

ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS SUCCESS

BUSINESS ACROSS CULTURES

Effective Communication
Strategies



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Unit 1 STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes of Russia

People from different countries always have stereotypes about each other. Stereotypes can prevent us from learning some aspects about the country and understanding a different culture in a more appropriate way.

You know that contemporary life in Russia has very little to do with playing the balalaika amidst matrioshkas and samovars, or wild rushing in sleighs driven by troika (three horses harnessed abreast) along the streets where bears supposedly wander. All these stories are just myths for naive tourists. But many things about Russia still remain unknown, such as our mentality, our attitude to religion and family, our manners, facial expressions, gestures and behavior in different situations and so on.

What think about us!

-Many stereotypes are connected with Russian vodka. Much is told about Russians drinking hard. People from other countries seem to think that most of Russians have been drinking vodka from birth (This stereotype is really offensive. And it really hurts. Such a stereotype forms a wrong image of our country.)

- Another popular stereotype is about our religion. Some people think that Russians are very pious. Others find Russians extremely superstitious

- A lot of stereotypes are connected with mimicry and gesticulation of Russian people. What shocks tourists most of all in Russia is that Russians seldom smile. From the first sight Russians seem very unfriendly and gloomy. And many people think that we are deeply unhappy and depressed

- This really makes tourists feel uncomfortable and upset in our country. But after some days of living and communicating with Russians most visitors understand that this is just the feature of our character and our mentality.

- Relationships between people and the government:

People here in Russia don't trust their government very much; they don't rely on it either.

-Relationships between family members

Russians usually start family at 22-25 years. Men sometimes get married a little later. Many couples start a family later. Father is considered to be the head of the family, however many women have actually more power than men in families nowadays.

- Relationships between the colleagues

Russian people are collectivistic more than individualistic, so they tend to solve their problems as a group, however since the beginning of a new century there is a trend among the younger generation to becoming more independent, thus individual.

- Relationships between people, who don't know each other

Russian people often treat associates with some sort of caution. They aren't used to trusting strangers.



American stereotype

Direct Communications

A straight forward, direct form of communication is highly valued in American Business. Americans take pride in saying what they mean, and meaning what they say.

Time is Money

Time is a commodity. American businesses try to improve efficiencies in their operations by saving time on completing tasks.

Americans Only Care About Money-Yes, it is true that they earn a lot of money but they also donate a lot of it to charities too

American Optimism

Americans typically are very optimistic about their businesses and future.

Americans Stick their Noses in Other People's Business

It appears that Americans are always involved with other countries' affairs especially wars. Some aspects of this point of view are true as Americans see themselves as the defender of freedom within its borders and outside of its borders

Americans Appear to Take Pride in their Lack of Sophistication

Americans Love Guns

Americans are **racist**. While it's true that racism is still an issue in American culture today

Americans are **uneducated**.

Americans are **arrogant and selfish**.

Americans are **destroying the planet**.

Hardworking- Americans are stereotyped as hardworking people, whether in their jobs or other matters.





Unit 2 Making Initial Contacts Across Cultures

US	Colombia	Egypt	South Korea
The phone communication is very common and accepted. Business meetings are frequently conducted on phones.	Important business is taken care of in person or on paper.	Before working in Egypt, it has to get letters of reference and introductions from a senator or government's envoy to Egypt before the Egyptians would consider doing business.	Make the first contact through a third party.
The character of a company is more important than the character of the person representing the company.	One can introduce oneself or go through an agency. The most effective way to be introduced is through a common friend or contact.	During the first meetings, the same respect and social interest should be shown to all persons who are in the key contact's office.	It has a clear social structure. People work with people who are in their own social. Everybody knows everybody.
Succeeding without the help of special personal connections shows independence and an ability to work hard.	The character of the person who represents a business is more important than the character of the business he represents.		The government has a lot of influence on business.
In making initial contacts, very little time is spent on building social relationships. Conversation is focused on business.	The better connected a person is to important decision makers, the more attractive he or she is as a business partner.		A person's status is defined by education, family, place of birth, current address, friendship, the size of the company.
	Trust and loyalty are the foundation of a good business relationship. A dinner talking about general interests, not about business.		Personal information about own connections should be given before the first meetings.

UNIT 3 HOSPITALITY ACROSS CULTURES

France	US	Russia
<p>There is some emphasis on class differences. People do not socialize across social classes.</p>	<p>Differences in social and economic classes exist, but are not emphasized. Social events are usually casual and relaxed.</p>	<p>Equal relationship between structures. Social events are casual and relaxed with dancing and drinking.</p>
<p>The boss represents authority. The boss should not be too casual or social with his employees.</p>	<p>The boss has authority but should not abuse it. Bosses are usually casual and informal with their employees.</p>	<p>Bosses are usually casual with their employees.</p>
<p>The home is a private place. Business colleagues usually socialize in restaurants or other public places</p>	<p>It is common to invite business colleagues or other acquaintances home for a dinner party or cocktail party.</p>	<p>Russians are great hosts and love entertaining guests in their homes. At formal functions, guests do not usually start eating until the host has begun</p>
		<p>You don't have to buy expensive souvenirs when being a guest. A box of chocolates or a bottle of fine wine will make a good gift. If you are visiting a family with children make sure to bring a treat for the kids—a candy, a chocolate bar or fruits.</p>

UNIT 4 TIME ACROSS CULTURES

- **Monochronic** cultures like to do just one thing at a time. They value a certain orderliness and sense of there being an appropriate time and place for everything. They do not value interruptions. Polychronic cultures like to do multiple things at the same time. A manager's office in a polychronic culture typically has an open door, a ringing phone and a meeting all going on at the same time.
- **Polychronic** cultures include the French and the Americans. The Germans tend to be monochronic.

Implications

- Interactions between types can be problematic. German businessman cannot understand why the person he is meeting is so interruptible by phone calls and people stopping by. Is it meant to insult him? When do they get down to business?
- Similarly, the American employee of a German company is disturbed by all the closed doors -- it seems cold and unfriendly.

Negotiators from *polychronic* cultures tend to

- start and end meetings at flexible times,
- take breaks when it seems appropriate,
- be comfortable with a high flow of information,
- expect to read each others' thoughts and minds,
- sometimes overlap talk,
- view start times as flexible and not take lateness personally.

Negotiators from *monochronic* cultures tend to

- prefer prompt beginnings and endings,
- schedule breaks,
- deal with one agenda item at a time,
- rely on specific, detailed, and explicit communication,
- prefer to talk in sequence,
- view lateness as devaluing or evidence of lack of respect.





UNIT 5 DECISION MAKERS ACROSS CULTURES

Differences in making decision in US and Japan

The quantitative and empirical studies characterized Japanese and American business leaders as representatives of two dissimilar cultures with respect to their approach of decision making). While the Japanese emphasized interdependence, American leaders tended to be more myopic and individualistic. Japanese management approached a connection with the emotional model through their strong consultative approach working harmoniously with groups. American leadership pointed out would circumvent authority to maintain independence. It is plausible to argue that American leaders have used the political/coalitional model for the purposes of manipulation and control. This may be contrary to how one might perceive Japanese leaders to think and act. Regardless of the similarities and differences of each country's influence on its leaders, one tenet remained. When all was said and done, leaders made decisions influenced by cultural preferences. In other words, they let the culture decide.

Many of the asian cultures are collectivist, while anglo cultures tend to be individualist.



UNIT 6-7 NEGOTIATIONS and CONTACTS ACROSS CULTURES

Japanese

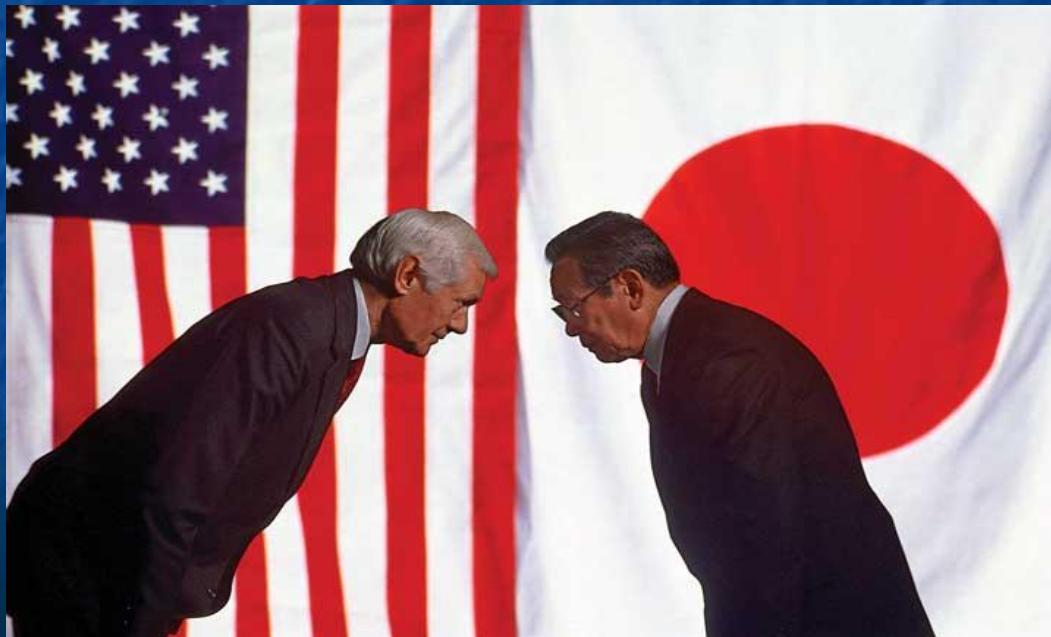
The negotiation process can be divided into four phases: 1) building a good relationship; 2) talking about the business deal; 3) persuading, bargaining, and making concessions; 4) making a final agreement. The first two phases take the longer, especially since personal trust and mutual understanding are important to good business relationships.

Contracts do not play a central role in negotiations. Businesses have traditionally focused on long-term business project.

U.S

The negotiation process can be divided the same Japan. The first two phases are not emphasized, because personal relationships do not play a large role in business.

Contract is a tool in the negotiation process. It is a working document that will be changed during negotiations. Business has focused on short-term project.



In general

In Europe and North America, business people will usually leave a certain amount of distance between themselves when interacting. Touching only takes place between friends. In South America or the Middle East, business people are tactile and like to get up close. In Japan or China, it is not uncommon for people to leave a gap of four feet when conversing. Touching only takes place between close friends and family members.

Space also relates to comfort with eye contact and attributions related to eye contact or lack of eye contact. In United States and Canadian dominant culture settings as well as many Arab cultures, eye contact is taken as a sign of reliability and trustworthiness. In North American indigenous settings, eye contact may be seen as disrespectful and inappropriate. Similarly, in Asian settings, looking down is usually interpreted as a sign of respect. Beyond these generalizations is a great deal of complexity. Lederach observes, for example, that in Central America, a slight movement of the eyes may indicate embarrassment, showing respect, or disagreement.

Closely related to notions of space is nonverbal communication. In intercultural studies, Japanese negotiators have been observed to use the most silence, Americans a moderate amount, and Brazilians almost none at all.

The Basis of the Relationship: in much of Europe and North America, business is contractual in nature. Personal relationships are seen as unhealthy as they can cloud objectivity and lead to complications. In South America and much of Asia, business is personal. Partnerships will only be made with those they know, trust and feel comfortable with. It is therefore necessary to invest in relationship building before conducting business.

Information at Negotiations: Western business culture places emphasis on clearly presented and rationally argued business proposals using statistics and facts. Other business cultures rely on similar information but with differences. For example, visual and oral communicators such as the South Americans may prefer information presented through speech or using maps, graphs and charts.

Perceive and exploit power



AMERICAN NEGOTIATORS	JAPANESE NEGOTIATORS	CHINESE (TAIWAN) NEGOTIATORS	BRAZILIAN NEGOTIATORS
Preparation and planning skill	Dedication to job	Persistence and determination	Preparation and planning skill
Thinking under pressure	Perceive and exploit power	Win respect and confidence	Thinking under pressure
Judgment and intelligence	Win respect and confidence	Preparation and planning skill	Judgment and intelligence
Verbal expressiveness	Integrity	Product knowledge	Verbal expressiveness
Product knowledge	Demonstrate listening skill	Interesting	Product knowledge
Integrity	Broad perspective	Judgment and intelligence	Perceive and exploit power
Perceive and exploit power	Verbal expressiveness		Competitiveness

UNIT 8 Marketing across cultures

Companies that are growing are always on the lookout for new opportunities. Some of these opportunities present themselves in new countries. Product diversification and growth may demand a product to be introduced on a global level. To develop a successful marketing strategy, an organization must take into consideration the cultural influences of the society where a new product is being introduced. People make decisions about consumption of a product based on these cultural influences.



Examples

- The Japanese company Matsushita Electric was promoting a new Japanese PC for internet users. Panasonic created the new web browser and had received license to use the cartoon character Woody Woodpecker as an interactive internet guide. The day before the huge marketing campaign, Panasonic realised its error and pulled the plug. Why? The ads for the new product featured the following slogan:
"Touch Woody - The Internet Pecker." The company only realised its cross cultural blunder when an embarrassed American explain what "touch Woody's pecker" could be interpreted as!
 - The Swedish furniture giant IKEA somehow agreed upon the name "FARTFULL" for one of its new desks. Enough said..
 - In the late 1970s, Wang, the American computer company could not understand why its British branches were refusing to use its latest motto "Wang Cares". Of course, to British ears this sounds too close to "Wankers" which would not really give a very positive image to any company.
 - There are several examples of companies getting tangled up with bad translations of products due to the word "mist". We had "Irish Mist" (an alcoholic drink), "Mist Stick" (a curling iron from Clairol) and "Silver Mist" (Rolls Royce car) all flopping as "mist" in German means dung/manure. Fancy a glass of Irish dung?
 - "Traficante" and Italian mineral water found a great reception in Spain's underworld. In Spanish it translates as "drug dealer".
 - In 2002, Umbro the UK sports manufacturer had to withdraw its new trainers (sneakers) called the Zyklon. The firm received complaints from many organisations and individuals as it was the name of the gas used by the Nazi regime to murder millions of Jews in concentration camps.
 - Sharwoods, a UK food manufacturer, spent £6 million on a campaign to launch its new 'Bundh' sauces. It received calls from numerous Punjabi speakers telling them that "bundh" sounded just like the Punjabi word for "arse".
 - Honda introduced their new car "Fitta" into Nordic countries in 2001. If they had taken the time to undertake some cross cultural marketing research they may have discovered that "fitta" was an old word used in vulgar language to refer to a woman's genitals in Swedish, Norwegian and Danish. In the end they renamed it "Honda Jazz".
- A nice cross cultural example of the fact that all pictures or symbols are not interpreted the same across the world: staff at the African port of Stevadores saw the "internationally recognised" symbol for "fragile" (i.e. broken wine glass) and presumed it was a box of broken glass. Rather than waste space they threw all the boxes into the sea!



UNIT 9 MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE

India is an enormously hierarchical society and this, obviously, has an impact on management style. It is imperative that there is a boss and that the manager acts like a boss. The position of manager demands a certain amount of role-playing from the boss and a certain amount of deferential behavior from his subordinates... Anglo-Saxon concepts of egalitarianism where the boss is the primus-inter-pares are virtually incomprehensible in a society still dominated by the historical conventions of the caste system... Managing people in India requires a level of micro-management which many western business people feel extremely uncomfortable with but, which is likely to bring the best results.

In Brazil a manager's personal style is considered to be of great significance and it could almost be said that his or her vision/bearing is viewed as of great an importance as their technical abilities... Relationships are of key importance in this Latin culture and the boss and subordinates work hard to foster a relationship based on trust and respect for personal dignity. First and foremost, managers are expected to manage. The boss is expected to give direct instructions and it is expected that these instructions will be carried out without too much discussion or debate (if there is debate it should be done in private to avoid showing public disrespect to the hierarchy). Decision-making in Brazil is often reserved for the most senior people. Taking the time to build the proper working relationship is crucial to success. Coming in as an outsider is often difficult, so it is advisable to have a third-party introduction... Often the people you negotiate with will not have decision-making authority. Decisions are made by the highest-ranking person.



China management style tends to follow Confucian philosophy: Relationships are deemed to be unequal and ethical behavior demands that these inequalities are respected: Older person should automatically receive respect from the younger, the senior from the subordinate. This is the cornerstone of all the China management thinking and issues such as empowerment and open access to all information are viewed by the Chinese as, at best, bizarre Western notions... Management is directive, with the senior manager giving instructions to their direct reports who in turn pass on the instructions down the line. Subordinates do not question the decisions of superiors – that would be to show disrespect and be the direct cause of loss of face (mianzi) for all concerned.

Japan management style emphasis the need for information flow from the bottom of the company to the top: Senior management is largely a supervisory rather than “hands-on” approach. Policy is often originated at the middle-levels of a company before being passed upwards for ratification. The strength of this approach is obviously that those tasked with the implementation of decisions have been actively involved in the shaping of policy.

The higher a Japanese manager rises within an organization, the more important it is that he appears unassuming and not ambitious. Individual personality and forcefulness are not seen as the prerequisites for effective leadership. The key task for a Japanese manager is to provide the environment in which the group can flourish. In order to achieve this he must be accessible at all times and willing to share knowledge within the group. Manager is seen as a type of father figure who expects and receives loyalty and obedience from colleagues. In return, the manager is expected to take a holistic interest in the well-being of those colleagues. It is a mutually beneficial two-way relationship....

Russian management style tends to be centralized and directive. The boss, especially the ‘big boss’, is expected to issue direct instructions for subordinates to follow. Little consultation will be expected from people lower down the company hierarchy. Indeed too much consultation from a senior manager could be seen as a sign of weakness and lack of decisiveness. Middle managers have little power over strategy or input in significant strategic decisions. The most powerful middle managers are the ones who have the most immediate entree to the decision-maker at the top of the organization. There is little point in wasting time debating with middle managers who do not have an easy access to the top. The most significant reason for delay in reaching a decision in Russia is that the decision has not been put in front of the real decision-maker...

UNIT 10 THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESSPERSON ACROSS CULTURES

It goes without saying that knowledge of other cultures is crucial to being a successful International Businessperson.

-“World becomes my oyster”

-Ability to think globally

-Understanding of global economy

-Awareness of international political developments

-Understanding of economic relationships between countries

-Country-specific knowledge

-Knowledge of business – government relations

It also makes the other person feel validated, respected and appreciated – all key ingredients for good communication.

Here are some steps to follow:

- 1) Show you are listening.
- 2) Repeat key information.
- 3) Show empathy.
- 4) Don't interrupt.
- 5) Any doubts, ask them politely to repeat and clarify key information.





Idioms

- To go out on the town-to go out and enjoy yourself at bars, restaurants etc. in the evening.
- To wine and dine-to try to impress someone with good food and drink.
- To take out to- to invite someone to something.
- To budget time- Systematic, priority-based structuring of time allocation and distribution among competing demands.
- To lose time on- to take longer smth.
- A game plan- strategy you use to try to win a game
- Warm up the opponent-friendly play between the two teams before the game to get to know each other.
- Home court advantage-to play better in your own city or country because you know the surroundings.
- To stack the deck-to trick, to arrange things unfairly.
- To have a poker face-to not show any reaction.
- To have a card up one's sleeve- to hide something valuable.
- Actions speak louder than words-what you say is less important than what you do.
- Take someone at his or her word- to make a promise.
- Give your word of honor-to believe what someone says.
- Go back on your word-to break a promise.
- Flea market-an open air market where antiques and second-hand things sold.
- In the market for-ready to buy/
- To play the market- to try make money on the stock market by buying and selling stocks.
- Buyer's market-a market favors the consumer not the seller.
- On the market-for sale.
- To play it by ear-to wait and see how a situation progresses before making a decision.
- To ride out the storm- to not leave a situation that is unfavorable at present, but rather to wait for it to get better.
- To go with the flow-to accept a situation by not trying to change anything and letting the other person lead.
- To not rock the boat-to not cause problems, to adapt.
- To meet halfway-to compromise, to be flexible.

Problems Caused by Cultural Differences

You greet your Austrian client. This is the sixth time you have met over the last 4 months. He calls you Herr Smith. You think of him as a standoffish sort of guy who doesn't want to get really friendly. That might be true in America, where calling someone Mr. Smith after the 6th meeting would probably mean something -- it is *marked* usage of language -- like "we're not hitting it off". But in Austria, it is normal.

A Canadian conducting business in Kuwait is surprised when his meeting with a high-ranking official is not held in a closed office and is constantly interrupted. He starts wondering if the official is as important as he had been led to believe, and he starts to doubt how seriously his business is being taken

A British boss asked a new, young American employee if he would like to have an early lunch at 11 am each day. The employee said 'Yeah, that would be great!' The boss immediately said "With that kind of attitude, you may as well forget about lunch!" The employee and the boss were both baffled by what went wrong. [In England, saying "yeah" in that context is seen as rude and disrespectful.]

A Japanese businessman wants to tell his Norwegian client that he is uninterested in a particular sale. So he says "That will be very difficult." The Norwegian eagerly asks how he can help. The Japanese is mystified. To him, saying that something is difficult is a polite way of saying "No way in hell!". Dave Barry tells the story of being on a trip to Japan and working with a Japanese airline clerk on taking a flight from one city to another. On being asked about it, the clerk said "Perhaps you would prefer to take the train." So he said "NO, I want to fly." So she said "There are many other ways to go." He said "yes, but I think it would be best to fly." She said "It would very difficult". Eventually, it came out that there were no flights between those cities.

Three basic kinds of problems: interpreting others comments and actions, predicting behavior, and conflicting behavior.

Some Perceptions of Americans

Europe & especially England. "Americans are stupid and unsubtle. And they are fat and bad dressers."

Finland. "Americans always want to say your name: 'That's a nice tie, Mikko. Hi Mikko, how are you Mikko'

Indian. "Americans are always in a hurry. Just watch the way they walk down the street."

Kenyan. "Americans are distant. They are not really close to other people -- even other Americans."

Turkey. "Once we were out in a rural area in the middle of nowhere and saw an American come to a stop sign. Though he could see in both directions for miles, and there was no traffic, he still stopped!"

Colombia. "In the United States, they think that life is only work."

Indonesia. "In the United States everything has to be talked about and analyzed. Even the littlest thing has to be 'Why, why why?'"

Ethiopia. "The American is very explicit. He wants a 'yes' or 'no'. If someone tries to speak figuratively, the American is confused."

Iran. "The first time my American professor told me 'I don't know, I will have to look it up', I was shocked. I asked myself 'Why is he teaching me?'"