

Kelm, Orlando R. and Mary E. Risner    *Brazilians Working with Americans- Cultural Case Studies*.    University of Texas Press, 2007, 218 pp.    ISBN-978-0-292-7147473-1

Maria Antonia Cowles

Professor Emeritus, Lauder Institute of the University of Pennsylvania

In an interdependent world where intercultural communication and foreign language proficiency are a critical tool for effective business practices, dedicated texts that draw on authentic experiences and discourse are few and far between. The English/Portuguese bilingual 2007 publication by Orlando R. Kelm from University of Texas and Mary E. Risner, from University of Florida presents a unique collection of real life cases which illustrate cultural issues in business related transactions leading to miscommunication and/or leading to less than optimal outcomes.

The volume comprises ten non-sequential units, each relating a case based on actual experiences that Brazilian executives lived through during their work with North Americans. Each chapter follows the same format: (1) the background story contextualizing a critical incident involving a cultural issue; (2) comments from three Brazilian and three American executives expressing their personal opinion on those issues; and (3) a number of topics and questions for discussion. In addition, supporting QuickTime movies of the executives' personal opinions permit viewers (students or businesspeople) to see and hear the entire text in both English and Portuguese.

The main strength of this text is its adaptiveness in serving multiple functions and multiple audiences:

- (1) As a text for business students, it provides for insights into real-life cultural issues from the business environment. Management style and approach to problem solving, models of the discourse used in a particular domain (e.g.: repertoire and register) as well as opinions and interpretation of the cases by peer Brazilian and American practitioners in both languages inform a broad spectrum of learners.
- (2) As a teaching tool, it provides the instructor with a wealth of materials from which to draw and incorporate into a business language and culture curriculum.
- (3) As a broad spectrum resource for North-American and Brazilian business practitioners and faculty, it can be used as a primer for the first encounter as well as a rich resource for validating existing assumptions and asking new questions.

English/Portuguese and Portuguese/English glossaries, and suggested supplemental readings on intercultural communication studies complete the document.

“*Brazilians Working with Americans*” should belong in the library of every student, teacher, and practitioner dealing with business between Brazilians and North-Americans and to the global manager who at some point will be doing business with Brazil.

Although there is concern for the life span of any book dealing with current issues, its well conceived format has the flexibility to permit content updates to serve its broad audience for years to come.