How is time perceived in your culture?

**Linear-Time**
The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule. Emphasis is on promptness and good organisation over flexibility.

**Flexible-Time**
Many things are dealt with at once in a fluid manner and interruptions are accepted. Flexibility is valued over organisation.

**ATTITUDES TO TIME DIFFER ACROSS DIFFERENT CULTURES**

Source: Erin Meyer, ‘The Culture Map’

Schedules, deadlines, time pressure... we are all painfully handcuffed to the notion of time. Scheduling is a state of mind that affects how you organise your day, how flexible those plans are. Yet the way we manage our time differs greatly across cultures.

For example, Germanic, Anglo-Saxon, and Northern European countries see time as linear. In these cultures, project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next. One thing at a time, no interruptions allowed. Any behaviour that distracts from the predefined tasks at hand is usually considered rude.

By contrast, Latin, Middle Eastern and many African cultures perceive time as flexible. Here, tasks change as opportunities arise, meetings grow in unpredictable ways, and the effective manager is flexible enough to capitalise on emerging new ideas and priorities. Frequent shifts in direction are seen as natural and necessary.

**WORD OF THE WEEK**

**Akihi**

(Hawaiian noun) When they explained how to get there, their directions all made perfect sense - you nodded and looked back with clear understanding. Then you parted ways, and now you can't remember whether to take a left or a right.

Listening to directions and then walking off and promptly forgetting them means that you have gone ‘akihi’.

What is your experience of time?