

Global business etiquette assignment

Sociology



Global Business Etiquette GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE: A GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND CUSTOMS Jeanette S. Martin and Lillian H. Chaney Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Martin, Jeanette S. Global business etiquette : a guide to international communication and customs / Jeanette S. Martin and Lillian H. Chaney. p. cm. Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN 0-275-98815-5 1. Business etiquette. 2. Intercultural communication. 3. Business communication. I. Title HF5389.

M375 2006 395. 5'2—dc22 2005037086 British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available. Copyright © 2006 by Jeanette S. Martin and Lillian H. Chaney All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, by any process or technique, without the express written consent of the publisher. Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2005037086 ISBN: 0-275-98815-5 First published in 2006 Praeger Publishers, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881 An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc. www.praeger.com Printed in the United States of America The paper used in this book complies with the Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National Information Standards Organization (Z39.48-1984). 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 CONTENTS Preface and Acknowledgments 1. Travel Customs and Tips 2. Language, Greetings, Introductions, and Business Cards 3. Socializing 4. Gestures and Other Nonverbal Communicators 5. Dress and Appearance 6. Cultural Attitudes and Behaviors 7. Dining and Tipping Customs 8. Conversational Customs and Manners 9.

Oral and Written Communication Customs and Etiquette Notes Index vii 1 23 35 51 73 89 107 127 145 161 175 PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS What
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you should gain from this book is a better understanding of who you are, the ability to find out about the person in the other culture, an increased sensitivity to other ways of thinking and being, an expansion of your communication skills, and a better understanding of global business relationships. You probably know from personal experience that it is not easy to correct a faux pas, and sometimes it is impossible.

Global business relationships are not easy to establish or maintain. Although we communicate using faster media (thanks to facsimiles, e-mail, and wireless phones), we do not necessarily communicate more intelligently. We are simply using faster tools and old habits. We know that our book can help you think about some of those old habits, and maybe it will stir you to take the time to change a few of them. Globalization is here to stay, and we will all be working with people from other cultures around the globe during our working life.

If this book helps you to learn to communicate verbally and nonverbally in intercultural encounters the book will be a success. Although this book has some country-specific information, it is more of a general information book on the topic areas. Enough academic information and examples are given to help you understand why the concepts discussed are important and why you need to give these concepts your attention. We would like to thank our families and friends for their support as we wrote this book, and we would particularly like to thank Nicholas Philipson, our senior editor, and Stan Wakefield, who introduced us to Praeger. Sincerely, Jeanette S. Martin and Lillian H. Chaney

Chapter 1 TRAVEL CUSTOMS AND TIPS Building global business relationships depends on the innate ability to learn about other

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cultures and proper training to help a person adjust once he or she is in another culture. Whether one is traveling for business or pleasure, new cultures are generally part of the process. Although there are many differences between cultures in the world, there are also similarities.

The similarities do not get us into trouble, but the differences can destroy a business deal or a pleasure trip. Learning some facts and some of the patterns of other cultures, as well as various travel customs and tips, can help you be successful. Preparation, support, and training before venturing abroad can help you meet the challenges of an intercultural assignment or trip. Employees who work globally should be trained in technical knowledge, such as import and export laws of other countries, comparative management styles, and business protocol, etiquette, and ethics.

Regardless of how much you learn about another country, always remember you are dealing with individuals who may or may not possess the aspects of the culture that you have learned. Stereotypes are as dangerous as ethnocentrism. We are all individuals, and when traveling abroad you must learn to handle every individual separately. Posters in Heathrow advertising HSBC make a good point about cultural differences concerning how the grasshopper is viewed: “ U. S. A. —Pest, China—Pet, and Northern Thailand—Appetizer. ” Even though taxonomists define a grasshopper as an Acrididae, culture determines how the insect will be perceived. 1 2 GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE Memorizing facts about a new culture is helpful; however, the real goal to cultural sensitivity is to be able to recognize and determine cultural differences, learn about the cultural differences, and respond appropriately in a new setting. To be culturally sensitive, one must monitor <https://assignbuster.com/global-business-etiquette-assignment/>

internal and external cues. 2 The more cultural and emotional intelligence individuals have, the easier it will be for them to acculturate and assimilate in a new culture and build relationships.

PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE First you need a passport, and if you do not have one it can take from 8 to 12 weeks for the government to process a request in the United States. To obtain a passport, you will need proof of United States citizenship (certified birth certificate or naturalization certificate), proof of identity (driver's license, state or military ID, or student ID), and two passport photographs. Once you have a passport, make copies of it, place the copies in various pieces of luggage, and leave one with a person at home.

If you lose your passport, it is much easier to have it replaced if you have a copy. Visas are required to travel to many countries. To obtain a visa application, contact that country's embassy or consulate. You can find most of these by searching the country name on the Internet. Many times there is a fee, and a photo is required. Be sure to allow sufficient time for the processing of your request before your departure date, as it normally takes anywhere from two to eight weeks to obtain a visa.

Because most of the world is on the metric system, it is nice to know how you can convert distances from miles to kilometers. The conversion is done by multiplying the miles by 1.6 (10 miles 1.6 16 kilometers), or convert kilometers to miles by multiplying the kilometers by 0.62 (10 kilometers 0.62 6.2 miles). Similarly, converting Celsius temperature to Fahrenheit is done by multiplying the Celsius temperature by 1.8 and adding 32 (25 C 1.8

45 32 77 F). To convert a Fahrenheit temperature to Celsius, subtract 32 from the Fahrenheit temperature and divide the remainder by 1.8 (77 F 32 45 1.8 25 C). Some hints for packing and traveling are to start packing in advance, pack materials that do not wrinkle easily, use suitcases and garment bags with rollers, check baggage and weight restrictions with the airlines, consider the weather where you are traveling, remember voltage adaptors for electrical hairdryers and shavers, and pack a portable iron for remote cities. Be sure to take a folding tote bag, comfortable shoes for the night, earplugs, a toothbrush and toothpaste, reading material, travel alarm, and an umbrella. Make and use a travel checklist, such as the following one; be sure to add anything to the list that is germane to your trip.

TRAVEL CHECKLIST

CUSTOMS AND TIPS ___ Passport and visas ___ Government-issued picture ID ___ Plane tickets ___ Lodging info ___ Car rental info ___ Insurance cards ___ Business cards ___ Other lists for the house and work ___ ATM card ___ Medicines ___ Credit cards ___ Money ___ Clothing ___ Umbrella ___ Contact lists ___ Hygiene products ___ Glasses or contacts ___ Alarm clock ___ Electric current adaptor ___ Raincoat ___ Camera

Some things you can do to reduce jet lag are to exercise regularly before departure, get a good night's sleep prior to your flight, change your watch to the time at your destination when you board the plane, and start acting as if you are in the arrival time zone. Also, avoid alcoholic and caffeinated beverages, heavy meals, smoking, unnecessary medications, and drink plenty of water. Upon arrival, stay awake until it is time to go to bed in the destination country.

If you are going to arrive at your destination in the morning, then taking a mild sedative to help you sleep on the plane will be helpful. Likewise, if you are going to arrive in the early evening, you will want to stay awake on the plane so you can go to sleep at your destination. See “ Dressing for Travel” in Chapter 5 for appropriate travel attire suggestions. Next, you need to read about the new culture and be trained to respond appropriately in the new culture. Although some people do this instinctively, most of us need to have some training if we are to be successful.

If you are successful in your own culture, that success is not a guarantee that you will be successful in another culture. **CONSIDERING YOUR HEALTH** If you are near a modern city, most over-the-counter medical supplies can be purchased as they are in the United States. It is always a good idea to have a first-aid kit for emergencies, however. Some items to include in the kit include sleeping pills, aspirin, motion sickness medication, diarrhea and constipation medication, adhesive bandages, antiseptic, antibiotic cream, and medications for any condition you may have.

It is a good idea to carry a short medical record with your passport that includes any medical conditions you have, your blood type, medications you take, allergic reactions to medications that you have, your doctor’s information, your insurance information, and an emergency contact. 4 If you are traveling to an area where medical care is not readily available, it is important to talk with a travel physician concerning immunizations you 4 **GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE** may need or, if you have special conditions, whether it is safe for you to travel to the location.

A doctor's certificate stating the medications you take may be helpful when clearing customs; also carry medication in its original prescription bottle. In case a flight is delayed or you have to extend your trip, be sure to take extra medication, and always carry your medication with you in your carry-on luggage rather than in your checked luggage. 5 Traveling in crowded airplanes, buses, and trains with recirculated air is conducive to getting sick; however, if you are well at the beginning of your flight and have taken precautions, hopefully you will stay well.

Take a pillow for your back and neck, walk around the plane during the flight, and drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration. Be cautious of the water you drink when abroad; the safest thing to do is to drink bottled water from a sealed bottle. 6 If you get sick, you need to realize that your health coverage may not make payments outside of the country, and Medicare does not make payments outside of the United States. If you travel outside of the United States on a regular basis, you may want to get medical insurance for travelers.

International SOS Assistance provides emergency health-care assistance by calling 800-523-8930. 7 CHOOSING ACCOMMODATIONS When traveling to other countries, do not take for granted that what you regard in the United States as first class will be the same abroad. Explain to the person making your reservations at the location exactly what you would like. For example, explain that you want a bathroom in your room that includes a Western-style toilet and shower, double bed, and access to the room via elevator.

Any amenities that you are interested in should be checked out in advance to be sure the hotel or inn can accommodate you. 8 Bathrooms can be a big concern for people. Many parts of the world have communal bathrooms, some of which are unisex. Then you have the toilets that are ? at on the ? oor, that are simply a hole in the ? oor, or that you must straddle without a seat. If these differences are important to you, discuss them with the person making your reservations. Except for remote areas, you can usually ? nd Western-style bathrooms if you check.

Many accommodations in Europe include certain meals with your room. If you have a continental breakfast, lunch, and dinner, it is considered pension complete; breakfast and one other meal is demipension; an American breakfast, lunch, and dinner is called the American plan; and modi? ed American plan is breakfast only. 9 Choosing hotel accommodations that offer concierge services can be particularly helpful. A concierge can generally help with transportation, TRAVEL CUSTOMS AND TIPS 5 event and entertainment suggestions, sightseeing, restaurants, and appropriate customs and gifts.

Most concierges can also help make business services arrangements for you, including translators, computers, and international cell phones. ARRIVING AT YOUR DESTINATION Be sure not to bring any plants, fruits, weapons, scissors, or other sharp instruments with you as these items can make going through customs and security very dif? cult; the items will be con? scated. Once you arrive at your destination, you will need to exchange dollars for the local currency. Because it is easy to use ATM machines abroad, do not take much cash with you.

When you need additional cash, simply use your bank card or credit card to obtain more cash. Do check ahead of time to be sure this is an option and that you know your PINs. Normally, you can exchange currency using your ATM cards in the airport or at banks. In some countries, such as France, the banks do not exchange currency except through their ATM machines. There is normally a nominal exchange charge for this service. Hotels can normally exchange currencies for you as well. Although traveler's checks are welcomed in some countries, they can be difficult to use in other countries. Even if traveler's checks are welcomed, the cost for converting to the local currency may be exorbitant, such as a \$7 charge to exchange a \$20 traveler's check (in Barcelona, Spain)! Be sure to check this out before you arrive at your destination. If you have not had time to learn the language, you should take the time to learn some common phrases in order to use the transportation system to get to your hotel, words for different food items so that you can order from a restaurant menu, and the proper words and behavior to use when greeting people.

Some safety tips to follow include using your business address rather than a home address on your luggage, arriving at the airport early to accommodate the screening process, securing a strap of your luggage under a chair leg when waiting at an airport, putting valuables in the hotel safe or your room safe, and double-locking your hotel room door.

10 CONSIDERING LEGALITY AND ETHICALITY OF CULTURAL PRACTICES

Because cultural diversity is part of the world, it is necessary to consider that an ethical behavior in one culture may be seen as unethical in another culture.

It is important to be cautious and understand the differences between ethics-based judgments and judgments based on concern and practicality. 11

Although it may seem that the easiest thing to do is duplicate 6 GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE successful ethics from the home country to the host country, this type of duplication can be disrespectful of the host country's culture. Standards of moral behavior—what is right or wrong—are the bases of ethical judgments. If a judgment is based on what is easiest, best, or most effective to achieve an objective, then it is based on practical ethics.

Subjective judgments measure by degrees rather than by absolutes what is ethical or unethical in a society. People generally disagree as to the exact difference between ethical and unethical acts. 12 Currently, many global business managers are trying to use hypernorms, which are norms that are forming transnationally by which all cultures can live. The hypernorm would say that bribery is wrong. Although it is true that every major religion considers bribery to be wrong, bribery still exists in many parts of the world. Political participation (democracy) and efficiency strategies both would argue that bribery is wrong; however, democracy does not exist throughout the world, and many economies are not developed to the point of being efficient, hence bribery makes inefficiencies economical. In 30 years, hypernorms may be followed more than they are today as we work toward transnational norms. 13 Four approaches to dealing with ethical differences include the foreign country approach, empire approach, interconnection approach, and global approach. According to the foreign country approach, you conform to the local customs. The empire approach applies the home-based ethics to the new host situation.

The interconnection approach does not consider either home or host country as having the ethical answers but the needs of the companies that are interacting. The global approach looks at what is good for the world rather than the local ethical customs. 14 The different approaches to dealing with ethical differences have shortcomings. The foreign country approach has no oversight or restraints on the host country's ethics. Both the empire and the global approaches say that what your culture (home country) believes is correct and that the other culture should accept your ethics, leaving no room for movement by the host culture.

The interconnection approach looks at both cultures and tries to balance the ethical requirements. The bottom line is that multinational companies should be helpful to a host country rather than harmful. In the business world, four motivations for unethical conduct exist: profits, competition, justice, and advertising. The three dimensions of negotiation ethics are means/ends, relativism/absolutism, and truth telling. The means/ ends question is measured by utility. The moral value and worth of an act are judged by what is produced—the utility.

The players in the negotiation game and the environment in which the negotiators are operating help determine whether the negotiators can justify being exploitative, manipulative, or devious. The relative/absolute question considers two extremes: Either everything is relative, or everything is without deviation from the TRAVEL CUSTOMS AND TIPS 7 rule. Although most people are somewhere between the extremes of relative and absolute, they debate which point between the two extremes is correct. Of course, it is a matter of judgment or culture as to what particular point on the continuum is <https://assignbuster.com/global-business-etiquette-assignment/>

correct. 5 Truth telling considers whether concealing information, conscious misstatements, exaggeration, or bluffing during negotiations is dishonest. Judging how honest and candid one can be in negotiations and not be vulnerable is different culture. Intercultural negotiators have the added problem of different business methods, different cultures, and different negotiation protocols. Although the decision to be “unethical” may be made to increase power and control, it is important whether the decision was made quickly, casually, after careful evaluation, or on the basis of cultural values. 6 Bribery in particular has undergone close international scrutiny in the past few years. Bribery is influencing others by giving them something. In Mexico, bribes are known as mordida; in Southeast Asia, kumshaw; and in the Middle East, baksheesh. Although bribery unofficially is part of doing business in many parts of the world, bribery is not approved of officially in any country. While the practice is not officially approved, it is considered neither unethical nor immoral in a number of countries practicing the art of “greasing the palm. Examples include paying the customs agent in Nigeria in order to leave the airport or giving a tip to the driver’s license bureau agent in Thailand and Indonesia in order to get a driver’s license. 17 Vivek Paul of Wipro tells of not being able to get a local telephone line between his office and factory unless he paid a bribe. Since he would not pay the bribe, he had to figure out another way to communicate. He communicated through his mainframe computer fiber-optic lease line which did not require a bribe rather than the one in town which did require a bribe. 8 Bribery is considered wrong in the United States. The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977 requires U. S. companies to account for and report international transactions accurately and prohibits bribes. The act states that companies found guilty of paying

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bribes to foreign officials can be needed up to \$1 million, and individual employees may be needed up to \$10,000. 19 Not only can U. S. competitors in Italy, Germany, and Japan use bribery in international transactions, but they may deduct the amount of the bribe on their taxes as a business expense.

Some examples of such pay-offs include an Italian oil company's paying \$130 million to agents for an oil contract in Saudi Arabia; 8 GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE a German firm paying an intermediary in order to sell submarines to the Indian government; and Siemens' paying an official in order to obtain the contract to build an Indonesian steel plant. Bribes generally are in the form of gifts or entertainment. When a company receives something in return, they have engaged in bribery. For example, a U. S. firm giving a Russian utility official money for the Russian's personal use to get an electric line brought in to a new construction site is an example of bribery. The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977 often puts U. S. firms at a disadvantage when trying to compete with companies from cultures that have no problem with the practice of "gift giving," which U. S. persons would call a bribe. To protect the company and their employees, many U. S. companies do not allow bribery. Bill Pomeranz, an employee with Hughes Space and Communications Company, says that only two contracts have been lost over the years because Hughes failed to pay bribes.

It is important to note that Hughes is the market leader in their field and has more to offer than those who might make payoffs. He responded as follows when asked about bribery: "It's illegal. Whether it's the way somebody would want to do business or not, it's illegal—and the company has a rigid code of ethics that prohibits unlawful conduct." Many Fortune 500

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companies have rules concerning bribery that they expect their employees to follow. 20 Expediting business transactions in some countries can be done with the help of consultants who make sure that roadblocks are cleared.

It is bribery for employees of U. S. firms to be directly involved in paying these commissions; however, by having a consultant, distributor, or joint-venture partner take care of the fees, the U. S. firm is not directly involved and probably should not ask about or have knowledge of the practice. 21

Export Administration Regulations subscription is available by going to

<http://bookstore.gpo.gov/index.html> or http://www.access.gpo.gov/bis/ear/ear_data.html and is helpful to those involved in international

business. The U. S.

Department of Commerce's 1993 booklet *International Business Practices*, although out of print, is an excellent source of information (available at

<http://bookstore.gpo.gov/index.html> or Federal Depository libraries), lists

foreign laws by country, and offers the following guidance on distributor

agreements: • • • • • Check legal differences between the countries. Check

translations for correct meanings. State the jurisdiction for handling

disagreements. Identify arbitrators to settle disagreements if needed. State

foreign laws that are to be waived in contracts.

TRAVEL CUSTOMS AND TIPS • State the benefits to both parties. • Put the

agreement in writing. 9 Because laws are different and companies are

responsible for both the home- and host-country laws, the Doctrine of

Sovereign Compliance was designed as a defense in your home country for

work carried out in a host country when the two countries' legal positions are

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different. For example, a U. S. manager working in Mexico may have to trade with Cuba even though it is illegal to do so in the United States. The manager could use the Doctrine of Sovereign Compliance as a defense. If a U. S. citizen is held to the U. S. law outside of the U. S. borders, it is called extraterritorial. Joint-venture trading companies, which are normally not allowed in the United States due to antitrust, are allowed through the Export Trading Act of 1982. 22 An example of this act would include Exxon and BP's development of a joint venture to drill for oil. Building global business relationships is affected by the laws of the countries in which companies do business and the growing body of international law. Laws tend to develop when the normal cultural beliefs, values, and assumptions no longer are sufficient.

Because managers in the United States are faced with situations in other countries that are considered illegal in the United States, they must be aware that different perceptions exist internationally concerning gifts. Bribery is culturally conditioned, and one country's tip is another country's bribe. 23 Examples of bribes given to clients include box seats at sporting events or lavish entertainment. 24 To be sure you do not break the law in other countries, follow these tips: 25

1. Because of political unrest in the world, register with the U. S. embassy or consulate when you arrive in a foreign country. . If you have any kind of trouble, turn to the embassy or consulate for legal, medical, or financial problems.
3. If you are taken to jail, realize the U. S. consul can visit you in jail, give you a list of attorneys, notify family, and protest any mistreatment; however, the consul cannot get you released or provide for bonds or fines.
4. While you are in another country, remember that you are subject to the laws of the country.
5. If you stay for a

prolonged time period, register with the local authorities. You may be requested to leave your passport overnight or to complete certain forms. . While in another country, use authorized outlets for cashing checks and buying airline tickets; avoid the black market or street money changers that you will see in many countries. 10 GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE 7. Before you take a photograph, ask for permission. 8. In many countries, notary publics have broader powers than in the United States. 9. Avoid infractions of the law in other countries, including trying to take historic artifacts or antiquities out of the country, customs violations, immigration violations, drunk and disorderly conduct, and business fraud. 10.

If you need to drive, obtain an international driver's license. Travel agents can assist with this. Many countries require proof of insurance while driving. Your U. S. insurance is generally not recognized in other countries. 11.

Although dealing in drugs is a serious offense in all countries, the penalties can be much more serious than in the United States and may include the death penalty. 12. In order to protect your credit card numbers and traveler's check numbers, keep a list of the numbers in a safe place. 13.

Obtain a copy of the U. S. State Department's Safe Trip Abroad, available through <http://bookstore.p.o.gov>. 14. Telephone numbers and addresses that may be beneficial include the following: • The U. S. State Department, 2201 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20520, 202-647-4000, www.state.gov. • Amnesty International USA, 5 Penn Plaza, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10001, 212-807-8400, <http://www.amnestyusa.org>. • International Legal Defense Counsel, 1429 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, 215-977-9982. 15.

Your health could be a major concern. Obtain a copy of the Health

Information for International Travel by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at 888-232-3299 or from www.cdc.gov. This will offer disease and immunization advice and health risks for countries. Health precautions may include the need to take a series of inoculations before you leave.

International SOS Assistance is a health provider that will work through the red tape of language, insurance, travel, or anything else you may need. They can also provide travel health insurance. They may be reached at 800-523-8930 or 215-244-1500. **ANTICIPATING CULTURAL SHOCK** Cultural shock is experienced when you enter a culture different from your home culture.

Cultural shock involves the frustration of not understanding verbal and nonverbal communication, customs, and the value system of a new culture. 26 Common frustrations include lack of common foods, less than adequate standards of cleanliness, bathroom facilities that TRAVEL CUSTOMS AND TIPS 11 are unusual, and fear for one's safety. The English saying, "That song is best esteemed with which our ears are most acquainted," states the fact simply: We like things as we are accustomed to having them. If you anticipate some of the differences in advance, some of the shock will be removed.

Jack London, in his story "In a Far Country," published in 1900, stressed that a visitor to another culture should acquire new customs and abandon what feels comfortable. It is amazing that we are still dealing with cultural shock and the unfamiliar more than a 100 years later. An example of cultural shock is finding that women are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia. As annoying as this is to the women, it is even more confusing to an eight year old who has never seen his mother drive until they return home to the United States <https://assignbuster.com/global-business-etiquette-assignment/>

from Saudi Arabia. 27 Cultural shock may have 4 stages: initial euphoria, crisis, adjustment, acceptance, and reentry. If you look at the letter U, you would find at the top-left side of the U the positive euphoric beginning, crisis would start as you move down the left side to the base of the U, adjustment starts at the base of the curve, acceptance moves up the right side of the U, and reentry to the home culture starts at the top-right side of the U. Because reentry shock starts another U cycle, this would become the first stage on the left side of the U for reentry shock in the home culture. 8 The first stage can last a few days or several months and is excitement and fascination with everything new. You will find the food and the people interesting and different. Sometimes this stage is referred to as the “honeymoon” stage, during which your enthusiasm for the new culture causes you to overlook minor problems, such as having to drink bottled water and the absence of central heating or air conditioning. 29 During the second stage, the honeymoon is over and the crisis or disenchantment period begins.

Excitement turns to disappointment as you encounter all the differences between your own culture and the new culture. Problems with people who do not speak English, transportation, and unfamiliar foods are exasperating. Bargaining over the purchase price of everything, which was initially fun, is irritating. Emotions of homesickness, irritation, anger, confusion, resentment, helplessness, and depression occur during the second stage. You may feel like going back by making disparaging remarks about the culture or by leaving, either physically, emotionally, or psychologically.

Other characteristics include withdrawal from people in the culture, refusing to learn the language, and developing coping behaviors such as excessive

drinking or drug use. Other individuals deny differences and will speak in glowing terms of the new culture. The second stage can last a few weeks or several months. 30 12 GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE You begin to accept the new culture by the adjustment phase. You begin to adjust to foods, make adjustments to accommodate the shopping lines, and to accept other inconveniences. You are able to laugh at situations and realize you have to change your attitude toward the host culture. 1 In the fourth phase, you feel at home and have entered the acceptance or adaptation phase. By becoming involved in activities, cultivating new friendships, and feeling comfortable in social situations with people from the host culture, you learn to adjust. You learn the language and may adopt the host culture's way of doing things. You may learn to enjoy customs such as afternoon tea or the midday siesta and miss them when you return to your home country. 32 Reentry shock starts the U curve again; it can be almost as traumatic as the initial adjustment to a new culture if you have had an extended stay abroad.

Feeling the same emotional, psychological, and physical reactions as when you entered the new culture can be very surprising. Reentry shock is experienced on returning to the home country and may follow the stages identified earlier: initial euphoria, crisis or disenchantment, adjustment, and acceptance or adaptation. You would have an initial euphoria about being home, then become disenchanted as your friends show no interest in hearing about your experiences abroad, your standard of living changes, and skills such as a foreign language or bargaining in the market are not useful.

Moving into the adjustment stage you become familiar and appreciative of new technology, the variety of foods and clothing, and the improved

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cleanliness standards. With the reacceptance of the mores of the home culture, you move into the acceptance stage, feeling comfortable with your earlier views and behaviors. 33 College students who had traveled abroad experienced four types of reentry shock that were statistically significant: readjusting to lifestyle, change in social life, change in standard of living, and reestablishing friendships. 4 The longer you are separated from your home culture, the more severe the stages may be. A former student from the United Arab Emirates called his U. S. professor to ask for information on purchasing property on the North Carolina coast. He went on to explain that he was homesick for the United States and had decided to bring his family here every summer. After spending 15 years in the United States earning his bachelor, M. B. A. , and Ph. D. degrees with only occasional visits back to his home country, he was experiencing reentry shock. He made the readjustment and did not buy the North Carolina property.)35 Train and interact with people from the culture if you can ? nd them locally. Learn as much of the language as possible before you go. Learn TRAVEL CUSTOMS AND TIPS 13 about the new culture, particularly time differences, communication, con? ict resolution, climate, power, standard of living, transportation, ethical practices, holidays, superstitions, taboos, technology, language, and cultural shock items for the culture to which you are traveling. One of the challenges is overcoming ecoshock. Ecoshock is the result of a person’s physiological and psychological reaction to a new, diverse, or changed ecology. “ 36 Items that are included in ecoshock include the similarities, differences, and tasks of the position or trip and how these are acted upon by communication, new people, complex travel, new location, organization, duration of the travel, cosmopolitan versus provincial location, <https://assignbuster.com/global-business-etiquette-assignment/>

giving versus exchanging versus getting role, technologies, less support, less structure, and more time needed. An example of one of these is travel dysrhythmia, or jet lag, when our biological clock has problems synchronizing with the local time.

This time difference can affect the circadian rhythms of the body, including eating times, sleeping, body temperature, and kidney and liver functions. Additionally you have to physiologically adjust to the temperature, humidity, altitude, food, and so forth. 37 The following strategies may be used for coping with the new culture during short visits. Do not accept the host culture and continue to act as you would have in the home culture. Make no effort to learn the language or customs of the host country. Some people will substitute host-culture behaviors for their home culture's customs.

Some people will add behaviors of the host culture when with host-country people but will maintain the home culture when with home-culture people. Synthesis is used by many and is a way of integrating the two cultures. The 4th strategy is resynthesis and is an integration of ideas not found in either culture but choosing items from a third culture. 38 RESPECTING HOLIDAYS, SUPERSTITIONS, AND TABOOS It is important to know the holidays, superstitions, and taboos of the country you are visiting. Lack of knowledge can be insulting to your host, cause you to lose business, or fail to build positive global relationships.

Superstitions, although inconsistent with the known laws of science, can hold a great deal of weight in some societies. Examples of superstitions include a belief that special charms, omens, or rituals have supernatural powers.

Superstitions are not the same around the world. In many Southeast Asian countries, spiritualists are highly regarded, and it is not unusual that they are consulted in making business decisions. An example of a superstition is a hotel that was built in Taiwan over a cemetery. The people told the government they would not stay there, and workers currently will 14

GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE not work there except during the day. This has caused all the food to be cooked off the premises, and only foreigners will stay at the hotel. When doing business with persons who take business advice from seers, it is best to respect these beliefs. Numbers are associated with bad luck and even death in many countries. Curiously, it tends to be different numbers for different cultures. People of the United States, for example, think that 13 is an unlucky number. Most U. S. American hotels do not have a 13th floor, and even a hotel number ending in 13 may be refused.

Friday the 13th is perceived as an unlucky day, causing people to not schedule important events on this day. The Chinese feel that four is the most negative number because it sounds like the word for death. Hotels in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan often have no fourth floor, and some Asian airports have no Gate 4. Numbers also have positive meanings in China. For example, the number six represents happiness, and nine represents long life. For many Chinese, having an uneven number of people in a photograph will bring bad luck, such as that the middle person in a photo of three people will die. 9 Number superstitions can be very important when building global relationships. Additional superstitions regarding numbers and gift giving are covered in Chapters 3 and 8. Practices or verbal expressions considered by a <https://assignbuster.com/global-business-etiquette-assignment/>

culture as improper or unacceptable are called taboos. Taboos are rooted in the beliefs of the people of a specific region or culture and are passed down from generation to generation. They can have a very strong hold on a society. Common business taboos include asking an Arab about the health of his wife or writing in red ink in Taiwan, because this has death connotations. Pointing with one's index finger is taboo in Malaysia, but the thumb is OK. In Indonesia it is taboo to touch the head because it is considered sacred. Patting young children on the head would be cause for great concern in Indonesia. Placing one's head in a higher position than the head of a senior person is taboo. The Russian Federation has a number of taboos: No whistling in the street, no coats worn indoors, and no lunches on park lawns. Madagascar has some very unusual taboos: Pregnant women are forbidden to eat brains or sit in doorways, women may not wash their brothers' clothes, and children are not permitted to say their father's name or make reference to any part of his body. 41 If you want to build global relationships, you must take into consideration the holidays and holy days observed by the people in the culture. All countries have holidays and holy days that you must be aware of before scheduling telephone calls and making business trips. Holidays generally celebrate a prominent person's birthday, a historic event, or pay homage to TRAVEL CUSTOMS AND TIPS 15 group. Holy days are religious observances. More information on religion is included in Chapter 6. Knowing the days that businesses do not operate is essential when working abroad. Knowing when to distribute promotional items can be very important, as a cereal company discovered after delivering two sample boxes of cereal with the Sunday edition of the newspaper. Jewish customers were incensed due to the fact it was the first day of Passover and they are

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required to keep their homes free of all bread and grain products for the week-long celebration.

People who travel to the United States would need to know that business is not conducted on Christmas Day, Thanksgiving, or the Fourth of July. Most businesses, with the exception of retail establishments, are closed on Sunday, which is the Sabbath for many religions. The Jewish Sabbath is observed on Saturday, whereas the Muslims observe the Sabbath on Friday. Although some holidays across the world are similar to those celebrated in the United States, there are also a number of differences.

Many Catholic countries, such as Germany, have a carnival season (similar to New Orleans' Mardi Gras), which is not a good time to conduct business. Although many countries celebrate the New Year, the time of year varies and the calendar that is followed to determine the New Year is different. In China, for example, the Chinese New Year follows a different calendar from that used in the West. Because holidays are so important to developing global relationships, the holidays of the 10 countries with which the United States conducts most of its international business are listed here. (An asterisk [*] indicates holidays for which dates vary and may be found online or on a calendar of the country.) Canada⁴² celebrates many of the same days as the United States, including New Year's Day (January 1), Easter Sunday and Monday*, and Labor Day (May 1). Other Canadian holidays include Victoria Day (third Monday in May), Canada Day (July 1), Thanksgiving Day (second Monday in October), All Saints' Day (November 1), Remembrance Day (November 11), Christmas (December 25), and Boxing Day (December 26).

Quebec has two additional holidays: the Carnival de Quebec (February) and St. Jean Baptiste Day (June 24). China⁴³ has numerous holidays that are very different from the West, including Chinese Lunar New Year and Spring Festival*, International Working Woman's Day (March 8), Youth Day (May 4), Children's Day (June 1), People's Liberation Army Day (August 1), and National Day (October 1). 16 GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE England⁴⁴ probably celebrates fewer holidays than any other European country.

The English holidays include New Year's Day (January 1), Good Friday*, May Day*, Easter Sunday and Monday*, Spring Bank Holiday*, Late Summer Holiday*, Christmas (December 25), and Boxing Day (December 26).

France⁴⁵ celebrates a number of holidays, many of which have religious significance, including New Year's Day (January 1), Mardi Gras (Shrove Tuesday)*, Easter Sunday and Monday*, Labor Day (May 1), Liberation Day (May 8), Ascension Day*, Whit Monday*, Bastille Day (July 14), Pentecost*, Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15), All Saints' Day (November 1), World War I Armistice Day*, and Christmas (December 25).

Germany⁴⁶ celebrates the following holidays: New Year's Day (January 1), Good Friday*, Easter Sunday and Monday*, Labor Day (May 1), Ascension Day*, Whit Monday*, Day of German Unity (October 3), All Saints' Day (November 1), Day of Prayer and Repentance*, and Christmas (December 25). Japan⁴⁷ celebrates a number of days during the year; however, they are not religiously oriented and include the following: New Year's Day (January 1), Coming of Age Day (January 15), National Foundation Day (February 11), Vernal Equinox (March 21), Greenery Day (April 29),

Constitution Day (May 3), Children’s Day (May 5), Bon Festival (August 15), Respect for the Aged Day (September 15), Autumnal Equinox (September 23), Sports Day (October 10), Culture Day (November 3), Labor Thanksgiving Day (November 23), and Emperor Akihito’s Birthday (December 23).

Mexico⁴⁸ has numerous holidays, and because it is one of the top trading partners of the United States, you will want to know the following holidays: New Year’s Day (January 1), St.

Anthony’s Day (January 17), Constitution Day (February 5), Carnival Week*, Birthday of Benito Juarez (March 21), Easter*, Labor Day (May 1), Cinco de Mayo (May 5), Corpus Christi*, Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15), President’s Annual Message (September 1), Independence Day (September 16), Columbus Day (October 12), All Saints’ Day (November 1), All Souls’ Day (November 2), Revolution Day (November 20), Day of the Virgin Guadalupe (December 12), and Christmas (December 25).

The Netherlands⁴⁹ does not celebrate a lot of holidays; however, as a European country they do have long vacations and celebrate the following holidays: New Year’s Day (January 1), Queen Beatrix’s Birthday (April 30), Liberation Day (May 5), and Christmas (December 25–26). South Korea⁵⁰ has a number of holidays that are similar to U. S. holidays and some that are new to people in the West: The New Year (January 1–3), The Lunar New Year (January or February*), Independence Day (March 1), TRAVEL CUSTOMS AND TIPS 17

Buddha’s Birthday (April or May*), Memorial Day (June 6), Constitution Day (July 17), Liberation Day (August 15), Ch’usok, Harvest Moon Festival

(September or October*), National Foundation Day (October 3), and Christmas (December 25). Taiwanese holidays are as follows: Founding Day (January 1), Chinese Lunar New Year (January or February*), Birthday of Confucius (September 28), Double Ten National Day (October 10), Taiwan Restoration Day (October 25), and Constitution Day (December 25). In addition, business is not usually conducted during certain other times of the year.

For example, August is the vacation month in Europe, and many corporations are closed. During Ramadan, the Islamic fasting month, Arabs conduct less business. Various holidays and birthdays are celebrated in Japan from April 29 to May 5, and businesses close. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION Before you travel to a foreign country, find out what documents are needed, what hotel accommodations and modes of transportation are available, what laws affect behavior (such as the legal drinking age), and other pertinent information to ensure personal safety and comfort so that your sojourn is a pleasant one. There are many country-specific books and Web sites to consult to gain a knowledge of a particular country. Because space does not permit an extensive examination of numerous countries, the following travel tips are limited to the top 10 countries with which the United States conducts most of its international trade. Canada Passports are required. Visas are not required for visits of up to 180 days. Hotel accommodations in the large cities are Western style. Voltage connectors and plug adaptors are not needed. Public transportation systems exist in Montreal and Quebec City. Domestic air transportation or cars are used elsewhere in the country. Radar detectors are illegal. Additional information about traveling in Canada can be

obtained from the Canadian Consulate General, 212-596-1759, www.canada-ny.org, or the Embassy of Canada, 202-682-1740, www.canadianembassy.org. China • Passports are required and should be good for at least six months beyond the visit period. • • • • • 18 GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE • Visas are required. • Hotel accommodations may or may not be Western style. • Public transportation systems include a subway system, buses, taxis, and railroads. Bicycles are still the main mode of transportation. • Intellectual Property Right infringements have made trade with China contentious. 2 • More information about China can be found through the Embassy of China, 202-328-2500, www.china-embassy.org, or the China National Tourist Office, 888-760-8218, www.cnto.org. England • Passports are required. • Hotel accommodations may include early-morning tea delivered to your room. Larger hotels may include a continental breakfast in the room price. • Electrical converters and plug adapters are needed to use small U. S. appliances. • Public transportation includes subways, trains, buses, and taxis. If you choose to drive, be aware that the English drive on the left side of the road.

They also walk on the left side of the sidewalk or stairs. • More information on traveling in England is available from the British Tourist Authority, 800-462-2748, www.visitbritain.com, or the British Embassy, 202-588-7800, www.britainusa.com. France • Passports are required. • Hotel accommodations may be U. S. style or with a bath down the hall and no air conditioning. Generally, a breakfast is included. • Electrical converters are necessary for small appliances. • Public transportation in France includes the

Metro (subway), buses, taxis, and the TGV (train a grande vitesse, a high-speed train connecting 36 European cities).

Keep your TGV tickets until the end of the ride. Use of? cial taxis. If driving in France, do not honk your horn as this is illegal. • Additional information about traveling in France is available from the French Government Tourist Of? ce, 410-286-8310, www.us.franceguide.com, or the Embassy of France, 202-944-6000, www.ambafrance-us.org. TRAVEL CUSTOMS AND TIPS

Germany • Passports are required. • Hotel accommodations generally include a continental breakfast; however, heat may be an extra charge. If you want private bath facilities, inquire when making your reservations. Electrical converters are needed to use small appliances in hotels. • Public transportation includes buses, streetcars, subways, trains, and taxis. Mass transit tickets should be purchased in advance. Keep your tickets until the end of the ride. • An international driver’s license is required for driving in Germany. • Crosswalks are the only place to legally cross streets. • Tap water in towns along the Rhine may contain dangerous chemicals, so drink bottled water. • More information on traveling in Germany is available from the Embassy of Germany, 202-298-4000, www.germany-info.rg, or German National Tourist Of? ce, 212-661-7200, www.visits-to-germany.com. Japan • Passports are required. • Hotel accommodations include Western-style hotels in the large cities. The accommodations may be somewhat different from those to which you are accustomed. • Public toilets are often for both genders and quite different from those people of the United States are accustomed to using. • Electrical converters are not needed for small appliances. • Public transportation includes trains, subways, taxis, and

buses. The bullet train, which runs between major cities, offers regular and first-class service. Additional information about travel in Japan is available from the Japan National Tourist Organization, 212-757-5640, www.jnto.go.jp, or the Embassy of Japan, 202-238-6700, www.us.emb-japan.go.jp.

Mexico • Passports are usually required to return to the United States. • Vaccinations may be necessary in remote areas. • Hotel accommodations are generally Western style. Because Christmas and Easter are important vacation times in Mexico, hotel reservations must be made in advance for these time periods. 19 20 GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE • Public transportation includes the subway of Mexico City, buses, trains, and taxis.

Driving a car in many parts of Mexico is not advisable. • Additional information about traveling in Mexico is available from the Mexican Government Tourist Office, 212-755-7261, www.visitmexico.com, or the Embassy of Mexico, 202-728-1600, www.sre.gob.mx/eua/English/Default.htm. Netherlands • Passports are required. • Hotel accommodations are very Westernized. • Public transportation includes a network of trains, buses, subways, and taxis. Many people ride bicycles. • Additional travel information may be obtained from the Embassy of the Netherlands, 202-244-5300, www.etherlands-embassy.org, or the Netherlands Board of Tourism for American and Canadian Tourists, 888-464-6552, www.holland.com.

South Korea • Passports are required and must be good for six months after the anticipated return date. • Visas are required for visits of more than 30 days. • Hotel accommodations include Western-style hotels or the Korean-style *yogwan* inns. Because many amenities are different, discuss this with the person making your reservations. • Public transportation includes rail,

subways, buses, taxis, and private cars. South Korea's fastest bullet train was tested in 2004 and cuts in half the travel time between Pusan and Seoul. • For more information about travel in South Korea, contact the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, 202-939-5600, www.koreaembassyusa.org, or Korea National Tourism Organization, 201-585-0909, www.knto.or.kr. Taiwan • Passports are required. • Visas are required for stays longer than 30 days. • Hotel accommodations tend to be Western in style and often include meeting facilities, fitness centers, and such. During the month of October, book well in advance. Public transportation includes buses, taxis, and subways. TRAVEL CUSTOMS AND TIPS • For information about traveling to Taiwan, contact the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office, 202-895-1800, www.taipi.org, or Taiwan Visitors Association, 212-867-1632, www.roc-taiwan.org. 21 When in other countries, learn about their local laws and obey their laws, be courteous, learn the common phrases in their language, and speak positively about the country. If you do not speak their language, realize that you may feel frustrated at times if they do not speak English.

However, if they speak English, even poorly, be thankful, and go the extra mile to understand them and help them understand you. Chapter 2 LANGUAGE, GREETINGS, INTRODUCTIONS, AND BUSINESS CARDS Building a business relationship has a lot to do with the first impression you make. That first impression could be your use of a language (yours or theirs), how you greet people in another country, how you make introductions, how you shake hands, how you exchange business cards, or your knowledge of how a business operates in their country. In this chapter we will look at the

importance of these items in building a business relationship. LANGUAGE Meeting, speaking, and being understood are necessary if you are to build global business relationships. Therefore it is necessary that you learn the basic history and culture of the country you are visiting and a few phrases in their language. Although English may be the international language of business, it is not spoken by everyone, everywhere. Even if it were, their English is probably not the same as yours. Learning key phrases, such as “ Do you speak English,” “ Yes,” “ No,” “ Good day,” “ Good night,” “ Excuse me,” “ Where is the restroom? “, “ Thank you,” “ Please,” and “ Help” can be very useful.

Everyone appreciates someone who tries to speak their language, even if it is only a few phrases. Research has shown that proficiency in the host language reduces cultural shock due to the ability to effectively communicate, whereas a lack of knowledge inhibits adjustment to a new culture. 1 Politeness or building rapport is done through the use of language. An element of language that Westerners tend to give less attention to is that of 24 GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE saving face. Anything that happens during discourse to cause one of the members to lose face can be devastating to the relationship in many cultures in the world.

Building a relationship or establishing rapport with a business colleague is the only way to do business in many parts of the world. Rapport has 3 domains: the act of speaking, the discourse content, inclusion or exclusion of people present, stylistic aspects, and the nonverbal domain. 2 Understanding how the host culture’s members speak to one another, what the proper discussion topics are, who to speak to or include in comments, what style to

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use, and what nonverbal actions to use can be very important in making a positive first impression and building a good business relationship.

Host-country language knowledge increases the opportunities for social and daily interactions with host nationals. Being able to speak the language allows you to have in-depth conversations with the people with whom you are working, neighbors, and store personnel. The more you speak the language and learn the meaning of nonverbal cues, the more you have the opportunity to be included in social interactions. Many aspects of these domains will be discussed in Chapters 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9. GREETING BEHAVIORS Customary greetings vary from culture to culture but are very important for building relationships in all cultures.

Persons from other cultures are surprised by the informality of U. S. Americans who often say “ Hi! ” to complete strangers. In most countries of the world, saying “ Hi” to strangers is uncommon. Also, U. S. citizens are often perceived as insincere when they use the standard greeting of “ Hi, how are you? ” because it does not mean that they are actually inquiring about the state of the other person’s health. Because U. S. citizens are in reality private and slow to form friendships, this outward show of friendliness is often misleading.

The use of “ Hello, I’m pleased to meet you” is a more appropriate greeting to use. An Asian colleague working in the United States was asked on Monday morning, “ What did you do over the weekend? ” He began on Friday evening and listed every event that took place over the past two days. It was far more information than his polite U. S. colleague wanted, and she spread

the word around the office: “ Never ask what he did on his time off! “ 3

When greeting someone for the first time, be sure to know how they should be greeted. Should you use their first name, last name, or title?

Is it OK to be familiar and use common greetings of the area, such as “ G’day, LANGUAGE, GREETINGS, INTRODUCTIONS 25 mate,” which is used in Australia? Generally, it is going to be a good idea to stay with the formal Mr. Young and Mrs. Connor until you are invited to use their first names. If someone has a title, it is proper to use the title, such as President Bush or Dr. Chan. For both business and social situations, you should arrive on time; however, the ending time is fluid. After the initial introductions and greetings, you may be given a beverage to share before the business meeting begins.

It is very important that you accept whatever you are offered, unlike in the United States where it is acceptable to decline the offer of refreshments. 4 Many international guests in the United States find the question “ How are you? ” to be insincere. As one Israeli woman observed, “ No matter if your children are on drugs, your spouse is leaving you, and you have just declared bankruptcy, you are expected to smile and say, ‘ Everything is great! ‘ Why do Americans ask if they don’t really want to know? ” Americans do not mean to be insincere. The question “ How are you? is simply a pleasantry and an example of the greeting rituals typical of people in the United States. 5 OFFICE CUSTOMS The times people work, take breaks, and take lunch vary around the world. Generally in the United States, offices are open from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. Employees begin work promptly and always look busy even if their work is caught up. Reading the newspaper or visiting with associates,

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when not busy, is common in many countries in the world, however. Knowing what the office hours are can be beneficial for planning your work schedule while in another country. Some examples of office hours follow.

Iran's business hours are from 9:30 a. m. to 1 p. m. and 2 p. m. to 5 p. m. , Saturday through Wednesday, and there is no work from noon until the next morning during the month of Ramadan (the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar). In Brazil and Colombia, business hours are 8 a. m. to 6 p. m. , Monday through Friday, with a noon to 2 p. m. lunch time. Peruvians average a six-day workweek of 48 hours. ⁶ Because office hours vary around the world, you will want to talk with your associates about the proper times to make appointments. In the United States, breaks and lunch times tend to be on the frugal side.

The lunch period is from 30 minutes to an hour, and break times are usually one 15-minute period in the morning with another 15-minute period in the afternoon. Because “time is money” in the United States, workers are expected to adhere to these times to the point that anyone who clocks in and out of work has to clock in and out at lunch time. It is difficult for U. S.

²⁶ GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE businesspeople to understand the Europeans' one- to one-and-a-half-hour lunch break, 20-minute morning and afternoon breaks, plus a 15-minute cleanup time at the end of the workday.

Whereas the United States has an average eight-hour workday, Europe has a seven-hour workday. ⁷ Although many nations have almost guaranteed employment by a corporation once you are hired, that is not the practice in the United States. The United States has many laws concerning when and

how you can fire someone, but it is not unusual for people who do not perform satisfactorily to be let go from an organization. U. S. people know that retaining their position and getting promotions depend on performing the job satisfactorily and on getting along with other workers.

In the United States, no position should be considered permanent, although unions and tenure rules try to make positions permanent. In much of Europe and Japan, workers feel as if they will always have a position with the firm. As many firms around the world are having problems paying pensions and surviving economically, this is beginning to change. Likewise, individuals who would never have considered leaving a corporation are now starting to change jobs. In many European countries if workers are let go for anything but criminal behavior, they will receive generous severance packages.

These benefits could be as much as three months' full salary and benefits while they look for a new job. 8 A U. S. firm that wanted to close a plant in Italy, after an unsuccessful attempt to sell the plant, notified the union about their plans. The Union went on strike. In Italy, management cannot shut down a plant that is on strike. The U. S. firm fortunately was able to find a buyer, or this could have been a financial disaster. Even though the firm had an Italian lawyer, they were never informed of this legal difference from the U. S. laws. Although U. S. workers consider their employer simply a place to earn a paycheck, many Asians are more married to their positions and companies than to their families. The company's needs come first; the family's needs come second. This difference in the importance of family and company has caused problems when Japanese companies open plants in the United States or elsewhere that do not have this custom of placing the

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company ? rst. In Japan, it is expected that lower-ranking personnel will not leave for the day until their boss leaves. To do otherwise is disrespectful.

Also, the Japanese believe that workers will stay with them for life. They are initially shocked at U. S. turnover rates and the need to constantly retrain people. The Japanese managers also have to change their interview questions because they are accustomed to asking personal questions that are illegal in the United States. Although in many of? ces in the world, people would always treat each other with a degree of formality, this fact is particularly true in Europe. Formality varies considerably in U. S. of? ces. The location of the company (urban LANGUAGE, GREETINGS, INTRODUCTIONS 27 r rural), the size of the company, and the type of work that the company does will determine the formality/informality of the organization. An informal atmosphere in U