

# SWEDISH NETWORKING CULTURE



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# COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

## Understanding Interpersonal Communication in Sweden

For some of you, this list of common communication styles in Sweden won't be very far off from your own culture. But for others, this will be crucial information to understand what you're "doing wrong" if these communication habits are very far away from your own culture.

You may not agree with them, you even may not like some of them, but the important thing is for you to gain an understanding of this culture and what their comfort zone is so that you're informed on how to adapt accordingly.

As you read through these cultural observations, take a mental note of how they may be different and just how different from your own culture. Do you notice how opposite your behavior may be? Of course – it isn't wrong to be yourself and behave with certain cultural habits you grew up with and were conditioned to have. But if you're noticing that you've been doing the exact opposite, think of how that may affect a Swedish person who isn't used to it. It isn't personal if they are hesitant to interact a second time.



**So, let's learn what are normal communication styles between the people of Sweden:**

When it comes to casual conversation, Swedes are unlikely to approach you first so it's up to you to take the initiative and approach them first. Even more so, they prefer to have conversations with purpose, even in light conversation.

If you want to find a reason to talk to someone, do just that – find a reason. Instead of walking up to a stranger and saying casually, *"That donut you're eating looks delicious"* say something like, *"That donut you're eating looks delicious, may I ask where you bought it from? I've been searching for these types for a while now."* This way, you're not intruding on their personal space but instead, have a purpose and even follow up with a question that encourages further casual conversation. If they're interested to speak more, usually they follow with their own questions such as, *"Where are you from? Have you lived here for long?"*

Regarding small talk, or *kallprat* in Swedish, many Swedes are aware their small talk skills don't match the natural flow and conversational skills as many other cultures and therefore tend to feel nervous, shy or insecure. If you find yourself feeling offended by their distant, coldish, and avoidant reactions to your small talk initiations try to consider that they aren't necessarily rejecting you, but may actually be rejecting the possibility of feeling insecure and uncomfortable in their own small talk skills and you are simply misunderstanding this to be about you (and therefore feeling rejected).

When finding topics to converse about, try to stay within neutral and “safe” subjects – at least until you really get to know the person well and understand their comfortability levels. Neutral topics mean less subjective topics, and particularly those which don’t cause major emotions to bubble up. If for some reason you like to live on the edge and want to bring up one of these topics anyways, such as Covid-19 vaccine mandates or immigration laws, use “the Swedish Dance” method.

Other topics which may be considered taboo are asking about someone’s private life too early, such as family life or personal habits, when you’re in a business setting.

Enthusiasm, showing acceptance and agreement will help the Swede in your conversation to feel more relaxed and comfortable. Showing expressions of enthusiasm in Sweden means using an amplified tone of voice, not necessarily in volume but in intonation.

For example instead of responding with “*That sounds like fun*” you could replace it with a “*Wow! How cool!*” and a little spark in your eye and smile on your lips. This doesn’t necessarily need to be genuine, but a little extra “*oomph*” in your expression here and there will make your Swede feel good.

When someone identifies feeling good and comfortable with conversations with you, they’re more likely to talk to you again in the future, help you out with requests, or invite you out for fika. This will also assist in “the Swedish Dance” method as they slowly open up to you more and share more honesty.

Encourage this, at whatever pace they want to go at. Hint: it could take more than one meeting or fika to get here. If you’re used to instant comfort and openness in your own culture, don’t project that onto a Swede or judge them for going at a different pace than you. It’s all neutral when it comes to using communication skills as a strategy, so adjust accordingly.

However, keep your enthusiasm to a safe level. Show an elevated expression, but try to avoid theatrical gestures. Waving hands, jumping around with body language, or using an overly loud voice is uncommon in Sweden. Use at your own risk. If this is your personality and you absolutely can’t contain it, try to limit the “volume” of expression until someone becomes more comfortable with you.

It’s polite and considerate to allow for a two-person conversation, meaning speak for a moderate length of time then pause to allow the other person to share their thoughts. Most Swedes will quietly wait for you to finish, even if they think you’re being rude and talking too much. This may be confusing for some who are misreading their patience as interest. If you notice they haven’t spoken up or shared their feedback on your topic of discussion, take a break from speaking and ask them their thoughts to make sure you’re still going in a good direction.

Additionally, it’s impolite to interrupt other people, to aggressively speak over them, or to dominate the conversation. Chances are, they will avoid conversation with you in the future due to this perceived unpleasant interaction with you. And since Swedes prefer to avoid conflict, don’t expect them to communicate this directly. Their avoidance of you or shorter conversations lengths is all the subtle communicative signals you need to understand they no longer feel comfortable.

However, something interesting to take note of is that in Swedish culture long periods of silence aren’t considered awkward or negative. If you ever go out to eat at a restaurant and notice two people quietly staring out the window but sitting with each other at the same table, this isn’t necessarily a negative situation. Most likely, they even look calm and content. Simply put – don’t interpret a quiet period in conversation as the other person being bored or disinterested; it’s a normal occurrence in Sweden.

It's not unusual for conversations to end abruptly with Swedes where one person starts walking away suddenly once they feel the conversation is complete. Although it may seem rude in other cultures, it isn't taken personally in Sweden. They are likely not trying to offend you since they wouldn't feel offended by this.

Swedes tend to communicate directly and to the point unless it's a topic that makes them uncomfortable such as negative feedback, criticism, something too personal, or something taboo. This means that no really means no. If they offer you something and you say no, it's likely they may never ask you again. If your culture requires you to say no first a few times before you say yes – skip that here in Sweden. If you're too shy to accept something the first time, learn to start saying yes right away.

Although Swedes are known to have a silly sense of humor, make sure they are open to your sense of humor before you start trying to impress with sarcasm. Maybe the colleagues in your culture love how edgy you are, but make sure the Swede you're talking to can handle the heat. Perhaps enter with "the Swedish Dance" method first, then work your way up. In the business setting, humor is used more on the "safe" and "soft" side. Sarcasm is usually misunderstood here in Sweden, especially from humorously colorful countries so use it with caution.

Surprisingly for some, Swedes are more comfortable and relaxed with using English swear words in the workplace than some other cultures worldwide, and even Swedish swear words (such as "*vad fan*") may feel uncomfortable if a foreigner attempts to use a Swedish swear word.

Some personalities like healthy debate and don't mind sharing conflicting opinions. In Sweden, this can be extremely harmful to a relationship, especially in business or networking. If there is a significant difference

in opinion between yourself and the other Swedish person, do your best to avoid making this a topic of discussion. A Swedish person may signal their discomfort by becoming more silent in conversation (this is not an invitation for you to have more time on the stage to discuss your opinions) or a quick change in subject to something entirely different.

Not noticing these subtle but important communication signals from your Swede is very likely to end in a dismissed networking opportunity. Certain topics which are avoided in Sweden (unless you hint around and find out they have the same view as you) can include politics, religious or spiritual views, finances, death or sickness or anything related to mortality, feelings and emotions which are too personal.

Expanding on the topic of conflict, if a Swede does need to confront you it may be in a passive-aggressive format. A common way of this happening is for someone to leave an anonymous note rather than speak with you one on one. If they do speak to you one on one about something, it's probably done in a soft way so that it doesn't seem like criticism. Consider how this may differ from your own culture in the fact that some cultures don't mind feedback. In Sweden, negative feedback is perceived as personal and can cause hurt feelings (even if you mean well).

If negative criticism is necessary, make sure it's done privately and never in front of others. Also, try to deliver it in the most positive way possible. Here is a good example: instead of saying *"You don't speak loud enough when you give a speech and should display more confidence"* say instead, *"You are really good at giving speeches and your confidence seems to be improving! Make sure you speak loud enough for the people in the back of the room to also hear you."* What this does is encourage the person to make positive improvements in a way that makes them feel good rather than criticized. Have you ever received a comment from a Swede like this? Well then, that was their version of giving positive criticism! The positive angle of this is that Swedes know how to deliver negative criticism in a way that will be very considerate of your feelings.

You may hear a Swede say *"I'll hold my thumb for you!"* this is the equivalent of "crossing their fingers" or simply, wishing you good luck. Funnily enough, crossing fingers means you are telling a lie in Swedish. You may wish to make this statement to a Swede to make them feel like you're trying to "speak their language" in a conversational setting, especially if you only know how to speak English and not enough Swedish to connect with them.

It's perfectly okay to introduce yourself in a group setting, and it may be necessary because often Swedes won't do it for you. When approaching a new group, smile and make eye contact then give a firm handshake, or elbow tap in the times of Covid. This applies to both men and women as gender equality is something that is encouraged. A good introduction of yourself, especially if you know someone in the group, would be something like, *"Hi! My name is Amanda, I was introduced to this company by Johanna."* Make sure you state your name but even more importantly, any time you can create credibility - do so. By mentioning you know someone in the group (even if you just met five minutes ago), others will start to associate you with "belonging." This is different than pretending like you know the other person very well if you don't. Your only job is to give an open-ended impression and let them make their own assumptions.

Swedes sometimes do this thing where they take a sudden, sharp inhale of breath which is audible and somewhat loud during a conversation. This is their way of saying they agree with you, or "yes." If this doesn't make sense, it will once you hear it in person. It's very distinct.

Being on time is important in Sweden, the exact time which was agreed upon. If you know you'll be late, communicate this to the other parties as early as possible. It's equally important that meetings end at the agreed-upon time, and if some topics are left undiscussed (especially in business meetings), they'll be extended to another day and time or through further communication methods, such as email.

Swedes don't have a direct translation of the word "please" so don't perceive it as them being rude if they ask directly for something without a please being offered. Most likely they will follow with a *"tack,"* or thank you afterward.

# SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

## Socialize Like a Swede

Understanding social behaviors in Sweden, and how to navigate them, can enhance your experience while living here.

Many have reported not being able to make friends for years, but after learning how social etiquette operates here many find they have removed the barrier between "us" and "them."



### So, let's take a look at what they are:

Making friends in Sweden is notoriously hard to do... or is it? If you have a good understanding of their cultural practices and adopt that mindset, it doesn't feel as hard as it first seemed. The thing about making friends in Sweden is this: people move slowly when it comes to opening up. Friendships are built slowly over time, but once they exist they are long-lasting.

Think about it - would you make a big investment in something that you didn't take the proper time to research? Swedes are not fair-weather friends – once they're a friend, they will genuinely be there for you for the long term. They also really value their independence and alone time, so when their free time is shared with others, they are selective. Maybe people build friendships faster in your culture, and that definitely has its benefits but it also has its defects. For example, if you don't spend much time getting to know someone before you begin bonding and committing to future plans, it will be harder to see their negative qualities and see who you're getting attached to. In Sweden, people are more cautious but once they open up, it's like a flower bud blooming in spring... there is so much being offered if they're just given the chance to open at their own pace!

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Here's a little tip to make friends more easily: find a way to lower your expectations. Make a lot of Swedish friends at once, and rotate the slow pace between them all. For example, it can take weeks or months to make plans with a Swedish friend. If you have five Swedish friends and see them all once every few months, you'll still have a busy social life and five good friends at the end of a year!

It's uncommon for Swedes to hold open doors for each other as a term of politeness. Foreign women may find this particularly rude if they come from a country where they're accustomed to men showing chivalry to ladies, however, if a Swedish man gets a hint you're from another culture he may hold it open just to have the experience of practicing something new where it won't be misinterpreted. Otherwise, if you hold open a door for Swedes they may look genuinely surprised – do it anyways, and spread the knowledge that opening doors for others feels good! Maybe it will pick up and become a new trend in Sweden.

Asking for help and offering help to others is a different experience here as many Swedes have grown up with a mindset to be independent and self-sufficient. Offering help if it isn't asked for may even make them feel embarrassed, almost as if it seems they aren't capable of taking care of themselves. In addition, you can ask them for assistance if you need assistance and most are willing to be kind and helpful.



Individuals in Swedish society are conditioned from a young age to be self-sufficient and independent. This may explain why so many traditional relationships between men and women are 50/50 (meaning they both share equal responsibilities with finances and childcare), or why there are so many elderly walking around with walkers or canes – they want to remain independent as long as possible.

This may also explain their approach to personal and business relationships. The welfare system through the government allows individuals the freedom to feel supported and independent, which allows more flexibility when choosing personal or business relationships. In simple terms: Swedes are less likely to make decisions out of desperation when it comes to personal relationships. They will only be friends with you if they actually want to. They will only hire you if they actually are interested, and if they don't find someone who fits their needs they would rather extend their search time than settle. The same can also be said by most Swedes who are job searching – they're interested in finding a job that is the right fit and most employers are aware of this thought process.

Personal space is a big thing in Swedish culture. This applies both physically and socially. You may see people sitting far apart from each other if there's no personal relationship already established. Conversations shouldn't be too personal or prying either, unless you feel invited by them to "go there." A good signal that you're invited is if they start asking you similarly personal questions first (ex: *"Do you have a good relationship with your parents?"*).

Waiting for the bus like a Swede.



It's quite common for foreigners to misinterpret the Swedish respect of privacy as disinterest, due to the lack of personal questions that are usually asked as you're interested in getting to know one another. You may use "the Swedish Dance" method to experiment and see if they slowly warm-up and show returned interest after asking a few safe, but daring questions first that indicate your interest in getting to know them more, preferably after a few initial meetings first. A sample question could be, *"What are your spiritual views on God?"*

You will get far in Sweden if you learn to show politeness the Swedish way. This doesn't necessarily mean holding open doors (although it would be a great addition), but it does mean being considerate of other people according to cultural standards.

This includes: respecting the privacy and personal space of others by noticing their cues of discomfort and being aware enough to change the subject rather than pushing your point, not asking intrusive questions without a signal they're comfortable enough to continue, being on time as well as not wasting the time of others (i.e. keep rescheduling to a minimum, make conversations intentional), following the plan or procedure if one is made, using a calm tone of voice with a slower speed of speaking (don't dominate the conversation by use of louder tones).

Teasing does not go well with Swedes, even if you're very familiar and comfortable with them – make sure to understand their boundaries and not cross the line. Some cultures thrive on teasing and even consider it a form of bonding, but not so in Sweden. Be extra cautious when learning just how far you can go as feelings tend to be more sensitive here when teasing is taken personally.

There's a joke that if you want to make friends with a Swede, get drunk with them. The other half of that truth is that they are known to act distant and even ignore you the day after bonding over drunken fun times. When approaching them the next time after this shared event, let them lead in terms of just how familiar you are to behave in "normal life" circumstances. This goes in both personal and professional settings. Note: you do not have to get drunk with Swedes to bond.

It can take a long time to make friends with a Swede, but once you break into their inner circle their friendships tend to be long-lasting and loyal. There are studies that indicate most Swedes are still friends with childhood friends even decades later.

Swedes are taught from an early age not to tell lies. Therefore, they trust what you say about yourself and assume you will be the same. This may explain why resumes are not deeply researched but instead, taken as factual. Or how Swedish people feel so comfortable leaving a cell phone unattended in public... it's highly unlikely to be stolen in such an honest culture in terms of integrity.

Bragging and over-confidence are not a strength in Sweden and in fact, can even be considered a weakness. Some cultures require this show of bravado... but try to keep it to a minimum here. This is most important during job interviews, where you should learn how to share your accomplishments in a humble way. A good way to do this is to be open about your struggles (within the safety zone of topics), but confident in your ability to overcome them.

There's a strange paradox in Swedish culture and their feelings of foreign cultures. They have been brought up to believe in following the rules, not standing out from the crowd, and not behaving too "out of the box." And yet, they admire those who are different because it's interesting in comparison to their society... but not too much, or it will force them out of their comfort zone. Do you see where this is going? It's going in the direction of "The Spectrum of Comfort" – a method found in this section of the course.

Things can move very slow in Sweden, and this is due to the practice of sticking to a plan or process. It doesn't matter that a bunch of things can be improved, or that there are complaints – "this is the way we have decided to do things and we will follow the rules." Many foreigners can find this way frustrating because the process is slower than they're used to and the logic doesn't make sense (ex: housing contracts take three months or more, hiring processes can take three months, etc.) but to Swedes, there is plenty of logic since it follows a pre-designed process and that keeps things orderly.

You'll find the fashion style, generally speaking, is all about monochromes. Wearing anything other than dull colors like black, brown, white, grey, navy blue, and so on may result in someone asking you "Where are you from?" because it's so obvious by your colorful fashion sense. Wearing bold prints, giant flowers or animal prints, loud designs and so on will make you stand out of the crowd – something which causes anxiety to the average Swede.



In terms of conformity, a larger portion of the general population won't stray too far out of societal norms and will even avoid others who make them feel uncomfortable or feel like they will stand out by association. Anything which is different than the average or makes others notice you would be considered your private life, by the way. This is a collective group thought, which is slowly easing up due to the younger generations experimenting with new ways, especially in the startup scenes.

Public transportation is not taboo or seen in poor taste, and in fact can even be regarded as behaving as an environmentally friendly person. The public transportation systems in Sweden are quite organized and well utilized. Although tons of Swedes have cars, they'll still take the opportunity to be physical when possible by riding a bike, walking or running. Integrating physical activity as part of your daily commute is seen as a sign of a healthy lifestyle and good character.

It's a common misconception that Swedes are cold, distant and emotionless. This is very far from the truth! In reality, they differentiate displaying emotions as a private occurrence, so it's often hard to know someone's full depth of personality until you spend time with them in several occurrences. The reason why they don't show emotions publicly is that it may make others feel uncomfortable, and therefore they wait until an appropriate moment or person to reveal their feelings due to politeness and social etiquette.

When saying goodbye at the end of a meeting, sometimes hugs may occur once the person is familiar with you, even in a professional setting! However, this isn't common with total strangers (unless they are really friendly). Let them make the first move and if you're caught off guard or feel it's unprofessional, just understand things can be more laid back in Swedish professional culture and not read into as anything more than a simple goodbye. It's more common for women to be offering hugs than men, though.

Many foreigners are horrified to learn that information is very transparent in Sweden compared to other countries. For example, one can easily search and find public information online on websites such as [Ratsit.se](http://Ratsit.se) about where someone lives and even their income. This is also available to look up the background of companies, income, and more at [allabolag.se](http://allabolag.se). Although this may feel extreme, it's also a form of holding people accountable.

# PERSONAL BEHAVIORS

## The Swedish Standard of Professionalism

Humility and humbleness are important to integrate into your professional personality. It's one of the most desirable traits to have and will make a great impression with a typical Swedish-staffed organization.

This can be done in the way you speak and communicate: make sure you give lots of recognition to your team and how they assisted in helping you to achieve your results, don't make obvious efforts to impress by overachieving, staying late, or showing off all the work you accomplished, and perfectionism is not celebrated in the Swedish workplace so maybe don't use that as a strength/weakness answer during interviews.

Additionally, showing consideration for the well-being and performance of your team is valued above caring more about self-preservation (at least publicly). Competition between colleagues is not viewed as a strength or regarded well and could even hurt your chances of getting hired somewhere.

When conflict is shown in the workplace, it could damage your reputation for years to come. Because Sweden is a small country, professional circles tend to be smaller than you realize. Start networking and adding people on LinkedIn, and you will soon see just how much everyone is connected. This may be one of the biggest obstacles Swedish companies face when hiring internationals – *"Will someone join our company from a country where conflict and competition are common in the culture?"* Conflict in this sense can mean raising voices or emotions during a challenging project, or lack of emotional control during communication. If you create a reputation as being "too hard to work with" due to communication styles that are too intense for the Swedes, this can follow you into other cities and professional circles. Try to keep composure at all costs.

Being able to show independence in the workplace is the main expectation from Swedish employers – something which may be totally opposite from some other countries, so be aware if you come from a culture that isn't used to this mindset. Try to find ways to sneak in hints of your independence in professional conversations (and in a humble way), especially if this is during an interview. A good example would be to share how your manager gave you an assignment and how you were able to support (remember, no bragging) them by assisting in the research process. This style of speaking shows both humbleness and the initiative to be self-sustaining and independent.

Be on time for meetings, engagements, and basically for any plans which are made. Of course, sometimes things happen and it isn't even uncommon for professionals in the Swedish workplace to reschedule themselves, but you'll notice they try to notify you as soon as possible – not at the last minute. Be mindful of their schedule as well and if you must reschedule or be late, it can be forgivable if you share a sincere apology for the inconvenience to show you still respect their time. *"I need to reschedule our meeting for tomorrow, can we move it to next week? I do apologize if this has caused you any inconvenience and appreciate your time!"*



When networking, lead with your personality rather than your skills and professional qualities. Personality traits are the highest priority here, and it may turn people away if you start leading with your accomplishments (note: this is the opposite of humble, but there are ways to show off those things you're proud of in the right way).

Always join a fika (coffee break) when invited, especially in your workplace. By not attending, you send a message that you're unavailable to build a relationship with others. This is because fika's are a tradition in Swedish culture to bond with each other, and by skipping it voluntarily you will send a message that you're different from them and don't desire to belong. It's okay to even just sit there silently (although it's better to network and bond when you can). If you're asked to bring in fika sweets to a gathering, it makes a better impression to bring home-baked goods rather than store-bought, however, it's not mandatory - just a good way to impress.

Personal lives and professional lives are kept separate, even when networking, unless you start to bridge the conversations into a more personal relationship. Topics can be about non-work-related things, but be careful not to stray too far into personal opinions unless you use "the Swedish Dance" method to see how far you can go. It is common, though, to meet a partner in the workplace and this happens often in Sweden. In some countries, it's strictly forbidden to date in the workplace but the rules aren't so rigid here. Just make sure to remain appropriate and use your judgment wisely.

Changing jobs or career paths often in Sweden is more acceptable than in many other countries, and it can be seen in many work histories with working professionals who may have spent years building their career paths. This is because careers here are seen as something someone pursues due to their enjoyment or passion for the work, and not with financial support as the leading purpose for their career choice, perhaps due to the socialist government which takes away the immediate fear of being financially destitute but rather, supported by the state. Furthermore, Swedes are entitled to a full student grant and loan up until the age of 47 which even encourages career changes. Isn't it relieving to know you're allowed to change jobs and explore your career options without it hurting your chances of getting hired? Don't ever threaten to leave a job if you don't actually plan on it, though. This should be considered in almost every country but in Sweden they will assume you mean it directly since mind games are not actively played here like they are in other countries where work politics run high.

Most Swedish organizations and companies have an equal or flat hierarchy style, which seems rare in today's world compared to most other cultures which tend to operate in a hierarchical structure that follows a chain of command. In Sweden, there is more relaxation in reporting structure between managers and employees.

This is reflected in the fact that titles are not used, such as Mister or Miss - simply a first name of the individual will work. This means don't write emails that begin with "Dear Mr." However, professionalism and respect of working relationships should still be retained. The lack of formality in addressing them doesn't mean they still aren't your boss.

The leadership style of managers is more of a coaching style than authoritative, therefore micro-managing is kept to a minimum and employees are expected to maintain independence and responsibility for themselves. For example, if you being late won't directly affect your manager then they probably don't need to be notified of every little action you take, nor do you need to ask permission for things which can be decided without their assistance (such as are you allowed to take your lunch break thirty minutes early).

There is no need to win over your manager by being an obedient employee. Instead, focus on building good personal relationships and delivering according to the plan. This creates an environment of delegated tasks and mutual respect between colleagues, employees and managers.

If you plan on applying for a management position, focus more on displaying your leadership skills rather than your subject expertise in the industry. This is prioritized more so than traditional management styles around the world, and people are less likely to be promoted for their excellent hard skills but rather, their soft skills (i.e. how good you are at working with others).

Consider this may be conflicting in certain workplaces which operate globally and in other cultures which recognize leaders who prioritize efficiency over leadership coaching, although you're still trying to get hired within a Swedish company. Finding a good balance and keeping this thought process behind their motivating factors for hiring you can be extremely beneficial during your recruiting process and for the first six months of workplace probation.

Business acquaintances don't expect gifts, but it is common to bring gifts when invited to their personal lives or homes. However, if you're representing a company or are hoping to build a long-lasting working relationship, it is common for good hospitality to be offered. If you're hosting them at your office or co-working center, prepare good-quality snacks. If you're trying to create a partnership or want them to invest in you, consider some gifts such as a meal, or industry-specific items which show your good intentions. This will be appreciated in the professional community and can even be considered good etiquette for higher-level business deals.

In terms of networking, it's extremely important to build your credibility and trustworthiness, especially as an outsider entering the market. This means delivering your projects on time at your current position, maintaining a strong personal brand and reputation, being efficient and respectful of others' time, and also building a strong network with other credible people.

A distinct difference in the Swedish workplace is the standards around delivering a project according to the agreed timeline. Of course, it's always best to deliver when agreed upon but if delays arise, it's more acceptable to get the work done to the best of your ability and perfectionism is not valued over sustainability. You may notice the Swedes don't make such a fuss if a timeline needs to be extended for a delivery, and will even support this decision.

This can be especially common in industries where a company must deliver a project to the client and will rationalize their need to extend the deadline. It may seem annoying to outsiders, but just remember when it comes to your turn to extend a deadline they will be more forgiving.

Negotiations in Sweden are calm, factual, fair and usually direct. This isn't a country that thrives on playing games, threats, causing confusion, or being aggressive. If you behave this way during a negotiation, a Swede will more than likely shut down or withdraw. However, it's important to remember they like to feel like they're paying for good quality, and view things as "it's worth the investment if it will provide good results" rather than "that's too much, I could get it a little lower." So, during a negotiation for your rates or salary, state what you desire and try to use logic and reasoning as your leading factors.

It's considered a strength to have work-life balance in Swedish society, as compared to some other cultures where being a workaholic is worn as a badge of honor and can even be considered competitive. Working late here means you don't know how to balance your life or manage your time.

It's also a standard Swedish companies are expected to adhere by to make sure their employees are treated fairly, and they can be held legally responsible for your well-being if you're overworked. Despite this, burn-out is still an issue in high-level positions which results in the person taking a long time off work to recover, so when a company encourages you to go home after work... they mean it.

Leaving during a meeting, conference or work event is not considered rude if you genuinely feel you need a few moments to take a break. Personal time is highly respected in Sweden, and even so, conflict over taking this action is really unlikely to happen since the culture is so conflict adverse.

Swedish language in the workplace – even companies that claim to be very international still use a lot of Swedish in the workplace. Making an effort to learn the basics of the language will be appreciated by others.

Being considered “*prestigelös*” is like gold in Sweden – it’s included in many native Swedish job ads and is regarded highly in traditional culture here. It essentially means being humble, or at the least not bragging too much or taking too much credit for a successful project. To receive this word in a recommendation from a Swedish colleague is really good for your portfolio.

The following personal attributes which Swedish employers commonly look for (and that you should highlight if any of these are your strength) are: being prestigeless, sociable and conflict adverse, friendly, self-sufficient and independent, attention to detail, ability to follow processes, authentic but emotionally controlled in the workplace (i.e. emotionally and mentally stable).

Some extra bonuses could be showcasing yourself as someone who commits to something, such as family or a hobby, sports activities (especially skiing, soccer, biking, going to the gym), and growing your skills outside the workplace like taking an online course.

Be prepared to enter a flat hierarchy in the workplace, which means you won’t be micro-managed and in fact, are expected to manage yourself and deliver results to the manager. Less permission is required from managers in Sweden compared to other cultures, and as long as you understand what is expected in your role, you should have a lot of freedom in the workplace to get your work done without feeling too oppressed by a micro-managing chain-of-command style workplace.

Join networking organizations related to your industry, or with those who have common interests. Belonging to at least one professional-related networking organization is common in Sweden, and you will be taken more seriously in your job search if you’re able to showcase this. It’s a great way to begin building credibility and establishing some familiarity almost immediately within the Swedish workforce, before even meeting anyone or holding a prior job in the country.

# HOW TO IMPRESS A SWEDE

## Blend In With The Culture

**Topics that are popular to discuss in Sweden and will make you feel familiar to the culture here include:**

- **Sports and athletics**, particularly marathons, triathlons, the Iron Man competition, basically anything that shows you are in good health and value staying in physical good shape. This also includes cycling, weightlifting, floorball, skiing, hiking, even daily walks... squeeze in anything that can be considered a physical activity and acceptable by the public!
- Hint at your attention to **health and well-being**. Some topics may include purchasing organic food products, getting healthy amounts of sleep, prioritizing mental health by making mature life decisions (avoiding negative news, calling friends for emotional support), and making sure you have a balanced nutrition in your diet.
- Being **environmentally friendly** is more important in Sweden than in many other countries, so it's hard to go wrong when referencing anything related to this. Mention that you recycle as often as possible, reuse your store bags, buy fair-trade ingredients from the store, prefer to shop at boutiques and farmers' markets, grow your own vegetables, bake your own homemade foods, and are interested in switching to an electric car. This is a big plus to mention if you hope to work for an environmentally sustainable company.
- Find ways to brag about your **social status** in subtle ways. They may not outright admit it, but people in Sweden care about appearances, social status and even wealth – it's just expressed more softly. This can be found to apply most in the business setting. You can position yourself well if you show it in the right way. Avoid mentioning your flashy and impressive lifestyle directly (showing off your car or nice apartment, knowing famous people, showing off your high income loudly by buying everyone dinner and announcing it), but instead do it in subtle ways... and the Swedish way. Casually mention your summer stuga (summer house) and that you're going on vacation in several weeks, dress in high-quality material (but not necessarily "loud" brands), show off a good quality of life in the things you own (like a high-end backpack), just don't bring it up with a purpose to impress.
- When meeting someone new, especially in the business setting, make direct and confident **eye contact**. It's not necessary to be assertive, but still show you are comfortable within yourself.
- If you want to make a Swede feel safe and comfortable, try not to make them do anything to **stand out from the crowd too much**.



# WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Learn the “rules of the game” with our course, **Network Your Way to a Job in Sweden**. This PDF is a sample of what is in our course material.

## Our students have seen some of the following results after taking the course:

- 7 years living in Sweden without a job offer, to a job offer in less than 2 months of completing the course. (Accounting)
- American living in Sweden for 2 years without any job offers, to suddenly getting 2 interviews within 1 month of completing the course and getting offered a position at a large company. (IT)
- Student living abroad went from a message response rate of only 10% to 90% by using our templates. End result = meetings with 2 Swedish recruiters. (Marketing)

Hey Amanda  
Your advice and coaching are really working.

Following the Intertalents formula..... it's working exactly like what you said. 🙌🏻

I made LinkedIn connections, and now people are scheduling a meetup to actually have a conversation.

I have 3 calls scheduled. 🤗

I also connected with a recruiter and just wanted feedback on the Swedish job market and how she can give tips. Her background seems Swedish. Just making connections makes me feel excited.

Just wanted to share this

She/Her • 18:59

Hi. I really love it and it's easy to follow. Not only the interesting stories and content, but useful tips that I have never realized before. I always think about my own situations when I was reading it.

I'm thinking the actual connections have gotten easier since the course. I am more strategic in sending private inmail messages. However I have about 12 new connections since the course.

But the actual networking part where I want to have calls and get to know people. So far, 3 persons have set up meeting calls. This is the part that excites me.

Practical Advice for the Long Haul!

This course is great if you're having trouble breaking into Swedish social circles (professional or otherwise) and but can't quite figure out what's going wrong. The course spells out the cultural nuances, and gives you concrete steps you can take to form a goal, build a strategy, and build quality networking connections with Swedes to help meet the goals you set. I loved it!

Yessss. This is what I was going to ask. I know the testimony will be separate. But what format do you want the assessment done was important

This will be helpful. I will have the report done by next week and offcourse with recommendations.

Don't worry; you guys have my support because after reading, I felt the passion, and I could have walked through your path through the course but now the correct way.

Don't worry about it. I am really enjoying the course.

I think because I am so in love with it, I am moving very slow because I don't want to miss any information. I am also taking notes. I enjoyed the Spectrum of Comfort especially how you applied Hofstede theory. The examples you give are very useful.

Let me know if you want us to schedule a meeting or we meet after I am done with it.

Enjoy your evening!

"HOW TO ENTER THE JOB MARKET"

I really want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for understanding and providing the best guidance to achieve my internship at my dream organization !

Your homework and research is totally worth it !

This part is 200% true. I have this whole personal experience. I cannot believe. It's surprising to me. I am looking forward to a strategy in my kind of a situation where I need to be motivated with the management of the production and I need to be close with my employees in the meeting. They were just calm and quiet. Keep listening.

However, later I feel they realize and they keep checking on me. As I suggest to have a one to one meeting where I expressed my concerns in a polite and nice way which I believe worked out.

Which of these 4 points do you offer up?

All of them literally.

And there are next two paragraphs as well.

You know I have personal examples and I am telling to share this happened to me exactly. I have faced such behavior exactly.

A lot of other persons taking the course have said similar things, that they thought it's just them experiencing it but now they see it's common.

Yeah. Validation

Your content is really awesome. I always try to find time to read. I am sorry I am a slow reader as I need to absorb. But, believe me it's awesome.

For me, I was sold from the time I got real-time action and real-time results. So, you gave me a template that will work forever. And in my opinion that should be the forefront of the marketing.

As a matter of fact in all success stories, there is only one formula.

So yeah, Intertalents are on the right track. 🙌🏻🙌🏻🙌🏻

And it's okay to use my testimony.

Read more testimonials at [intertalents.com/testimonials](https://intertalents.com/testimonials)

Learn more about **Network Your Way to a Job in Sweden** at [intertalentsinsweden.com/learn](https://intertalentsinsweden.com/learn)



[info@intertalentsinsweden.com](mailto:info@intertalentsinsweden.com)  
[intertalentsinsweden.com](https://intertalentsinsweden.com)

## THE FACTS

- It takes an international an average of 12-18 months to get a job in Sweden\*
- It takes a native Swede only 6 months\*
- Our Network Your Way to a Job in Sweden course: only 1-2 months

\*Results based on statistics from TRR (trr.se)

## ABOUT OUR NETWORK YOUR WAY TO A JOB IN SWEDEN COURSE

Get a job quickly in Sweden as a foreigner by learning the unspoken rules of Swedish society. In less than 10 hours, you get a crash course in all the secrets of Swedish society to Crack the Swedish Code™.

You will get access to our Swedish cultural training guide, powerful networking techniques especially designed for Sweden, strategy building, templates and workbooks, and so much more!

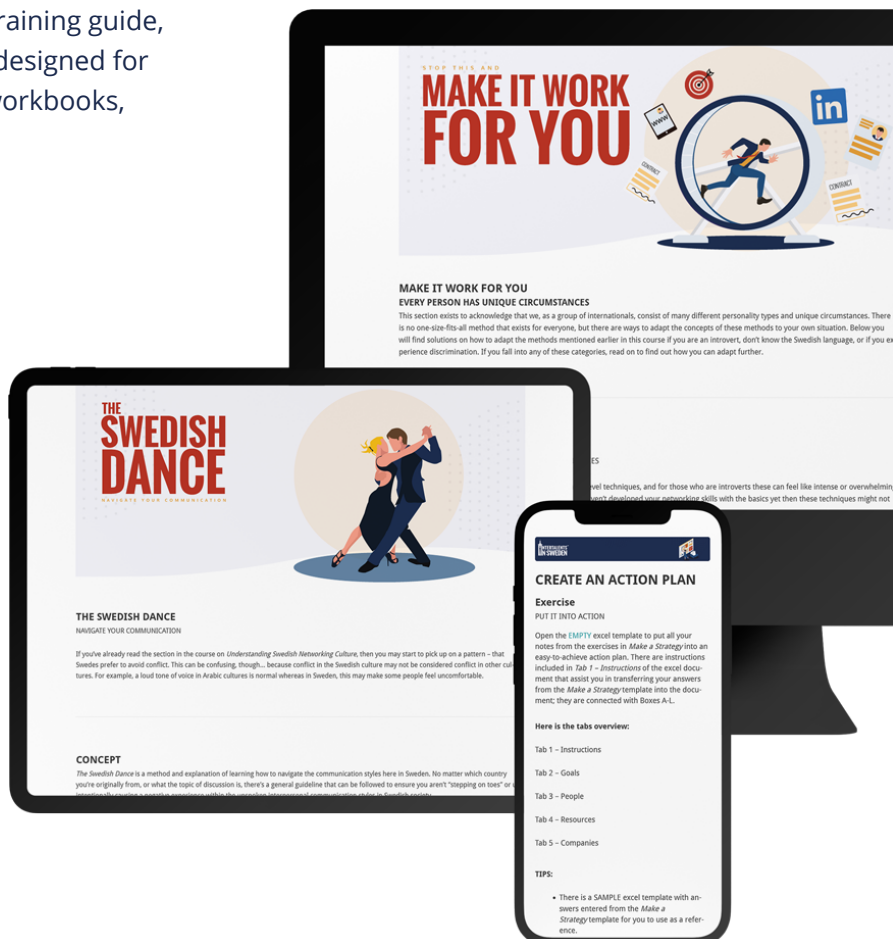
## BUY IT HERE

**SPECIAL OFFER WITH 100KR OFF!**

Originally priced at 399kr, but it is now being offered at a discounted price of 299kr with the code below

Code: **networking299**

Visit <https://bit.ly/3b4QkCF>  
or scan this QR code:



Learn more about **Network Your Way to a Job in Sweden** at  
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