

International business practices - cultural differences



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Being aware of cultural differences is vital for the sales managers. Each country has its own peculiarities regarding the way business is conducted and potential sales negotiated. South Africa, United Kingdom and Australia have completely different business practices and to ensure the successful cooperation sales manager should pay close attention to them. In Australia for example, business people are very enthusiastic in conversations and debates and prefer to discuss issues during face-to-face meeting rather than on the phone (Australia Business Etiquette, 2003). The sales manager should be ready to discuss such distant to business topics as religion and politics. The best method is to wait until Australian partner brings these subjects and not to be afraid to express the opinion even if it completely different. Similar to Australians, South African partners might discuss social issues as well, including race policies. The concept of political correctness is very important - it is acceptable to talk about race without imposing the personal views. Interestingly, South African business partners tend to talk about anything except for business. For example, the common interest in sports can solidify the personal side of the business relations (South Africa Business Etiquette, 2003). If the sales manager expresses the desire to see a cricket match or any other national sport, the further business communication will much improve and be beneficial for both sides. Knowledge of this business ethics can help the PM company to do business more effectively in South Africa. The culture in Britain is very unlike to Australia and South Africa. British partner will never discuss social issues or common sports interests with the stranger. British are more reserved and value personal distance in business relations (United Kingdom Business Etiquette, 2003). Therefore, if the sales manager is pressing the opinion too much and asks the questions that are

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not directly related to business, the potential partnership with British representative will become impossible.

Taking Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions for the basis, it is worth to note that U. K. business relations can be described with the following principles: power distance index and individualism. The sales manager has to develop the plan on how to interest the potential partner. Of course, similar plans have to be developed for all target markets, but the most thorough should be created for U. K. - British will not give the second opportunity to approach them if the first trial has failed and they did not become interested in the product.

Australians are best described with the long-term orientation dimensions.

From the first minutes of conversation it is necessary to ensure the potential partners that the primary goal is long-term trustworthy relations, otherwise, the approach will fail. South African style of business is based on masculinity and uncertainty avoidance index. The social differences between men and women are almost eliminated, however, the American sales manager should expect male partner from South Africa. The South African society reinforces the traditional masculine work role model for control and power and would prefer to cooperate with the male representative in business matters. As it was already mentioned, the race issue is of extreme importance to South African people and they will not tolerate the uncertainty on this issue - the American sales manager should be ready to face the question regarding his opinion on racial disparities.

In conclusion, the cultures of South Africa, Australia and United Kingdom are very different, but some of the global principles are applicable in every country. For example, the sales manager at his first contact to the different country representative should be open in expressing the opinion and <https://assignbuster.com/international-business-practices-cultural-differences/>

answering the questions honestly. British business relations are highly official and only business-related topics should be raised. Unlike British, South Africans and Australians shift the personal interests and attitudes into business matters. Thus, the managerial style of the international sales manager should be very flexible to meet the expectations of the business representatives of each country. British partners will appreciate focus on business issues and official relations. South Africans expect open face-to-face conversation with the discussion of non-related to business topics. Australians do not tolerate boastful behavior and prefer making judgments on their own. Following of these simple rules will help to develop long-term relations beneficial for all sides involved.

References

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