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Germany & United States Culture Guide

Introduction

When dealing business with people of Germany or The United States, there are important cultural differences to note. Failure to consider differences will likely offend or annoy members of both cultures. This guide discusses the notable culture differences between these countries, including:

- 1. Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication
- 2. Management Styles
- 3. Decision-Making Procedures
- 4. Sense of Time and Place
- 5. Local Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes

1. Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

The people of Germany are slightly loud and very direct in their verbal communication. The north United States is similar in directness, but the southern United States is more indirect. Indirectness can irritate Germans. The people of The United States are very expressive with non-verbal communication, while Germans are less so.

2. Management Styles

German management hierarchical structure exists for the order, not because the “boss” is better than those under them. The latter idea is sometimes the United States management style. German companies usually have close relationships between employee and supervisor. In the United States, there is often a separation between employee and supervisor, depending on the company. United States management usually has significant individual independence at all levels of the hierarchy.

3. Decision-Making Procedures

German decision-making is very inclusive at all levels. Supervisors and employees alike will work together to make the best decisions. This is a very methodical process involving multiple individuals at various levels of the management hierarchy. German and United States decisions are difficult to change once decided. United States decision-making usually consists of one individual who may sometimes reach out for assistance. With this, management accepts responsibility for the decision.

4. Sense of Time and Place

Both people of Germany and The United States see lateness to meetings unfavorably. Attempt to be right on time or a few minutes early. Business lunch and dinners are common in both cultures. In the United States, business is commonly discussed over meals. However, in German culture it is not common to find business discussed over dinner.

5. Local Values, Beliefs, and Attitudes

Germans value directness and quality above most things. Directness is found in their communication and quality is shown through their communication duration and attention to products. People of The United States value speed, efficiency, and competitiveness above most other things. The value of speed is seen in management styles, resources should be used the best way and not wasted (time is a good example of this, and competitiveness can be found in constant business expansion.

Conclusion

These are the most important cultural differences to note between The United States and Germany. Review these before interacting with the less familiar culture. Especially that Germans value high quality and inclusiveness, while people of The United states value speed and individualism. Further explore available resources to gain a better understanding of culture differences between these countries.

Katz, L. (2017). *Negotiating international business the negotiator's reference guide to 50 countries around the world*. Charleston, S.C: CreateSpace.com.

<http://www.leadershipcrossroads.com/mat/cou/Germany.pdf>

<http://www.leadershipcrossroads.com/mat/cou/United%20States.pdf>