

DO'S AND DON'TS OF OTHER COUNTRIES

Germany

- Guests should stand when the host enters the room and remain standing until they are offered a seat again.
- References to baseball, basketball, or American football are usually not completely understood by Germans.
- Do not talk with your hands in your pockets.
- Do not prop your leg(s) on desks, chairs, or tables.
- A handshake is the most common form of greeting in Germany, but it should be firm only with men.
- Chew gum only in private.
- Use cosmetics and jewelry sparingly.

Middle East

- Avoid talking about business until you get to know your host or you will be considered rude.
- Do not engage in conversations about religion, politics, or Israel.
- Alcohol is prohibited in some countries, such as Saudi Arabia.
- It is considered impolite for Arabs to say “no,” so avoid requesting favors from those in authority and do not take the lack of a firm “no” as an acceptance.
- Avoid shaking hands too firmly or pumping; gentle or limp handshakes are preferred.
- Do not point your finger at someone or show the soles of your feet when seated.

Japan

- Make your first approach in a Japanese organization at the highest level possible; the first person contacted will be involved throughout the negotiation.
- Avoid direct communication about money; leave this to a go-between or to lower-echelon staff.
- Never put a Japanese person in a position in which he or she must admit failure or impotence.
- Avoid praise of your product or services; let your literature or your go-between do that.
- Use business cards that include titles, preferably in both Japanese and English.
- The logical, cognitive, or intellectual approach is insufficient in Japanese business; the emotional level of communication is also considered important.
- Wait patiently for meetings to move beyond the preliminary tea and inconsequential talk.

China

- The foreign businessman should not focus on the individual Chinese person, but rather on the group of individuals who are working for a particular goal. Singling out an individual as possessing unique qualities could very well embarrass the person, and cause others to lose face, or feel resentful (envy).
- Avoid self-centered conversation in which the word “I” is excessively used. The individual who boasts about personal attributes is viewed with contempt (except for money!).
- Chinese are more reticent, reserved or shy. They avoid open displays of affection, and the speaking distance between two people in non-intimate relationships is greater than in the West. China is not a “touching” society.
- Loud, boisterous behavior is not appreciated.
- Telephone calls and electronic communication are a vital part of business, but face-to-face communication is for important business.