

Business etiquette in japan



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BUSTER**

Japanese seldom shake hands and can be so uncomfortable doing so, that they could avoid meeting again. Holding your hands together as a prayer and bowing your head slightly when you are greeting someone. When you are meeting someone for the first time, say ‘Hajimemashite’, which means ‘Hello, I am pleased to make your acquaintance’.

Business dress code In Japan, people are often judged on the way they are dressed. In the Japanese business wearing a dark suit, white shirt and a tie is the norm. Do not wear a black suit together with a black tie. This would be seen as a funeral outfit. Nowadays other colors are seen more often than in the past, but especially when you are meeting someone for the first time it is advisable to keep it safe. Japanese companies do not allow people wearing beards or shaved heads. For women the business dress code is formal as well. Women do not commonly wear trousers in business in Japan.

Accessories and makeup should not be too ostentatious.

Rules to stick to during meetings When you arrive, always wait to be seated in the meeting room because there is a tradition regarding which party sits on which side of the table. When doing business in Japan it is important that you take a lot of business cards with you. On one side of the business card, the information should be written in the Japanese language. The other side has to be written in English. Always present your business card with both hands, with the Japanese side up and to the most senior member first.

Also accept a business card with both hands and treat it with respect. Do not write notes on it, play with it or leave it behind. During the meeting, place the received cards carefully on the table in front of you with the senior cards

on top. Giving gifts is also an important part of Japanese business. Gifts should not be too generous, but always of good quality and they should always be wrapped. Avoid gifts in quantities of four or nine. These are unlucky numbers. Also avoid sharp gifts because these could signify the desire to end a relationship. Alcohol is always an appreciated gift.

Negotiation style during meetings Harmony is very important during meetings. A solution must not be achieved by disturbing the peace.

Therefore an individual should not express a strong opinion, which might cause a confrontation. Decisions are reached by a process of consensus-building meetings. The decision-making process can seem very long and drawn out. Be patience is very important when doing business in Japan.

Relationship-building is also very important during meetings. Meetings are often long, non-business conversations which could cover topics as family or Japanese food. Take into account that oral agreements carry as much weight as written contracts.

Any other relevant aspects to take into account when doing business in Japan If you are doing business in Japan, the following aspects are important to take into account; -Avoid strong eye contact which can be seen as threatening or hostile behavior. -Always show respect. Age brings dignity and should be respected. -Never blow your nose in a public space.

-Never pat a Japanese man on the back or shoulder. -Do not overestimate the levels of understanding when speaking English in Japan. Many people do not understand even when they indicate that they are. -Avoid showing

negative emotions as irritation, annoyance or impatience. This could put a strain on the development of the relationship.