

# Case Study 3:

## I Don't Understand What You Want

### Background

Gabriella Marquez is the general manager of Cysoft Inc., a developer of customer relationship management (CRM) software. The company formed as a result of a 2009 merger of a Canadian firm and a South Korean firm. Cysoft operates in two locations: its corporate office in Toronto, which employs 55 marketing, sales, finance, and administrative staff and its development office in Seoul, which employs 44 software developers. Jason Cai was hired 10 months ago as director of product marketing in the Toronto office. Seo-jun Kweon is director of software development out of the Seoul office and has been with Cysoft for the past six years.

### Current Situation

In one week, Gabriella Marquez is scheduled to report to key investors on the progress of Cysoft's newest CRM product offering. It has been two years since Cysoft has launched a new version of its software and this offering is a completely redesigned application aimed at the financial services market.

The project has been delayed several times, which has resulted in missed deadlines and increased costs. A meeting involving the key managers revealed that the problem seems to be a lack of communication between development and product marketing, as both Jason Cai and Seo-jun Kweon struggle to cooperate on personal and professional levels.

Gabriella asked to be copied on communications between the team leaders to see if she might be able to help coordinate the two teams. This morning she received the following emails. The first is an email from Seo-jun Kweon to Jason Cai and the second is Jason's reply.

Read through the two emails to determine what might be contributing to the communication breakdown.

To: Jason Cai  
CC: Gabriella Marquez  
From: Seo-jun Kweon  
Subject: Reply to your request for information on the tracking software object

Dear Jason,

I am very distressed over the delay in delivering the tracking software object to your team for testing. We strive to complete tasks in a timely fashion and greatly appreciate the close relationship we have with your group.

A number of factors have led to the delay and we are working toward rectifying them. Did you receive our list of questions regarding the format of the interface and the key features you would like to see placed on the opening screen? It would be very helpful if you were able to get these to us as

soon as you can. Once we have all the information required we would be able to move forward with the coding of the interface and complete the tracking object beta.

Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.

Seo-jun Kweon

To: Seo-jun Kweon

CC: Gabriella Marquez

From: Jason Cai

Subject: Re: Reply to your request for information on the tracking software object

Seo-jun,

Do you need the interface features decided upon before you can complete the beta? Is it possible for you to get us something to look at before we decide on the features? Please be clear what you need.

Jason

## Activities and Discussion

1. What sort of intercultural communication issues may exist between Jason and Seo-jun?
2. Using Hofstede's dimensions of culture, which may apply to the situation and why?
3. What should Gabriella Marquez do in this case?
4. Write an email from Gabriella to Jason and Seo-jun detailing your suggestions/solutions.