

Effect of different religions on business practices

Name

Institution

Introduction

Religion is defined as a set of beliefs that are held by a group of people. Religion is one of the key factors in workplace cultural diversity thus, it should be considered especially in this era of mass globalization. Faith is a major factor in global economic growth perhaps more so in the emerging markets. The various religious customs have several effects on the business practices. The three most common religions include Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity. This paper will discuss how the three religions affect business practices all around the world.

1. Islam

Islam is the second most practiced religion in the world. For this reason, it has several effects on business practices. Although Muslims are all around the world, they are more prevalent in the Middle East and Africa. First, the religion has strong instructions that guide behavior. For instance, women are not allowed to wear western clothing and instead are allowed to wear veils that cover the entire body to show modesty. Even though in less conservative areas people are allowed to wear western clothing, some restrictions exist on which type of clothing to wear. For this reason, international businesses taking conservative Muslim regions cannot venture into retail or fashion selling, as they will be required to alter their inventory. Secondly, Muslims also need several breaks for praying as well as ritual washing before eating and praying. These practices can affect workplace efficiency. Finally, the Islamic faith has several holiday days such as Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr, which might eat a lot of productive time.

2. Christianity

This is the number 1 religion worldwide practiced by about 33 percent of the total population. Just like Islam, Christianity is monotheistic i.e. they believe in one powerful deity that provides guidelines for personal conduct. Conservative Christians have theological beliefs that discourage

the use of products such as alcohol and only allow modest dressing. Some activities such as dancing and listening to some types of music are prohibited. This means that conservative Christian regions will tend to put strict regulations on liquor, clothing, and music. For instance, the state of Utah, which is a conservative Christian region, the government maintains tight control over the liquor industry and places strict sanctions on the limits of sale and consumption. Therefore, entrepreneurs venturing into conservative Christian regions should refrain from goods that are deemed sinful or evil. In addition, Christians have several holidays such as Easter, Christmas, which require businesses to close.

3. Buddhism

Buddhism is the world's fourth most practiced religion and it is most prevalent in Asia. The biggest teaching for Buddhists is that the desire for worldly things leads to evil. The religion is focused on enlightenment rather than a central deity. The pursuit for material things is of no value and to do so will hinder the path to enlightenment. Products such as luxury cars and five-star restaurants are a rarity in conservative Buddhist regions because they believe they are worldly desires. Consequently, businesses planning to retail products that are shunned by observant Buddhists will definitely face numerous challenges. Therefore, to survive in Buddhist regions as a business person, the focus should be on the basic products. Buddhists also take their holidays very seriously and sometimes businesses can stay closed for days or weeks especially during the New Year celebrations. Other holidays that disrupt business include Buddha's birth, April 8 and Bodhi Day (Buddha's enlightenment), December 8.

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