

Negotiations and business communication

[Business](#), [Management](#)



The Far East business communication differs from European and American styles. Culture, religious traditions and unique Eastern values have a great impact on the personal style of negotiators and their behavior patterns. Different nations stress different aspects of the negotiations. Some of them underline substantive issues directly related to the agreement while others stress relationships.

Martin et al (1999) identify four main stages of negotiation process: “relationship building; exchange of information, persuasion and compromise, and concessions and agreement”. At the beginning stage of negotiations, the unique issues of the Far East business communication are importance of detailed information about business partners, asking probing questions, importance of socializing and exchange of information.

Asians prefer to spend time asking questions about financial, market, manufacturing, and personal issues relevant to the negotiation. Before the meeting, Asians spend time searching for information about the business partner and his business relations. “The Japanese admire people who are well informed, sincere, honest, and serious about their work” (Paik, Tung 1999). Socialization involves development of personal relations with business partner.

In contrast to American businessmen, Asians logic is based on spiral or non-linear bases, holistic and cyclical approaches. “Asian managers tend to analyze issues in a more systemic, circular, and interactive way as compared with American managers who often examine issues based on linear causality” (Paik, Tung 1999). In contrast to Europeans and Americans, Asians

do not use argumentation and persuasive reason during negotiations. For Asians, time is “ nonlinear, repetitive and associated with events”. For Americans, time is “ monochronic, sequential, absolute and prompt” (Paik, Tung 1999).

For Asian businessmen, working to a common goal is the most important feature of the negotiations. This means the development of a long-term relationship. Japanese conduct negotiation in a nonlinear manner and in a distinctive style. The difference is found in motivation and the purpose of negotiations. For Americans, signing of a contract means the final stage of negotiations while for Asians signing of a contract implies “ the beginning of a long and productive relationship” (Paik, Tung 1999).

At the final stage, Japanese businessmen are concerned with the end-results and relations rather than the length of negotiations. These variables shape the values and the behavior of Asian employees and enable researchers to explain differences in the way different countries conduct their business affairs. Also, “ Asian managers find the constant rotation of people involved in the negotiation process as disruptive and confusing” (Paik, Tung 1999).

In spite of great differences between American and the Far East styles, researchers prove that the personal style of Asian businessmen is a mixture of Europeans business norms and practices based on unique Eastern values and religion, psychological characteristics and cultural traditions. The Far East negotiator is patient and silent, introvert and tolerant, well-informed and friendly. He follows “ an indirect and harmonious style”, oriented on the end results. Sometimes, his reasoning and argumentation seems illogic to

Americans. They reflect emphasis on personal relations and strategic goals, importance of seniority and organizational hierarchy.

For Asians, 'listening' attributes are the most important. "The primary persuasive tactics in the Japanese business negotiations appear to consist of volunteering of more information and the use of silence" (Martin et al 1999). Verbal communication is on the second place. Asians use both oral and written communication during negotiations. They can involve annual reports or press releases, provide a great deal of information about the type of project they want to launch.

Oral communication helps to enhance task accomplishments; second, to make sense out of content; and third, to supply the bridge between parties. The first level involves cognitive meaning, which focuses on either/or choices. "Listening' attributes take about 45 % of negotiations time while Verbal communication takes about 20%. Non-verbal communication involves handshaking and expression of emotions. During negotiations, many Asian businessmen use "extensive non-verbal means".

Europeans and Americans rely on empirical information, logical reasoning and argumentation (verbal communication) while Asians rely on sensitivity and intuition, non-verbal signs and facial expressions. For instance, "Nunchi refers to an ability to silently understand what the other party is thinking by reading non-verbal cues, a process similar to that used in a game of poker" (Paik, Tung 1999). The vast majority of nonverbal behaviors is intuitive and is based on normative rules. Except for behaviors such as good manners or etiquette, little formal training is provided for nonverbal communication.

In Asian meetings, verbal communication is highly structured and is reinforced through an extensive formal and informal learning process. There is no clear-cut linguistic structure for nonverbal communication even though researchers have found some consistencies in how Asian people interpret nonverbal behaviors. It is possible to say that for Asians the process of negotiations is ceremony which helps to establish long-term relations and business partnership.

In sum, national culture and culture of business relations have an influence on communication styles, interaction and behavior patterns of the Far East businessmen. The fundamental value is the dualistic existence innate within the Asian culture and a short-term view in many interventions. While mental representations certainly are not identical, particularly in cross-cultural interactions, message producers and receivers both add meaning to communicative exchanges.

Spoken words of friendly greeting in another's language might well be translated properly by interpreters, yet cross-cultural communicators will still need to know the cognitive meaning of a friendly smile in contrast to a lascivious one. An understanding of how representations are formed is first required in order to acquire the necessary cognitive tools to make sense of cross-cultural communicative exchanges in Asia.

Works Cited

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