

# Effective intercultural communication

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



The management team from Asian Services international Group (ASIG) will be in our office next week. During their one week visit, we will present our marketing proposal and take them to visit some of the clients that will benefit from our joint marketing venture. It is imperative that we be aware of and sensitive to the many cultural differences we will encounter.

As you know Asian Services International Group has offices in many Asian countries including India, China, Korea, The Philippines, and Thailand. ASIG also has strategic marketing partnerships with companies in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. Since ASIG is sending a multi-cultural group to our office, I want to provide you with some information and guidelines about communicating with people from other cultures. Since you are the team which is responsible for closing the sale, it is critical that you have not only an excellent presentation, realistic numbers, and a strategic action plan. You must present our program in a way that they will receive. You must also be prepared to understand their actions and reactions to your presentations to ensure that you have covered all of their objections and concerns, leading them to make a “ yes” decision.

Verbal/non-verbal - In the U. S. we rely heavily on verbal communication to make our points. In many cultures non-verbal cues are as important as verbal communication. So body language is important.

As you address the personnel requirements for the partnership, be sure to address job creation. In India job creation is a higher priority than creating efficiency through job streamlining and individual multi-tasking. The Indian executives will respond more positively to job creation, than to saving money, especially if it involves reducing the number of jobs.

Time lines - We have a schedule of events, but we must be flexible. For Asian executives cultivating the correct relationship will win their approval more than meeting deadlines. So, if they want to spend an extra hour at one of our clients offices, be prepared to reschedule other activities for the day. You may want to show them as many of our satisfied clients as possible. However, it may only take a good relationship with one of our clients to win the approval of some of the Asian executives.

Body language and eye contact - We are taught to make eye contact and to analyze our clients when we make the close. We also assume that if the client is looking down that they may have objections, or are not being totally honest about their business intentions. However, in Asian cultures lowered eyes are a sign of respect. Lowering the eyes is similar to the European practice of bowing to royalty. Lowering of the eyes can be a key that you have won their respect and approval about a specific area of expertise that you have presented to them. Use that opportunity to begin the closing and negotiating phase.

Finally, remember that just as you are learning to communicate across cultural lines with them, in the same way they are learning to communicate with you. They most likely will have received a similar memo with cultural assumptions and suggestions. The key is to use all forms of communication, verbal and non-verbal, to enhance your experience with our future partner from ASIG.