



CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION

TIPS

E-MAILS AND PHONE CALLS

Good to know:

- Brazilians might need some personal contact before acting. They would also like to know the benefits of providing information.
- Small talk is very important for Americans to build relationships.
- British jokes might be hidden messages.
- Chinese colleagues might want to check with the group or boss before responding.

Tips

- Use e-mails for communicating information (not for sensitive issues)
- Use the "Cc" with care when writing to someone from high power-distance cultures (e.g. China).
- Telephone conferences should have a clear structure with time to speak for everyone

FACILITATING MEETINGS

Tips

- Clearly define the aims of a meeting and tell presenters what is expected from them.
- Keep in mind that the meeting culture from the participants can be very different from yours: check what is expected.
- Consider language requirements: lunch menu in English, interpreting and translation facilities,
- Be aware of dietary requirements: Asian participants may like hot water, Americans may prefer ice.
- Plan enough time for interaction and a social program around the meeting.

NEGOTIATIONS

Good to know:

- Chinese want to show their hospitality and get to know their business partners better; eating together is very important.
- Chinese will first of all discuss everything with their colleagues to reach a consensus.
- A contract is seen more as a statement of the interest in working together rather than a detailed plan: changes must be possible.

Tips

- Think about the best place to negotiate: in the office, restaurant or golf course?
- Consider who should be involved in the negotiation: experts or the boss?

PRESENTATIONS

Good to know:

- US presenters like to focus on the "big picture" before going into detail, and appreciate interaction with the audience.
- Detailed presentations from low-context cultures (e.g. Germany) might be boring for those people who would like to be convinced by the main point first.
- The understatement of British people can be misunderstood by people from outside the UK.

Tips

- Presentation styles vary across cultures: consider the aspects of communication style (e.g. gestures and body language)
- Future or past oriented audience? For example, future oriented audiences (e.g. United States) want to hear about the potential benefits of a product while past-oriented audiences (e.g. India and China) seek to gain credibility by focusing on past achievements.

SOCIALIZING

Good to know:

- Highly person-oriented cultures find socializing very important, because getting to know another person is necessary to doing business together.
- Toasting with vodka is common in Russia.
- You'll be invited out in many countries by your business partners, e.g. to a karaoke bar in Japan, to the sauna in Finland or to the pub in Britain.

Tips

- Take advantage of being invited out to get to know each other and build trust.

MANAGING TEAMS

Good to know:

- The French felt that they have not been involved in the process.
- The Indians didn't want to criticize their boss or give feedback in a video conference.

Tips

- Spend time on face-to-face relationship building before switching to virtual communication.



Speak with Confidence

Costa Rica

San Pedro (506) 2253-9191
Sabana Norte (506) 2291-4327
Fórum I, Santa Ana (506) 2204-7555

Guatemala

Reforma (502) 2291-4444
Majadas (502) 2291-4444

Panamá

Marbella (507) 265-4800

800-BERLITZ
www.berlitzca.com
info@berlitzca.com

