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DOING BUSINESS IN JAPAN

An ancient culture which has evolved within the geographical boundaries of an island has produced a modern day society with unique values, traditions and customs. Doing business in Japan arguably poses the most potential for cross cultural misunderstandings.

However, Japan's professionals are well educated in doing business with the West and will try to modify their own behaviours to accommodate. Nonetheless, doing business in Japan necessitates preparing oneself by understanding areas such as business culture, business etiquette, negotiation, and meeting protocol.

There is heightened sense of formality in Japanese interaction. When doing business in Japan, your suitability in respect to conducting business will be assessed during a first meeting, so always maintain a sense of professionalism [1].

The bow is an integral part of Japanese society. It is used when meeting, getting attention, to show gratitude, to express sympathy or as an apology. Whilst doing business in Japan as a Westerner, you would not be expected to bow. You will most likely be greeted with a handshake combined with a slight nod of the head.

Introduce yourself with your full name followed by your company name. It is important to use proper titles when addressing someone, so always establish the position of the other person.

The exchanging of business cards when doing business in Japan involves a degree of ceremony. The card is seen to represent the individual, so should be treated with respect. Before travelling to Japan, ensure you have ample cards and have one side translated into Japanese. Include your position within the company on it. Invest in a carry case to store cards and keep this in the inside pocket of a suit jacket [2].

When exchanging, offer your card with either both hands or just the right hand. Present Japanese side up. Ensure there is no barrier between you and the recipient such as a table, chair or plant. When accepting always use two hands as this shows deference.

At a meeting you will always deal with a team as opposed to an individual. Each attendee will be there with a particular expertise so either bring assistance or be sure you are confident enough to handle all the questions you will receive. You will greet the most senior employee first and then others in descending order. The senior employee will be there as a ceremonial representative of the company. The lesser ranking attendees will usually do the talking or negotiating.

Meetings usually take place for only one of three reasons: to build rapport, exchange information or confirm previously made decisions. Decisions are rarely made in a meeting [2].

If rapport has yet to be established then this is your priority. It is important not only to build relationships with all the senior figures but all lower ranked ones too. Remember group consensus is important so the opinions of all staff will be taken into account when coming to a decision on any proposal.

Thus yet the Japanese are very detail orientated. Expect lots of questions and lots of questions repeated in different ways. Be sure to have the answers, as the failure to do so will look unprofessional. Be sure to bring as much information as possible, in writing, on your company, service, product or proposal.

The Japanese like dealing with quiet, sincere and compromising individuals. Extroverts are seen as brash and arrogant. Early on in negotiations remain humble, indirect and non-threatening. Do not disagree openly, do not put people on the spot and always employ diplomatic language when doing business. Be sure to hold off concessions till the end of proceedings. If made early your integrity will be questioned.

Silence is considered a virtue. If things go quiet when doing business in a meeting then do not panic. Reflection is taking place. Silence may be also be accompanied by the closing of the eyes. Never interrupt or break the silence. So, taking into consideration all these strategies will help you to build long-term relationships with Japanese business partners and make your business prosperous.

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FREMDSPRACHEN IN UNSEREM LEBEN

Fremdsprachenkenntnisse sind der Schlüssel zum Erfolg in der modernen Welt, wo Kommunikation in Fremdsprachen und die Verarbeitung enormer Informationsmengen immer wichtiger werden. Das Interesse am Sprachenlernen ist traditionell groß. Im Allgemeinen hat eine Person, die Sprachen spricht - eine vielseitige Persönlichkeit, die beste Fähigkeit, neu, freier und selbstbewusster in der Kommunikation mit Menschen zu lernen.

Manche lernen Sprachen, weil sie diese bei ihrer Arbeit brauchen, andere machen Reisen ins Ausland, für manche ist das Erlernen einer Sprache ein Hobby. Jemand, der Sprachen kennt, kann sich mit Menschen aus anderen Ländern unterhalten, fremdsprachige Literatur im Original lesen, was sehr lehrreich ist. Es ist kein Wunder, dass viele gebildete Menschen Sprachgenies waren [3].

Heute studiere ich gerne die deutsche Sprache. Deutsch ist heute eine der wichtigsten Sprachen der Welt, die Sprache, in der man Beziehungen auf vielen Gebieten der Kultur und auch der Wissenschaft anknüpft. Die deutsche Sprache ist eine der verbreitetsten Sprachen der Welt. In fünf Staaten ist Deutsch eine Landessprache: in Deutschland, in Österreich, in Belgien, in Luxemburg und in Liechtenstein. Für etw. 117 Millionen Menschen ist Deutsch der Muttersprache [2]. In meinem Leben ist Deutsch auch ein integraler Bestandteil.

Viele Menschen lernen jetzt Fremdsprachen auf jede mögliche Art und Weise. Fremdsprachenlerngruppen werden in Industriebetrieben, in Büros großer Firmen, in Bildungseinrichtungen, in Forschungsinstituten organisiert.

Ich denke, dass die deutsche Sprache es wert ist, studiert zu werden. Es gibt ein Sprichwort: "Neue Sprache - eine neue Welt". Meiner Meinung nach, sollte