

FEI SEATTLE

FINANCIAL NEWS

The official chapter newsletter of FEI Seattle

BRIDGING THE CULTURE GAP KEY STRATEGIES FOR FINANCE LEADERS MANAGING A GLOBAL WORKFORCE

By: Jessie Shao

2024-25 FEI Seattle Chapter VP Events

In today's corporate landscape, finance teams are increasingly diverse, spanning different geographies, cultures, and employment norms. Many companies outsource accounting, FP&A, and controller roles offshore to Asia, Latin America, or the rest of the world. For finance executives, the challenge lies in leading, motivating, and integrating these employees into the **Corporate American Culture** to ensure alignment, productivity, and retention.

Having worked for over **20 years in multinational environments**, where my direct managers were U.S.-based while my teams were globally dispersed, I have firsthand experience in bridging these cultural gaps. One of the most critical challenges is helping overseas staff understand the unique American work culture, which places **strong emphasis on work centrality**—a concept deeply rooted in historical and religious influences, which values diligence, achievement, and a strong identity tied to one's profession.

Additionally, the at-will nature of U.S. employment contracts reinforces respect for authority and the chain of command. Insubordination—disobeying a direct order from a supervisor—could lead to termination in the U.S. But it is certainly not the case in most countries outside the U.S. In many cultures, both reinforce hierarchy in the workplace, and challenging authority is handled in a much more subtle way. Understanding this difference is crucial for offshore staff to navigate leadership expectations and avoid workplace conflicts.

Here are three key strategies finance leaders can use to bridge these cultural differences and lead global teams effectively:

1. Foster a Transparent and Inclusive Work Environment

Employees from different cultural backgrounds may feel uncomfortable voicing concerns or ideas openly. Establish clear communication channels, structured feedback loops, and an inclusive environment where all contributions are recognized and valued.

2. Clarify Corporate Expectations and Work Norms

Work centrality in the U.S. often means long hours and professional identity tied to career success. Leaders should communicate **workplace expectations**, including performance standards, accountability, and the consequences of insubordination, while balancing cultural sensitivities.

3. Provide Coaching on Corporate American Culture

Structured training sessions can help offshore teams understand U.S. business etiquette, proactive problem-solving, and **communication styles**. Coaching on decision-making autonomy, performance-driven work styles, and workplace hierarchy can enhance their ability to work seamlessly with U.S.-based leadership.

By implementing these strategies, finance executives can **cultivate a cohesive, high-performing global finance team** while ensuring that overseas employees are set up for success. If you're a CFO looking for guidance in navigating these challenges, I'm more than happy to chat more during one of our FEI events and provide the insights and support.

Note from our Treasurer

Dear FEI Seattle Members and Potential Members,

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your membership. We trust that you are finding the value in your FEI Membership. In addition to our monthly FEI Seattle meetings, there are additional services provided as an FEI Member (please see below and/or on the website).

Your annual dues are split between FEI National and the FEI Seattle. Going forward, FEI's Membership will be streamlined into two main categories, Individual and Corporate, effective July 1 to align with the transition to and implementation of a new Association Management System and the start of the new fiscal year (FY 2026).

New Members

- Professional (formerly Executive, Academic, and Government/Military)
- In-Transition - reduced annual fees

Renewing Members

- Professional (formerly Executive, Academic, and Government/Military)
- In-Transition - reduced annual fees
- Retired (ongoing reduced fees) or Life Retired (1x payment)

Financial Executives International connects financial leaders through exchanging ideas about best practices, defining the profession, educating Members and stakeholders and working with the government to improve the general economy. FEI has been advancing success through information, community, and advocacy since 1931.

Diane Kelleher
2024-25 FEI Seattle Chapter Treasurer

Financial Executives International Individual Membership Benefits

Professional Development and Career Advancement

Participate in leadership development programs designed to enhance your skills and advance your career. Gain discounted access to national conferences, local Chapter meetings, and virtual events. Engage with top industry experts and stay ahead of the latest trends. Many of our events qualify for CPE credits, ensuring you meet professional standards while expanding your expertise.

Networking Opportunities

Build relationships with nearly 10,000 finance leaders across the United States. Exchange ideas, share best practices, and find mentorship opportunities.

Advocacy and Influence

FEI represents your interests in Washington, D.C. We advocate on key financial and regulatory issues, ensuring your voice is heard in policy-making.

Knowledge Resources

Access research reports from Financial Education & Research Foundation (FERF) and content from FEI Weekly. Stay up to date with the latest information on financial reporting, risk management, corporate governance, and more with our curated webinars and workshops.

FEI Seattle Events

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|--------------|--|
| Mar 27, 2025 | Plant Tour - Jemco Components and Fabrication |
| Apr 24, 2025 | Inside the Mind of Fraud: An FBI Perspective on Financial Crimes |
| June 4, 2025 | Summer Social Event - Top Golf |

Sign up for our events [here!](#)

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



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Why did you join FEI?

When I wanted to build my local network of finance peers after moving to Seattle I found no better solution than joining FEI.

How has being a member of FEI benefitted you?

Besides the networking opportunities that FEI provides at every turn, I have been recommended for job roles by some of its members. Moreover, FEI's educational events exposed me to interesting people and valuable information that I could have not known otherwise.

What would you say to someone considering joining?

If you want to get the pulse of the finance and accounting community in the Greater Seattle area and meet key players across all industry sectors you should join FEI.



Cybersecurity Insights from IMA: Preparing for and Managing Cyber Attacks

Our Platinum sponsor, IMA, has recently shared a timely and informative article about preparing for and managing cyber attacks, a critical topic for finance executives today. The article highlights essential strategies, including proactive planning, effective response measures, and the importance of insurance coverage in mitigating cyber risks. Read their valuable insights [here](#).

Don't miss our upcoming **FEI Seattle event** on **April 24th**, where IMA will moderate an engaging panel discussion on cybersecurity. Gain expert perspectives and practical strategies to protect your organization from cyber threats. More information and registration details can be found [here](#).

SPREAD THE WORD *Today*

Word of mouth is essential for our growth, and we need your help to expand our community. Tell your friends and colleagues about the FEI Seattle and the incredible value it offers. A larger network means more resources, insights, and opportunities for all our members. Let's grow together and continue to elevate our profession!



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A huge **THANK YOU** to our Chapter Sponsors! Your generous support is essential to our community's success and helps us to provide valuable programs and events for our members. We deeply appreciate your partnership!

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