

International marketing: chapter 19 (negotiating with international customers, pa...

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Consider the *aisatsu* (a meeting or formal greeting for high-level executives typical in Japan). Such face-to-face negotiations are an omnipresent activity in international commerce. Once global marketing strategies have been formulated, once marketing research has been conducted to support those strategies, and once product/service, pricing, promotion, and place decisions have been made, then the focus of managers turns to implementation of the plans. In international business such plans are almost always implemented through face-to-face negotiations with business partners and customers from foreign countries.

Executives must also negotiate with representatives of foreign governments who might approve a variety of their marketing actions or in fact be the actual ultimate customer for goods and services. One authority on international joint ventures suggests that a crucial aspect of all international commercial relationships is the negotiation of the original agreement. The seeds of success or failure often are sown at the negotiation table, *vis-a-vis* (face-to-face), where not only are financial and legal details agreed to but, perhaps more important, the ambiance of cooperation is established.

Indeed, the legal details and the structure of international business ventures are almost always modified over time, usually through negotiations. Business negotiations between business partners from the same country can be difficult. The added complication of cross-cultural communication can turn an already daunting task into an impossible one. On the other hand, if cultural differences are taken into account, oftentimes wonderful business agreements can be made that lead to long-term, profitable relationships across borders.

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