

## CULTURE INSIGHTS 2026

### From Friction to Flow: An Organisational Culture Proposal

By Beth Camprubí

#### The Situation

A Spanish SME is growing internationally.

The project delay with Germany and the UK is not a competence issue.

It is a culture-in-action issue.

The real friction lives in:

- How responsibility is shown
- How clarity is demonstrated
- How decisions are communicated
- How action is prioritised

Culture lives in the *how*, not the *what*.

So, what would it look like to address this professionally and strategically?

#### Organisational Culture Intervention Proposal

##### For Internationally Growing SMEs – Objective

#### To help the company:

1. Reduce invisible friction in international collaboration
2. Align expectations around responsibility and action
3. Increase clarity without damaging relationships
4. Build a shared operating model across Spain–Germany–UK

#### Phase 1 – Diagnosis & Cultural Mapping

##### Timeline: Weeks 1–2

#### What we do

Leadership interviews (Spain, Germany, UK)

- Short diagnostic survey (communication & decision-making habits)
- Analysis using Hofstede 6-D framework:
  - Power Distance
  - Individualism
  - Uncertainty Avoidance
  - Masculinity
  - Long-Term Orientation
  - Indulgence

## Why Hofstede?

Because it allows us to measure not only the *brain side* of culture (structure, autonomy, hierarchy), but also the *gut side*:

- tolerance for ambiguity (Uncertainty Avoidance)
- preference for competition vs consensus (Masculinity)
- flexibility vs control (Indulgence)

This prevents oversimplification and avoids “culture-lite” conclusions.

## Outcome

- Cultural Friction Map (Spain–Germany–UK)
- Identified risk zones
- Leadership alignment report

## Phase 2 – Leadership Alignment Workshop

**Timeline:** Week 3

**Format:** 1 half-day (online or onsite)

## Focus

- Decode the case study in real time
- Identify unconscious assumptions
- Align on shared definitions of:
  - Accountability
  - Clarity
  - Ownership
  - Escalation
  - Deadlines

## Tools used

- Hofstede country data (as diagnostic lens, not stereotype)
- Behaviour mapping
- Decision-flow simulation
- Structured intercultural scenario practice

## Outcome

- Agreed “Rules of Engagement”
- Defined communication protocol for delays
- Responsibility matrix template

## Phase 3 – Team Calibration & Practical Implementation

Timeline: Weeks 4–6

### 2 Interactive Sessions (90 min each)

#### Session 1:

- How clarity looks in Germany
- How flexibility looks in Spain
- How pragmatism works in the UK
- Interpreting understatement and directness

#### Session 2:

- Writing effective cross-cultural delay communication
- Turning politeness into precision
- Action orientation without relational damage

### Deliverables

- Shared email templates
- Delay communication checklist
- “Escalation without emotion” guide
- Quick-reference cultural behaviour grid

## Phase 4 – Follow-Up & Behavior Reinforcement

Timeline: Week 10

- 60-min review session
- Measure improvements
- Identify remaining friction points
- Adjust operating agreements

### Total Timeline

10 weeks

Light structure. High impact. Minimal disruption to operations.

### What Changes After This?

Before:

- Goodwill
- Assumptions
- Reactive clarification

After:

- Named expectations
- Defined action protocols
- Cultural awareness at decision level
- Faster recovery from delays

## Why This Matters for SMEs

SMEs grow through trust and speed.

But when entering international partnerships:

- English is not alignment.
- Politeness is not agreement.
- Silence is not clarity.
- “We understand each other” is not a system.

Cultural friction does not explode dramatically.

- It accumulates quietly.
- In deadlines.
- In tone.
- In perception of competence.

And it costs money.

## My Role

My role is not to replace leadership.

It is to:

- Make invisible cultural dynamics visible
- Translate Hofstede data into behavioural clarity
- Create shared operating agreements
- Help leaders act consciously, not react culturally

This is not about national stereotypes.

It is about operational intelligence.

## Final Reflection & Next Steps

International collaboration does not fail because people do not care, it struggles because they **care differently**.

The solution is not more effort. It is **structured cultural awareness, shared definitions, and agreed action protocols**. By making differences visible and aligning on behaviours, **friction becomes flow**: decisions move faster, accountability is clear, and teams deliver with confidence across borders.

### Next Steps:

To turn this insight into action, we propose beginning with the **diagnosis & cultural mapping phase**, followed by leadership alignment and team calibration sessions.

This approach ensures immediate impact with minimal disruption, setting the foundation for sustainable international collaboration.

Schedule a call here at: [beth@bethcamprubi.com](mailto:beth@bethcamprubi.com)

—

*Beth Camprubí*

Let's connect the dots!

**Beth Camprubí | Intercultural Leadership Coach**

*Beth Camprubí*

24.03.2026

### Resources:

- <https://geerthofstede.com/country-comparison-bar-charts/>
- <https://www.amazon.co.uk/New-Narrative-Culture-Values-Shape/dp/B0DZT7Z5V7>