

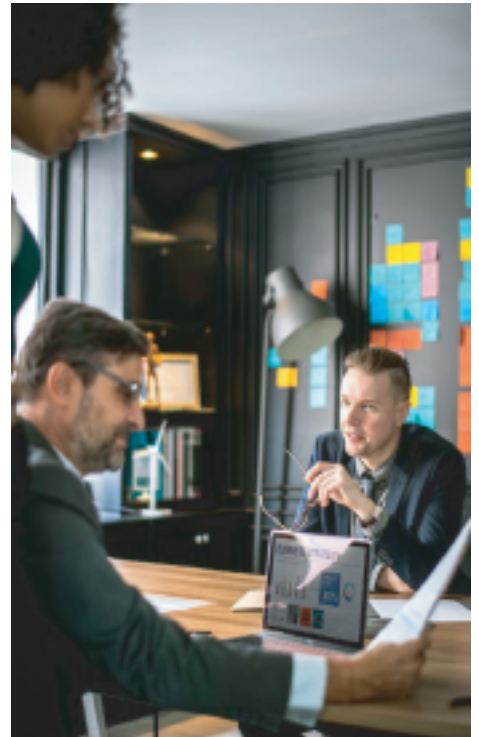
LESSON 11

DOING BUSINESS IN FOREIGN CULTURES

KEY POINT CULTURES AND BUSINESS RELATIONS

Do you meet people from different cultures often?
If this happens, what do you know about their cultures?
Is it important?
How can you improve this?
What are your professional expectations?

Read the following articles by Andrew Bell and Hans Jorgensen covering different cultural traditions with respect to how to manage business relations in professional circumstances. Where does the suit and tie come from? Which culture is more old-school, the Asians or the Europeans? Find out more.



Objectives To learn about business cultures.

Time 60 Minutes

Vocabulary business cultures.

Key Points Foreign Cultures and Business Relations

Grammar Irregular Verbs

Review Previous Chapter

VOCABULARY AND EXPRESSION BUILDERS

Worldwide international universal

They work worldwide.

Impacting blow collision

The impact of the announcement was big.

Middle management Not top management

The middle management at the company is big.

Far beyond Way past

They went far beyond what was requested.

Acclimatized To get used to

I have to get acclimatized to the new company.

Shape up or ship out Improve or go away

My boss said shape up or ship out to the suppliers.

Reps Sales people

They have a sales rep over today.

Rarely Not often

I rarely see my counterpart.

Entourage people around

The CEO had an entourage.

Follow suit To do the same

I asked the team to follow suit.



VOCABULARY AND EXPRESSION BUILDERS

Further Moreover

Further to my announcement, I want to make known my resignation.

True Korean culture Veritable Korean style

True Korean culture is very old.

Disoriented To not be familiar

I was quite disoriented in my new job.

IT Information technology

The IT company is doing well.

Shape up or ship out say the new middle managers regarding acclimatizing to foreign cultures.

Business people can be ill at ease when faced with scenarios of multi-faceted cultures.

We frequently see people with entourages in swanky hotels.

The impact of globalization is worldwide. In business circumstances, it is best to follow suit.

The reps were disoriented when they visited the EU. They were not used to true Polish culture.

COMPREHENSION BUILDERS

Do I shake your hand? Anecdotes from afar

Being aware of cultural differences. By Andrew Bell, Fortune Magazine

Receiving people from different cultures.

With worldwide activities expanding and general consolidation of industries impacting the way we do business; middle management is being required to have a cultural sophistication far beyond that of a generation ago. Before we interacted with locals culturally acclimatized to our company, and now we have to have cultural sensitivity training, speak three languages, and know the latest on current affairs in three different countries. Shape up or ship out can be the subtle message being communicated by our bosses. Read about three people who tell us about receiving business relations from different countries and a few funny stories.

The auto show in Geneva (by Lucas Humble, Mercedes)

The annual auto show in Geneva is one of the industry highlights and tends to draw visitors from around the world. We feature our latest cars and want our product stars to shine. We receive reps from all areas of the auto sector and of course these people are from all over the world. In the Middle East and the UAE and more specifically Dubai, there tends to be culturally, people that are used to a formality that one rarely sees in Europe.

This means that we have to be on the alert and have to be able to identify these potential clients' origins immediately. One can usually tell by the entourage. I look for the people around the boss. I try to follow suit.

A trade fair in Seoul (by Sung Park, The Shilla hotel)

I have had people from around the world visiting. On one occasion, we had an American businessman who was interested in organizing a series of major conferences in our hotel. Further to this, he was interested in seeing true Korean culture, so we showed him the town.

COMPREHENSION BUILDERS

Needless to say, that sitting on the floor, which is very common in Korean culture, and eating rice for breakfast, which is not common in the US, took some time for our guest to feel comfortable with. He was relieved to have bacon and eggs the next morning. I think the cuisine and formality are the challenges foreigners face here.

Meeting Clients in Mexico City (by Alphonso Rodriguez, Ford car part representative)
Mexico City is huge. Visiting can disorientate even the most seasoned traveller. I work for a company that supplies car parts to American car manufacturers. As a consequence, we see a lot of foreigners. This can include purchasers from all over the world.

One of the most interesting experiences was recently when a purchaser from Toyota visited our production facility. We had organized several meetings but some of the managers were not aware that there had been a change in schedule. Also getting around Mexico City and region was a nightmare. We had to reorganize several meetings. I think our Japanese colleague was not very impressed. We got the contract though.

An IT conferences. (by Ali Hasan, on Denmark visits Rabat)
I recently had the possibility to assist in a symposium based on IT technology transfers between the EU and Morocco. The two day conference took place in a swanky hotel called the Tour Hassan, located in the city of Rabat. Perhaps one of the most ill at ease moments was to see how Europeans take liberty in interacting with our officials.

The minister of industry was present and he was liberally approached by two Danish IT specialists. I was able to avert a compromising situation by distracting our Danish guests, but it was obvious they do not do a lot of work in our part of the world.

QUESTIONS

1. Consolidating of industries requires _____.
a) a cultural sensitivity training program b) an acclimatized attitude to foreign cultures c) a conceptual understanding of multi-national management
2. Previously, we interacted with foreign cultures _____.
a) on unusual occasions b) frequently c) all the time
3. Some cultures are used to swank _____.
a) that can intimidate others b) that can be distasteful c) rarely seen elsewhere
4. In some cultures, to liberally approach someone is to _____.
a) step out of cultural boundaries b) take a risk at rejection c) be a perfectly acceptable approach

PART TWO

And the Winner is...

The London Times By Fiona Smith

Hans Jorgensen is a cultural specialist from the London School of Economists and his seminars cover the very broad topic of cultural differences in professional circumstances with a spotlight on attire. London Times Magazine interviewed Mr. Jorgensen to get his take on the situation.

First of all, analysing the possibilities of cultural interactions would result in too many scenarios to properly evaluate. Perhaps, it would be easier to look at just a few. I have based the majority of my efforts in three areas. They include Asia, Europe, and America.

One of the most multi-faceted cultural challenges in professional circumstances is the Asian zone. As emerging markets mature, there tends to be a more conservative approach to business manners. This can be offset with the speed with which the market is expanding. The style of business found in Japan has been changing dramatically following the post-economic miracle era of the 50s and 60s. Young Japanese executives have been taking on a style that is similar to the style of cross Pacific offices, in contrast to that of their aging predecessors. In Contrast to the Japanese style is the Korean business class which tends to be more along the line of the more traditional European attire. Seoul is a suit city. Shanghai is the same. History tells us that emerging economies tend to have a more formal style with general liberalization with the passing of time. When visiting, it is best to favor a formal approach. This way there is less risk of embarrassment.

Closer in concept to a common international style is the European mode of function. Similar to Asia there is a wide variance in convention. Copenhagen and Madrid are as different as Amsterdam and Paris. In Europe, the further north you go, the less conservative the style. A generation ago, Amsterdam was considered a suit and tie city. Now if you go to work in a tie, people will think you have a job interview. In the meantime, Athens has maintained a conservative style. Similar to Asia the rule of dress is beware of the attire of the target city.

One might think that it is the Americas that are setting these trends but the cultural seclusion that stretches from Miami to Anchorage Alaska, and from San Diego to the North Pole are pretty much the same. This might prove to be a major handicap in the near future. Cultural isolation and mono linguistic attitudes are fine when you control economic purse strings, but times are changing and the necessity for appreciation of difference can eventually help people win out. Similar to Europe, America used to have an old school style. Apart from cities like New York and Washington DC, which are not really typical American cities, Americans are laid-back.

Where does the suit and tie come from? England. The word suit comes from the French word suit which means to follow. Thus, suit is a coined term for business attire and was meant to indicate that business garments would follow a pattern. Same material. Matching coat shoes etc.. Trends indicate that the formality in business dress is becoming more casual. How do you think we will be dressing at work in 100 years?

1 Hans Jorgensen bases all of his efforts in three continents because he thinks _____.

a) there are only three areas that are problematic b) there are too many scenarios to consider c) the rest do not matter

2 Economic market expansion has what effect on cultural styles?

a) A greater part of the market can buy suits. b) It has permitted an upgrade in business clothes. c) It has liberalized business attire.

3 Mono linguistic attitudes and cultural isolation only work _____.

PART TWO

a) when you have money to control business b) when you work uniquely in your region c) when times change

4 The suit was invented in

a) New York b) France c) England

GRAMMAR

Secrets to success

Team work is essential for strong results. A populist approach means that all of the players are working together. This is in contrast with Jürgen's approach but they complement each other well.

Name Luciano Votare Director

Salary 100 000 USD plus bonuses

Education MBA Stanford University Business School

Nationality American

Years with company 5

Last book read: In Search of Excellence by Tom Peters

Perceived management style Top down management.

Intro There are common irregular verbs and there are less common irregular verbs. Here are some of the less used ones.

Explanation

Examples

awake / awoke / awaken

uphold/ upheld /upheld

undo /undid/undone

strike /struck / struck

spread / spread / spread

sink / sank / sunk

shave / shaved / shaved

retake / retook / retaken

preset / preset / preset

grind / ground / ground

Questions

1. He became acclimatized to his new business style after he _____ his old function. c

a) retake b) retaken c) had retaken

2. After the shares of the company _____ the financial officer was told to shape up or ship out.

a) sink b) have sank c) had sunk

3. The new reps at the company _____ all of the work from their predecessors by the time they set up the office in South America.

a) will undone b) will have undone c) undid

4. He was disoriented when he arrived at the client, so he _____ out a map to get directions.

a) spread b) had spread c) have spread

5. The financial interactions _____ the profit margins to their lowest level by this time next year.

GRAMMAR

a) will have shaved b) had shaved c) shave

6. Their excessive expenses at the swanky hotel _____ the accounting department to their spending style. I think they will have to justify the costs.

a) awake b) awoken c) have woken

7. The stock options that the board _____, made the shareholders ill at ease. a

a) had preset b) will preset c) will have had preset

8. The impact of the financial situation had the company _____ to a halt. b

a) has ground b) ground c) have ground

9. The multi-faceted style of the organization _____ the competition. They became the market leader.

a) undo b) had undone c) will have undone

10. They _____ the worldwide market share after they had launched of the new product.

a) have retaken b) retook c) retaken

