






Working across cultures

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- What do you miss most about your own culture when you go abroad?
 - Why is cultural awareness important for businesspeople? Give examples.
 - What is culture? Choose the four factors that you think are the most important in creating a culture. Give your reasons.



Climate, historical events, language, architecture, behaviour and attitudes, institutions, religion, social customs and traditions, cuisine, geography, ceremonies and festivals arts



Level of formality is one area where cultures differ, and you can often notice this during the first contact

- Punctuality
- Directness
- Conversation during the free time
- Humour
- Body language

Can you help me?

I wonder if you could help me?

That will be very difficult.


That's not going to be easy.

Can I open the window?

Would you mind if I opened the window?

No, that's not right.

Really? Are you sure?





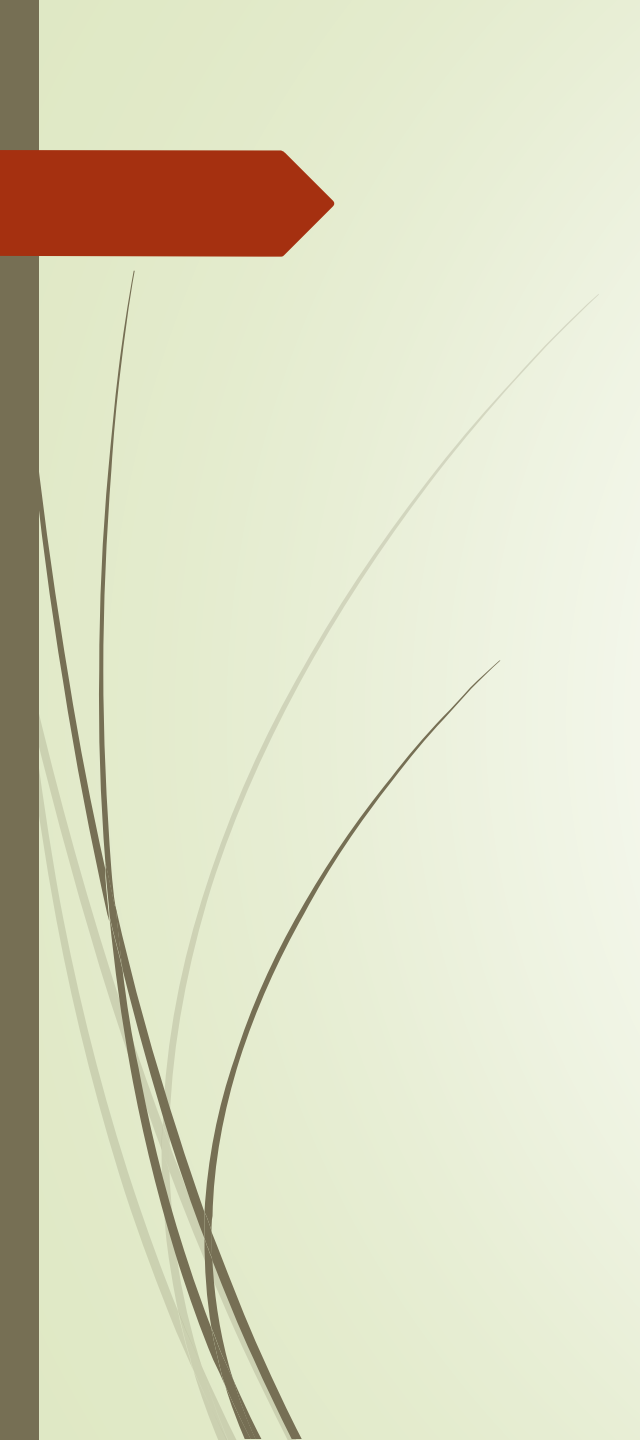
*Can you help me?
I wonder if you could help me?*


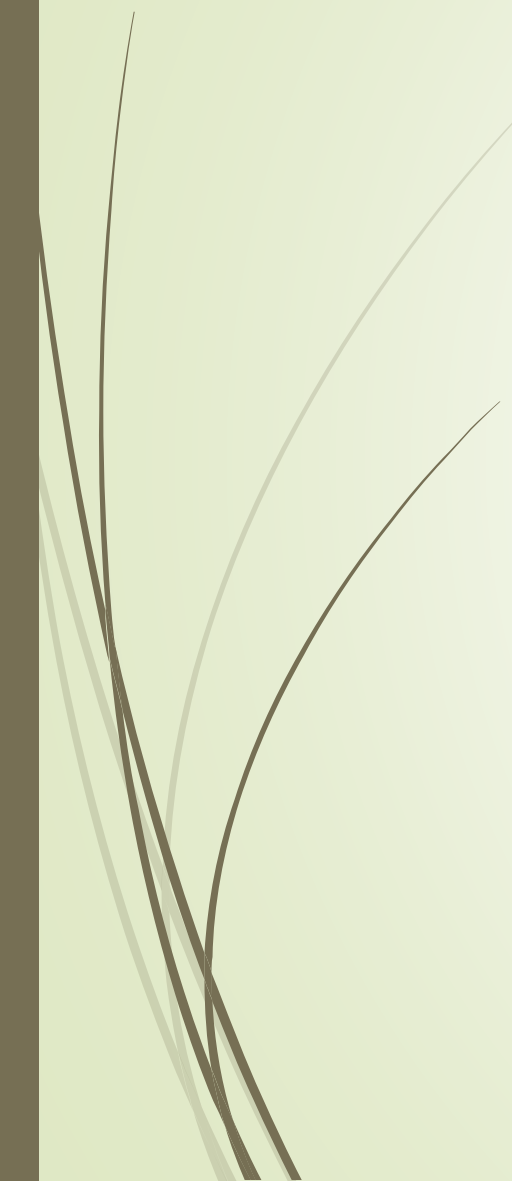
*That will be very difficult.
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*Can I open the window?
Would you mind if I opened the window?*


*No, that's not right.
Really? Are you sure?*

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- Religion
 - Roles of men and women
 - Hierarchy
 - Levels of formality
 - Conversation, discussion
 - Dress for different settings and occasions
 - The relation of work to private life
 - Time

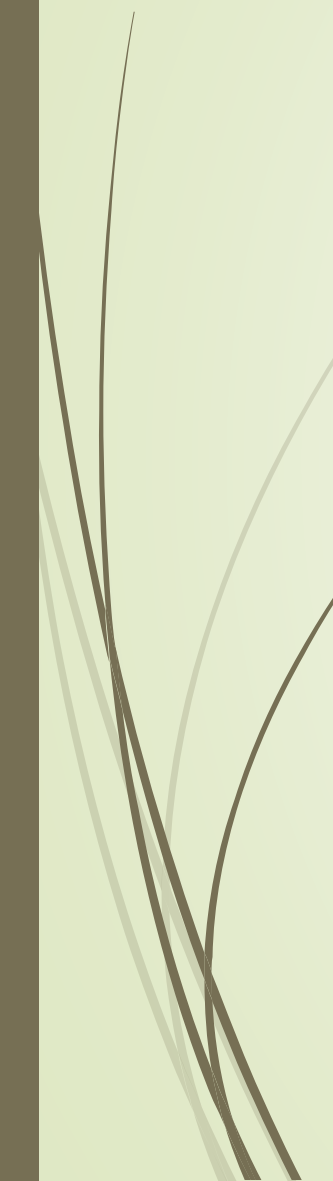
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- 1 Try to have good working *relations / relationships* with people from other cultures.
 - 2 My name is Aga. It's *pleasant / a pleasure* to meet you.
 - 3 Bjorn, I'd like to *introduce / present* you to Sergey.
 - 4 My name is Josephine, but please *call me / say* Jo.
 - 5 Avoid making people *lose face / lose their face*.
 - 6 It's not very nice to be in a situation where you are *embarrassed / have shame* in public.
 - 7 It's OK to *speak / talk* business at a working lunch.
 - 8 Laughing at yourself can *put the other person at ease / make the other person easy*.
 - 9 Irony is often *mistaken / misunderstood*.
 - 10 Some people judge you by how firmly you *shake hands / shake the hands*.


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- 1 How close do you like to be when speaking with a business colleague?
 - 2 How much eye contact are you comfortable with?
 - 3 Are you comfortable with long periods of silence?
 - 4 How do you feel about interruptions?





1 Do your homework

- Essential for building relationships when dealing with businesses across cultures.
 - Each organization will have its own culture, personality, and way of doing things.
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2 Keep your eyes open

- Your mind is processing a lot of information in new environments, so observation skills may be clouded or unfocused.
- Notice how people act, dress, and treat each other. Look for non-verbal messages. Being able to read a situation will greatly improve your ability to have a successful meeting.




3 Take your time

- Appreciate the need for more time. Communication may be slower and logistics may be different. You may be working in a culture with a different concept of time.
 - Also, give yourself more time to process all the information before making decisions.
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4 Take individuals into account

- Individuals may vary greatly from the stereotype of their native culture. Values and behaviour are also influenced by background, experience, and personality.
- Keep an open mind: be careful not to form an opinion too early or to attribute too much of what you see to a cultural difference.




5 Tolerate uncertainty

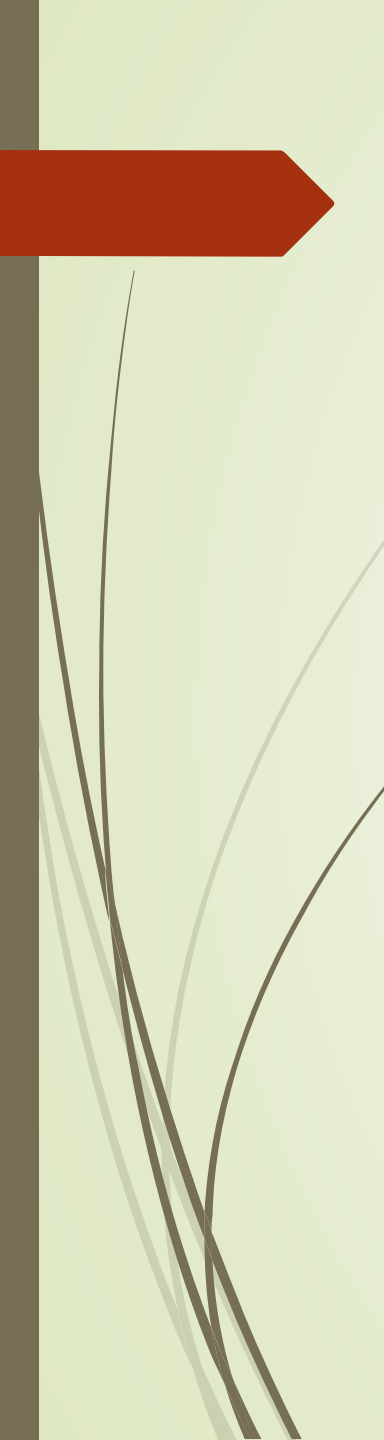
- This can be extremely difficult for people from some cultures where directness and precision are valued.
- Business is about managing unknowns. When working with a culture with a high tolerance for uncertainty, you may not get concrete answers. This, of course, can work both ways.





6 Build your intercultural skills

- When working with people from different cultures, you need a solid understanding of the norms of that culture.
- Greater cultural awareness will help you weigh up the pros and cons of your way of doing things and will give you a better insight into working across cultures.

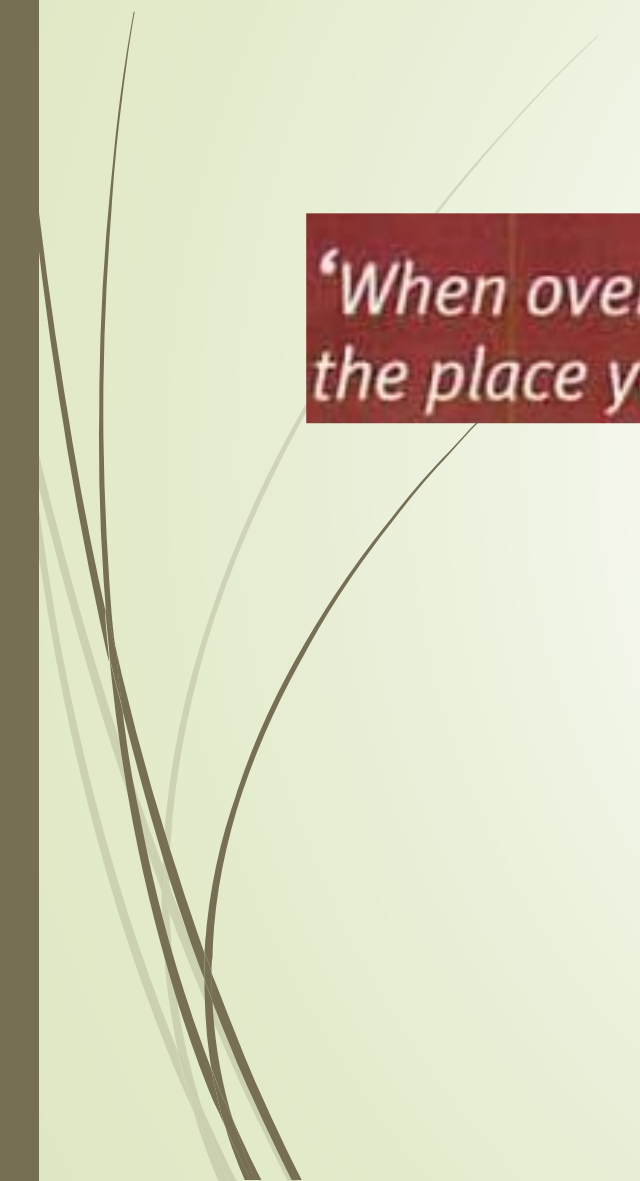
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- 1 'A business contact in Japan took me out to dinner in Tokyo. I asked the waiter about the dish of the day. The waiter told me, and I said, "No, I don't like that." My Japanese host looked horrified.' _____
 - 2 'We just grabbed a few sandwiches from a place round the corner and went back to the office.' _____
 - 3 'When I worked in London I found that people used to make jokes in the middle of a business meeting – that just doesn't happen in my country.' _____

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- 4 'We were supposed to start at 9am, and I got there ten minutes early. They were only just opening the building – the lights weren't even on.' _____
 - 5 'He leant forward and stared at me in silence for several seconds, like he was looking into my soul or something. I felt very uncomfortable.' _____
 - 6 'A German colleague once told me that over there a senior male university teacher with two PhDs could receive emails that begin 'Herr Professor Dr Dr Schmidt'. I wonder if it's true?' _____

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- 1 a) American business people are usually very relaxed and friendly – not at all official.
b) American business people are usually very informal.
 - 2 a) Indirect people disagree politely and sensitively.
b) Indirect people disagree directly.
 - 3 a) Jokes about people's race are offensive and should not be told.
b) Jokes about people's race are acceptable.
 - 4 a) Italians are famous for their head, arm and hand movements that show their feelings.
b) Italians are famous for their gestures.



‘When overseas, you learn more about your own country than you do the place you are visiting.’ Clint Borgen, American activist





Thank
you

