but not with her team in Sweden.
2. Gabriela's team questioned her proposals and her decisions because they didn't trust or respect her.
3. Gabriela was satisfied with her Swedish manager's way of dealing with her problem.
4. Gabriela found it helpful to talk openly with her team about the differences in their expectations.
5. Gabriela faced a problem with her Swedish team because her management style was old-fashioned and wrong for the modern world.
6. The author believes that people from high power distance cultures and low power distance cultures should never work together.



## Task2: Explain the words in blue and make a sentence to expand your vocabulary

- Frustration
- Collaborate
- Vague
- Directive management style
- Hierarchy
- Subordinates
- Adjustments
- Initiative
- To be perceived
- Resentment

## ARTICLE B:

### Becoming a leader in a market

In order for a business to become a leader in a market, it is important that we regularly review what we are doing and how we are doing it. By considering new ideas and new ways of doing things, and trying to innovate, we can improve on our products/services, increase sales, reduce costs and make our processes more effective and efficient. Innovation is key to increasing profits. There are several ways a company can be innovative with their products and services. Today we will look at four of them.

1. Using the latest technology to improve your product/service  
when we think of innovation, we often think of new technologies. While they might be impressive, we should not use new technologies just because they are available. It is important to consider how the technology can improve our product/service and make a difference to our customer. Companies that produce cars, toiletries, household appliances, etc. often have a large R&D department to work on making their products better.
2. Responding to customer demands by changing what is on offer  
By listening to customer feedback, we can get their opinions on how we are doing and find out about what it is that they want. We also need to be aware of changes in customer demands and keep up with the times. When fast-food restaurant McDonald's realized that the market wanted healthier choices, they introduced fruit and salads, while removing the 'supersize' option from their menus.
3. Offering a new product/service to reach new customers  
Your business might be doing well, but there is no growth or development and there is a risk that your competitors might take away some of your customers. Innovation sometimes means developing a new product that targets a different market. Although video games were often played by boys, in 2006, video games giant Nintendo introduced the game console Nintendo Wii, successfully targeting girls and older customers with games like Cooking Mama and Brain Training.
4. Changing the way you provide a service.  
By looking at the changes to the customer's lifestyle and needs, we sometimes realize that there might be better ways to serve them. Customers who do not have a lot of time might prefer to have their food or their shopping delivered to their homes, or they might like to do their banking online rather than in an actual bank. Not all innovation will bring success to our businesses, but it can give us the opportunity to grow and learn more about what we do and what our customers might want.

### Task 2 Are the sentences true or false?

1. We innovate because we want to increase the amount of money our businesses make.
2. Being innovative is all about using the newest technologies in your business.
3. Customers often don't know what they want.
4. McDonald's have not changed their menu since they started.
5. If you always target the same customers, you might lose them to your competitors.
6. Nintendo understood that only boys will play computer games.

[Source 1](#) | [Source 2](#)