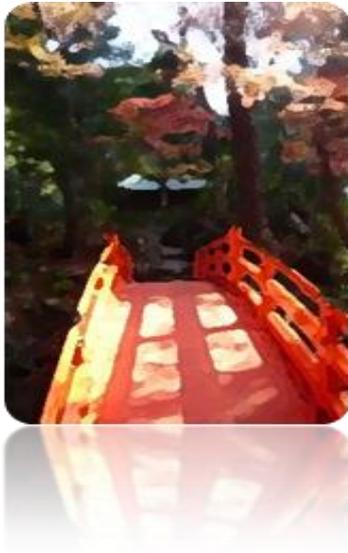




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Your Japan Business Guide

Your trainer:
Ulrike Fröhlich
Understanding Japan



In Cooperation with:





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About Japan 日本の基本データ

Population: 125 million
Size: 377,835 km²

Main economic areas:
 Tokyo-Yokohama metropolitan area,
 Osaka, Nagoya, North Kyushu

Emperor: Naruhito
Prime minister: Fumio Kishida
 (LDP)

Constitutional monarchy with a
 parliamentary government
 Diet with a lower (House of
 Representatives)
 and upper chamber (House of
 Councilors)

Religion: Shintoism and
 Buddhism

Currency: Yen ¥ (Japanese 円)

Time difference: winter +8h, summer +9h



Economy

After its defeat in World War II, Japan's economy quickly recovered and enjoyed high growth rates from the 1960s to the 1980s, when it became the second largest economy in the world. The 1990s, however, were difficult for Japan's economy as it entered a deflationary period sparked by the bursting of a disastrous real-estate and stock 'bubble' that ushered in stagnation which plagued it until around 2010. 2010 was also the year as Japan was surpassed by China as the second largest economy in the world. It is now the third biggest economic power in the world. In the recent years Japan has been growing slowly but steadily and has managed to get out of the very long deflation time. Ex-prime Minister Shinzo Abe's Abenomics implemented several deregulatory steps, which seems to have helped Japan to get back onto the path of economic growth.

Geography

Japan, a country of islands, extends along the eastern or Pacific coast of Asia. The four main islands, running from north to south, are Hokkaido, Honshu (mainland), Shikoku and Kyushu. Okinawa Island is about 380 miles southwest of Kyushu. About 3,000 smaller islands are included in the archipelago. In total land area, Japan is slightly bigger than Germany. About 73% of the country is mountainous, with a chain running through each of the main islands. Japan's highest mountain is the world-famous Mt. Fuji (3,776 m). Due to a lack of flat areas for farming, many hills and mountainsides are cultivated all the way to the summits. As it lies in the tectonically active Pacific Rim, Japan experiences frequent low-intensity earthquakes and



occasional volcanic activity. Destructive earthquakes occur several times a century, the last being the massive earthquake (magnitude 9.0) and tsunami which struck northeastern Japan's Tohoku region on March 11, 2011.

The climate of Japan varies considerably. Sapporo, on the northernmost main island of Hokkaido, has warm summers and long, cold winters with heavy snowfall. Tokyo, Nagoya, Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe, in the central and western parts of the largest island of Honshu, experience relatively mild winters with little or no snowfall and hot, humid summers. Fukuoka, on the island of Kyushu, has mild winters and wet summers. Okinawa is subtropical.

People

Japan experienced a phenomenal growth rate for much of the 20th century as a result of scientific, industrial and sociological changes, but birth rates have fallen steadily since the 1970s.

Japan is an urban society with only about 1% of the labor force engaged in agriculture. Many farmers supplement their income with part-time jobs in nearby towns and cities. About two thirds of the urban population is heavily concentrated on the Pacific shore of Honshu and in northern Kyushu. Major population centers include: Metropolitan Tokyo with approximately 8.9 million, Yokohama with 3.6 million, Osaka with 2.6 million, Nagoya with 2.2 million, Sapporo with 1.8 million, Kyoto and Kobe with 1.5 million each, Kawasaki and Fukuoka with 1.4 million each, and Saitama with 1.2 million. Japan faces the same problems that confront other urban industrialized societies throughout the world: overcrowded cities, congested roads, and air pollution.

Shintoism and Buddhism are Japan's two principal religions. Shintoism is founded on myths and legends emanating from the early animistic worship of natural phenomena. Since it was unconcerned with problems of afterlife which dominate Buddhist thought, and since Buddhism easily accommodated itself to local faiths, the two religions have coexisted comfortably, and Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples often became administratively linked. Today many Japanese are adherents of both faiths.

Government and Politics

Japan is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary government. There is universal adult suffrage with a secret ballot for all elective offices. The Emperor is only a symbol of the state and has no real power.

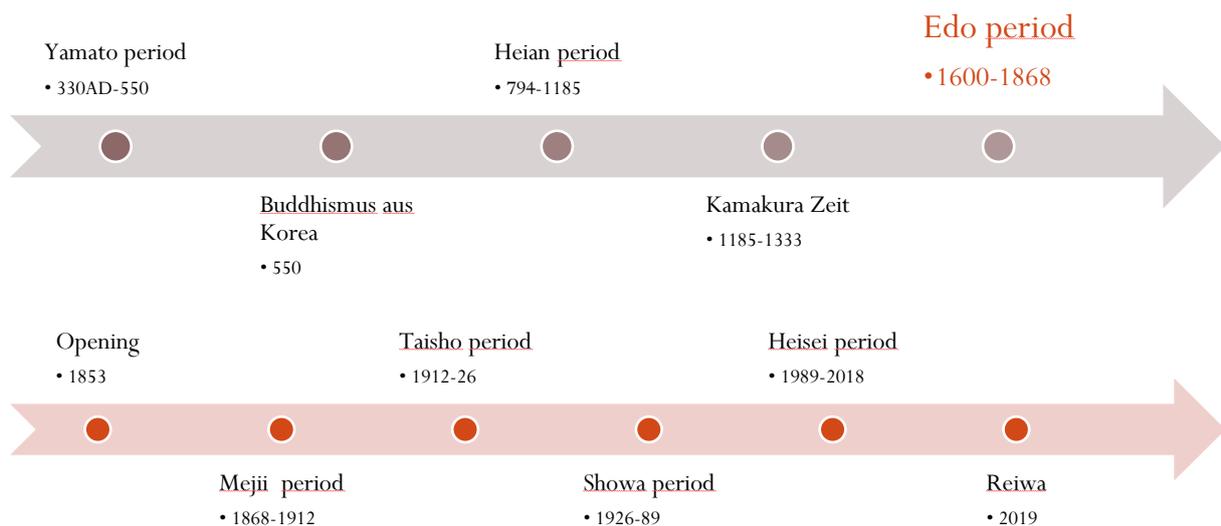
Japan's government is a parliamentary democracy, with a House of Representatives (also known as the Lower House) and a House of Councilors (sometimes called the Upper House). The Prime Minister has the power to appoint and remove ministers, a majority of whom must be Diet members. The seven major political parties represented in the National Diet are the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the People's New Party (PNP), the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the New Komeito Party (NK), the Japan Communist Party (JCP), and Your Party (YP). The time after Japan's defeat in World War II until the 1990s was mostly dominated by the LDP. This, however, changed when the DPJ won the more powerful lower house in 1993, installing a non-LDP Prime Minister. Since then the ruling party has changed back and forth due to political scandals and voter discontent.



The 47 prefectures which make up Japan are not federal entities as in the US. Most depend on the central government for subsidies. Governors of prefectures, mayors of municipalities, and prefectural and municipal assembly members are popularly elected to 4-year terms.

Japanese History

The Edo Period (1600-1868) is a time in Japanese history, which has a strong influence on today's Japan. The leaders of the Edo Period (Tokugawa clan) closed the country off for nearly 270 years. During this period Japan could focus on itself and develop a lot of culture, which we nowadays consider as typical Japanese, like Japanese tea ceremony. Many of the typical Japanese family business structures, which were formed during that time, still remain today's Japanese management practices.



Japanese Business Etiquette 日本ビジネス マナー

Self-Introduction

A Japanese self-introduction always has the following three phrases:

Hajimemash(i)te, *Fröhlich des(u),* *Dozo yorosh(i)ku onegaishimas(u).*
Nice to meet you; my name is Fröhlich, looking forward to a good relationship

The translation of the last phrase is not a literal translation, but a good approximation for it in our language.

Business Cards (Meishi)

In the Japanese business world, business cards are an absolute must, as cards are exchanged at the first meeting. The proper way to exchange 'meishi' is to hand over and take the card with both hands, read it and repeat the name. The business card is then put into a special holder; never just stick them into your jacket pocket. Quite often more Japanese come to a meeting than expected; therefore, it is always a good idea to have more cards (the double) than you would have in Europe.

How to Address Japanese: Mr., Ms. or – san?

In Japan, usually the family name is used. Many Japanese who have worked in the USA or with Americans are used to using their first name or have even created their own English first name by which they would like to be called. To avoid confusion, take care that the same name-level is used so as to avoid calling your Japanese counterpart Mr. Xxx while he calls you 'Heidi'.

Japanese use the word '–san' for Mr./Mrs. If they talk about themselves or their own group, '–san' is left away. One should be careful, however, in using '–san' with Japanese customers.

Presents/Gifts

In Japan, it is very common to give gifts, especially in the beginning of a business relationship. Some ideas for gifts include: a music CD with classical European music, typical local products such as chocolate, company giveaways such as pens, umbrellas, pins, USB sticks, etc. Packages of sweets are always a favorite and should include around 20--30 small cookies or chocolates.

Gifts are presented with both hands and it is polite to wait to open the gift until the guests are gone. Avoid the number 4 since it represents death.

Sitting Order



Source: 釜淵 壽子 仕事の日本語: ビジネス マナー

In Japanese companies, there is a definite sitting order which is based on hierarchy. Every new member of a company has to learn who sits (or stands) where. This is not limited to the office plan, but also includes meeting rooms (big and small), taxis and even elevators. Don't worry, if you do not remember who sits where, your Japanese counterpart will show you.

The sitting order in a meeting:



Business Attire: What to wear?

Business outfits are very formal in Japan, dark suite, white shirt and tie. Women also wear a more conservative business outfit. If you are on business trip in Japan, be aware of your socks, since there are situations, where you might have to take your shoes.

On Business Trip to Japan? Good to know!

- Punctuality is very important. It is better to be 5 min. earlier than late.
- The number 4 is pronounced the same way as the word death and is for this reason avoided.
- Tipping does not exist.
- Japanese consider it rude to talk on the cell phone in trains and subways, and of course in meetings.
- Smoking in public is forbidden. There are designated smoking areas on streets, train stations and buildings.
- Shoes get changed very often: e.g. house shoes for the house (even for guests), toilet shoes for the bathroom; no shoes (only socks) are worn in tatami mats in restaurants, temples and private homes.
- In public baths ('sento') or hot springs ('onsen') you have to take a shower and rinse all the dirt and soap off your body before you enter the water. Do not take any soap or towel with you into the water. The water at 'onsens' and 'sentos' is incredibly hot.

Having a Cold Is Sometimes Difficult in Japan

Japanese don't blow their nose and use paper tissues in public. It is seen as very unhygienic.

Eating and Drinking in Restaurants

Some table manners:

Things that are not done:

- Blowing your nose in public
- Sticking the 'hashi' (chopsticks) into a bowl of rice is done at the funeral and is also a symbol of death.
- Pouring soy sauce over rice

- Eating food/ice cream while walking down the street

This is OK:

- Slurping noodle soup
- Drinking miso soup from the bowl (like tea)
- Eating sushi with your fingers

In some restaurants all ordered food is placed in the middle of the table and is shared.

When having a business dinner with Japanese counterparts, especially in the beginning phase of the business relationship, discussion may revolve more around private topics than business matters. This is done to get to know you better and build rapport, the importance of which should not be underestimated. Later on, business-related issues will often be discussed over food and drinks in the evening.

In case you don't know what to talk about, here are some topics:

- Food and drinks (what you like and not)
- Your home country/town, and where the Japanese person comes from
- Countries visited
- Your positive impression of Japan
- Japanese tourist attractions
- Hobbies (music, sports, books, etc.)

Cross-Cultural Communication 国際的なコミュニケーション

How Do I Recognize Agreement?

As in European languages, it is common for Japanese listeners to give regular feedback that they are listening. We usually use sounds like “hm, hm”. Japanese also say “hm, hm” or “hai, hai”, (which we literally translate to “yes, yes”). However, in Japanese this feedback is given much more often so that a mixture of “hm, hai” feedback is given (for the sake of variety). This “hm” and “hai”, in turn, is often interpreted as “Yes, he really agrees”, although what is really meant is “Yes, I am listening”. Therefore, Europeans have to ‘listen’ a lot more carefully to what is an agreement. If your counterpart takes one of your ideas and expands upon it, then this is a good sign that he agrees to it. It is also important to observe the body language.

How Do I Recognize Disagreement?

Making sure that nobody loses his face is very important in Japan. As a result, the word ‘no’ is rarely used. Instead, typical phrases such as “We will consider it”, “I am very busy”, “It is difficult” or “It is different” is a sign that your counterpart is actually saying “no”. Another such sign is when your counterpart breathes deeply through his teeth.

Verbal vs. Non-Verbal Communication



The farther someone is to the left, the more they:

- Use a lot of words to communicate
- Feel that precise communication is important
- Yes = Yes
- No = No
- Dislike vagueness
- Get fast to the point
- Like a “either or” abstract logic

The farther someone is to the right, the more they:

- Are able to communicate using few words
- Focus on body language, tone of voice, facial expressions
- Rely on shared background knowledge and history
- Feel that actions speak louder than words
- Communicate more indirectly
 - Yes = Yes, maybe, I listen, no,
 - No = doesn't exist
- Like a „as well as“ logic - with details and examples

The Japanese cultural background prefers concise communication. “Hear 1 understand 10” is a typical Japanese saying which means if you are told 1, you will understand 10 implications (from just hearing 10% you will figure out the other 90%). This is considered to be a virtue. However, for this form of communication ‘reading between the lines’ is important.



If the person you are working with is to the right of you:

- Pay attention to non-verbal signals
- Read between the lines
- Ask good questions to get the information you need (w-questions)
- Create time for face-to-face interaction
- Use visual methods in your written communication (charts, tables, diagrams, outlines, etc.)
- Explain as much as possible with details
- Listen 😊

Japanese Language

Japanese is a phonetic language. It consists of the vowels 'a', 'e', 'i', 'u' and 'o', which are similarly pronounced as in German.

Japanese Alphabet

a	i	u	e	o
ka	ki	ku	ke	ko
sa	shi	su	se	so
ta	chi	tsu	te	to
na	ni	nu	ne	no
ha	hi	fu	he	ho
ma	mi	mu	me	mo
ya		yu		yo
ra	ri	ru	re	ro
wa				o
n				

ga, gi, gu, ge, go
za, ji, zu, ze, zo
da, di, du, de, do
ba, bi, bu, be, bo
pa, pi, pu, pe, po

After that there are only syllables, e.g. 'ka', 'ke', 'ku', 'ke', 'ko', etc. A combination of consonants like 'fr', 'lt', 'gl' and 'tr' is not possible. For this reason Japanese often have problems pronouncing words with two consonants following each other. 'R' und 'L' as we know it also doesn't exist, only a mixture of them. Therefore, Japanese pronounce the English word 'Mc Donald' like 'makudonarudo', and 'Berlin' as 'Berurin'.

Tips for the Communication in English

Japanese school children begin learning English in Junior High School, where the emphasis is more on written than spoken English. This might be a reason why communicating in English is sometimes difficult. Since written English is understood quite well, my tips are to:

- Send information beforehand
- Speak slowly
- Write important things down

If you are not sure if everything was understood, don't ask "Did you understand this?"; even we Europeans would then answer with "yes". Instead, it is better to ask "Do you have any further questions?", "Is there anything that is not clear/needs further explanation?" or "Is there anything I can clear up?"

Written Communication

"I apologize for bothering you in such a busy time, but there is a small matter I would like to draw your attention to..." is a very typical way of starting an e-mail in Japanese. It also could be followed by a longer sentence about the season and the weather, and this kind of 'introduction' is rarely skipped.

As you see, the European tendency to skip the introduction and come directly to the point is something not done in Japan. If the introduction at the beginning of the e-mail is missing, your Japanese counterpart may feel a bit trampled by its 'directness'.

After the introduction (about weather or thanking for the former e-mail, etc.) the real content can be written. At the end of the e-mail it is quite common to thank or to apologize for the time you have taken.

How Do I Communicate Something Unpleasant or a “No”

Saving face, harmony and politeness are some of the most important values in Japanese society. Harmony regulates the social cohesion and only when harmony exists can society function. Destroying harmony will have serious impact on the relationship between persons and can even destroy the relationship. Therefore, it is hard for Western people to communicate a ‘no’ or other unpleasant news since a very direct ‘no’ can easily destroy the harmony as well as a business relationship.

“So, how can I communicate a nice ‘no’ without damaging the business relation?” is a question I often get asked. Even if you have a wonderful relationship with your Japanese business partner, there are always going to be some situations where you simply have to say “no”.

For such situations, I like suggesting my 7-point action plan, which was given to me by one of my Japanese bosses. I have, however, adjusted this plan a bit to fit a more ‘European’ style.

The adjusted 7-point action plan:

1. Positive introduction, e.g. thanking for something that worked before (this could be an e-mail, quick answer, a nice evening out, etc.)
2. Communicating the bad news with regret and apologize (I am very sorry to inform you, ...)
3. Apologize
4. Deliver explanations and reasons as to why the answer is negative. Add facts like numbers, figures, meeting minutes, guidelines, etc. to the explanation
5. Take the blame out of unpleasant news (not “You didn’t send me the necessary information”, but rather “I have not received the information, maybe it got lost/got in my spam mail...”)
6. Show several possible ways for a solution: this might be time intensive, but is often necessary to show that you will not leave your Japanese partner alone solving the problem. It also shows that you are willing to continue working with your Japanese partner
7. Apologize once again and point out the good cooperation you had so far

Admittedly, this plan is neither new nor earth-shattering. Some Europeans surely deal with unpleasant news the same way. I do want to emphasize that it is important to use polite language, to apologize more than you would in Europe and to present a possible solution so that you can show that you are willing to work on the situation together.

There are two more tips I would like to give on:

1. Try to avoid a direct ‘no’. This creates the risk of your counterpart losing face.
2. If your Japanese business partner made an obvious mistake (wrong numbers, wrong date, etc.) and you have to point this out to him, avoid accusing him directly (this figure is wrong). It is better to treat the mistake neutral (e.g. “I have a different figure here, which one is now the latest?”)

Doing Business with Japanese 日本の会社と経営文化について

Japanese Business Life

Long working hours are some of the well know characteristics of Japanese working style. In recent years the government tried to reduce the weekly working hours, however if you walk in the evening through the streets of Tokyo, you will see light many offices way past 10 pm. Often Japanese salarymen also continue work with socializing with their colleagues after work at an 'izakaya' (Japanese restaurant), so that will not be home before midnight.

Bureaucracy in Japan

Governmental workers usually have graduated from the best university of the country and therefore have a high reputation among Japanese. They also tend to act more 'Japanese' than employees of Japanese international companies.

Characteristics of Japanese Management

Labor force in Japan is basically divided into around 66% of employees, who have a lifetime employment and around 33% of the worker, who have part-time work or limited contracts. The typical Japanese management characteristics apply only for the 66 % of the so-called inner work circle. These are:

Lifelong Employment with a Seniority-Based Wage System. Core workers usually enjoy life-long employment with the same company. Promotions are made according to seniority. For this reason, young top managers are very rare in Japan.

Rotation on the Job. Every 3-5 years an employee will have to change his position. In doing so, the Japanese salary man learns everything about the company, builds up his network and stays flexible. Once the salary man gets into higher management, he really knows his company, its products and the processes extremely well.

Generalists: Japanese firms and governmental offices want to educate their employees to know their organization very well, therefore they rotate and form generalists, rather than specialists. Since the team takes over the tasks, there are usually no job descriptions.

Quality-Management. There is a reason why 'Kaizen' and TQM come out of Japan. Quality management is far more important in most Japanese companies than in Europe. One reason for this might be the very high-quality requirements and expectations of Japanese customers.

Customer Satisfaction. In Japan the customer is not only the king, he is God. For this reason, companies invest more to satisfy the customer and keep him forever.



Negotiations

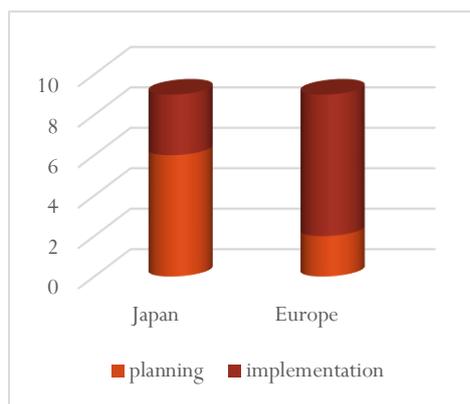
Negotiations are seen as a common problem-solving process. For this reason, several meetings are necessary where information as well as ideas get exchanged. Usually there are no ad-hoc decisions made in the first meeting, since on the Japanese side several groups will be involved and have to agree to every new idea and suggestion.

Therefore, prepare the meetings well and send as much information as possible beforehand to your Japanese counterparts.

Decision-Making Process in Japan

The Japanese decision-making process can be very long. The reason for this is that everybody is involved in the decision-making process and no decision is made until everybody agrees. The process also goes through various divisions, even for little things. Therefore, a lot of information is needed before a decision can be made. European companies often feel that they have to give away too much information for something for which no decision has yet been made.

'Nemawashi' is the informal exchange until a consensus is found. After 'nemawashi' takes place, 'ringi' begins. 'Ringi' is the circulation of documents which leads to a decision. All the changes during the process are put into the final document. Each person gives his 'hanko' (personal stamp) to confirm his/her agreement to the document. After 'nemawashi' and 'ringi', a meeting takes place in which the decision is made. For this kind of decision-making process, a good network in the company is essential.



Project Management

The entire decision-making process with its different timing has a huge impact on project management. Specially the timing where the decision is finally made causes delay on our project management timing. Be prepared to send information to your Japanese counterparts even if a decision on your side is not made. The before-information is needed in Japan to prepare a decision.

Women in Business

In Japan, more and more women are entering the world of the salary men. There are women in management positions, although more in lower and middle management than in the upper levels. Most women, however, do not work in management positions, but instead as office ladies (OL), who are responsible for supporting their male bosses.

If you are a woman working in a management position, make sure that your Japanese counterpart knows who you are and what position you hold. Do not take over jobs a typical office lady might do, such as bringing coffee to the meeting table, making copies, etc. If you have the feeling that the Japanese side does not see you as a manager, ask your European colleagues for support. They could introduce you and put emphasis on your title, etc. The Japanese side needs to know and understand your position. Once this is clear, there are usually no other unusual challenges in doing business as a woman with Japanese.

Socializing & Building Networks

Many Europeans, who work successfully with Japanese, say: "Go out with your Japanese counterpart, get drunk together and then you will have the best business relationship you can imagine!"

Maybe "getting drunk" together can get replaced by having fun together and getting to know each other. Since a good relationship to your business partner is essential in Japan, socializing together is a nice and easy way how you can improve your business relationship. So use every possibility to get to know each other. In these

evening hours outside of the office you will talk about some simple private topics, get to know each other and you will also talk about business. Specially if things are not going well, a talk about it in the evening in a good atmosphere might help solving the problem.

The Japanese Information Flow

'Horenso' means spinach in Japanese, but also stands for the Japanese information flow, which basically says:

"Nice to know = need to know"



Tricky Situations & Peculiarities

In meetings, it is not uncommon for the Japanese salary men to start long conversations in Japanese among themselves. This is needed to find consensus within the group and sometimes to confirm the content of the discussion. Although it is considered rude in Europe to start a conversation in a language that the rest of the meeting participants do not understand, it is important to give the Japanese the time they need for themselves. If the Japanese conversation takes too long, a 'smoking' or coffee break could get suggested.

Another peculiarity of meetings with Japanese is silence. It can happen that no one will say anything for what seems to be long periods of time. If this happens, ignore it and/or ask whether there is anything that needs further explanation or needs to get cleared up? Silence is sometimes used as a tactic in negotiations, e.g. to achieve a better price or conditions.

Manager Communication

In Japan, on the other hand, discussions are based on common topics. Intuition is very important and managers generally have a reserved and modest demeanor, and stick to the issues in a fact-based manner. They avoid negative statements and confrontation, and frequently use silence as a negotiating tactic.

Japanese Presentations

Japanese presentations are very colorful and overflow with details, which can be seen as being 'too much' for European standards. Japanese audiences, on the other hand, may become bored if forced to look at a typically mono-color and empty European-style presentation. This is why it is often necessary to adjust your presentations for your Japanese audience.

A good rule of thumb is to have twice as many slides as normal, prepared with a lot of figures, facts, tables, graphs and pictures. Show how you came to a certain result and not only the result. The process is as important as the result. Since a lot of information is asked for in meetings, a longer appendix can be helpful.

Some More 'Good to Knows' about Japan

- The number thousands is separated with a comma as in English and not with a period as in German (32,000 not 32.000)
- In questionnaires, a cross (X) is negative and a circle (O) is positive.



Japanese Business Values

Harmony is the most important value in Japanese society. It gives the society a system of regularity, consensus and unity. Etiquette and social rules help saving the harmony. Conflicts are avoided to keep the harmony, and by observing proper etiquette conflicts are also avoided. Self-control also helps to have harmony. Whoever destroys harmony gets sanctioned.

Hierarchy: Every person has a specific place in society. It is natural that everyone has a different social status. Observing the hierarchy ensures stability and harmony. Not observing this can lead to loss of face. One example for vertical hierarchy: customer stands above the sales person. Origins are in Confucianism.

Consensus: Decisions are made by consensus with everyone involved. One's own opinion is mentioned during the informal decision-making process. Once the group has decided everyone stands behind that decision. Since everyone is involved in the decision-making process everyone is also responsible for incorrect decisions. The consensus is found not through arguing but through emphasizing the common points. Consensus helps to avoid conflicts and therefore preserves harmony.

Saving Face: You lose your face, if

- Something embarrassing happens to you and some else sees it
- You are accused of a mistake
- You stubbornly keep your point of view
 - e.g. a contractor loses his face if he gets sent a reminder, although he has mentioned that he can't deliver in time.
 - A employee loses his face if he admits to his superior that he did not understand the work instructions

The loss of face is avoided by following the proper etiquette.

Group Identity: The individual defines him/herself with the group he/she belongs to rather than their own individual characteristics (e.g. company, school and organization, as well as family and town). Harmony must be maintained within the group and therefore, one's own interests are subordinated to the interests of the group. The group provides safety, closeness, feelings of security and many companies promote the vision of the company as being a 'family'.

Relationship Orientation: Consistency, loyalty and trust are the foundation of any relationship. Even in business the relationship is more important than contracts. Business deals are not seen as a single business transaction, but more as a long-term dual partnership. Relationships develop through common activities (dinner, playing golf, etc.), through small gifts and regular contact (new year cards, etc.). Mutuality is important in the business relationship.

Outside /Inside: Every person gets grouped into either being inside of the group or outside of the group. Who belongs to what group can change quickly depending with who is being dealt with; e.g. the German colleague of a Japanese firm can be (while dealing with the Japanese mother firm) outside of the group and the next hour (when dealing together with a customer from another firm) inside the group. If you are outside the group, working orders/requests go up and down the hierarchy.



General Multicultural Issues in the Workplace

- Language problems
- Incorrect assumptions about diverse cultures
- Expectations that others will conform
- Biases against the unfamiliar
- Traditional own values conflict with values of others

Success Factors for a Good Cooperation with Japanese

Be patient and realize that Japanese business relationships take time to build.

Show that you are really making an effort for building a good business relationship and do not only focus on the result.

Avoid direct criticism towards Japanese as well as your own group in the presence of Japanese counterparts.

In conversations do not rush to the matter at hand, instead slowly get to the topic.

Do not put any pressure on your Japanese counterpart.

Prepare the meetings well and send the presentations in advance.

Try to have a unified appearance within your group.

Adjust, if necessary, your presentations to Japanese-style (colorful and more details)

Deliver a lot of information to the Japanese; do not delete anyone out of the e-mail address distributor / cc.

Modesty is important.

Social events such as common dinners, etc., are business events. Do not bring along your spouse.

Networking in Japan is more important than in other countries.

Decisions are not made in a meeting.

Write up the meeting minutes at the end of the meeting while everyone is still present, and agree on the relevant 'next steps' and 'to dos'.

Japanese contracts are often more vague. A business relationship is seen as being more important than a written contract.

Contact:

If you have any questions,
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