



Département Technique IESN
BAC3
Anglais Renforcement
2023-24

Chapter 2: Workplace Culture

Part 1: Cultural Etiquette



1. The Cultural Etiquette

What is the cultural etiquette?

a) Let's play a Kahoot game to see what you know about cultural etiquette!

Type « Kahoot! » in you search engine.

Kahoot!

1. Click « Play »
2. Wait for the pin code of the game (your teacher will display the Kahoot screen to play). Type the pin code
3. Type your name
4. Ready, steady... play!

When in Rome, do as the Romans do



b) Discussion

1. Did you know all the facts presented in this game?
2. Can you give other examples?
3. What does the idiom « When in Rome, do as the Romans do » mean?
4. When you go abroad, do you check the local habits and customs before departure? Is it important to do so?
5. What is the most difficult when you leave your country?
6. How would you define the word 'culture'?
7. What are the elements that define a culture?
8. Have you ever experienced any weird situation while being in another country?
9. So, in conclusion, what do you really need when you go abroad?

“A great way to learn about your country is to leave it”

Henry Rollins

II. Small Talk¹

1. What is « small talk » according to you?
2. What should you avoid while practising « small talk »?
3. Can you think of advice to practise « good » small talk?

Exercise. Play the situations using small talk and the correct greetings:

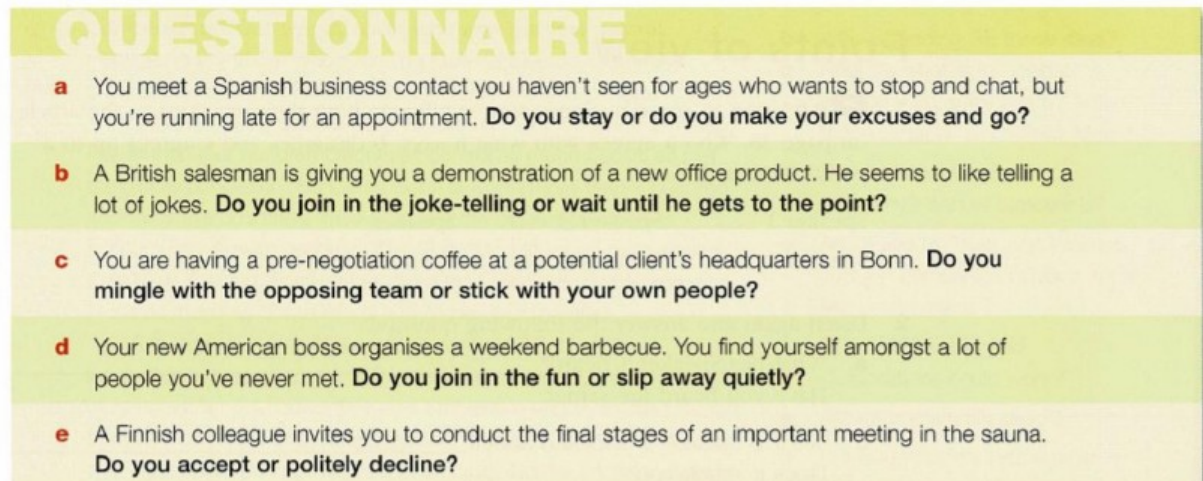
Exemple 1 : Je commence par demander à mon interlocuteur depuis quand il travaille dans l'entreprise, quelle y est sa fonction, puis son parcours, sa formation, le lieu où il a étudié, s'il se plaît là où il vit actuellement, quels loisirs il profite d'y pratiquer.

Exemple 2 : J'attaque le small talk par une question sur la taille de l'entreprise et j'enchaîne en demandant ce qui a attiré mon interlocuteur vers son poste, sa fonction, son produit. Je lui demande alors s'il arrive à faire cohabiter ses impératifs professionnels avec sa vie privée. J'en profite ensuite pour lui demander quelles activités il pratique pendant son temps libre.

¹ <https://www.plussept.com/blog/small-talk-technique-pour-mieux-comprendre-interlocuteur/>

III. The Business Etiquette

1. What is business etiquette?
2. How culturally aware are you? Try the following questionnaire.



QUESTIONNAIRE

- a** You meet a Spanish business contact you haven't seen for ages who wants to stop and chat, but you're running late for an appointment. **Do you stay or do you make your excuses and go?**
- b** A British salesman is giving you a demonstration of a new office product. He seems to like telling a lot of jokes. **Do you join in the joke-telling or wait until he gets to the point?**
- c** You are having a pre-negotiation coffee at a potential client's headquarters in Bonn. **Do you mingle with the opposing team or stick with your own people?**
- d** Your new American boss organises a weekend barbecue. You find yourself amongst a lot of people you've never met. **Do you join in the fun or slip away quietly?**
- e** A Finnish colleague invites you to conduct the final stages of an important meeting in the sauna. **Do you accept or politely decline?**

3. Do you think that cultural differences play an important role in business? How?

4. Which elements might cause problems during business relations?

5. How important are these things when doing business in your country? Are they a) important, b) not important or c) best avoided?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • exchanging business cards: | • giving presents: |
| • shaking hands: | • being direct: |
| • bowing: | • using first names: |
| • kissing: | • being formal or informal: |
| • socializing with contacts: | • punctuality: |
| • small talk before meetings: | • humour: |
| • accepting interruption: | • eye contact: |

IV. Vocabulary

end	eye	eye	fire	foot	ice	water	water
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1. Complete the idioms in the sentences below with the words in the box.

- a) Small talk is one way to break the _____ when meeting someone for the first time.
- b) I was thrown in at the deep _____ when my company sent me to run the German office. I was only given two days' notice to get everything ready.
- c) We don't see eye to _____ with our US parent company about punctuality. We have very different ideas about what being 'on time' means. It's a question of culture.
- d) I got into hot _____ with my boss for wearing casual clothes to the meeting with the potential Japanese customers.
- e) I really put my _____ in it when I met our Spanish partner. Because I was nervous, I said 'Who are you?' rather than 'How are you?'.
- f) I get on like a house on _____ with our Polish agent; we like the same things and have the same sense of humour.
- g) When I visited China for the first time, I was like a fish out of _____. Everything was so different, and I couldn't read any of the signs!
- h) My first meeting with our overseas clients was a real _____-opener. I hadn't seen that style of negotiation before.

2. Match the idioms in exercise 1 to the correct meaning.

- given a difficult job to do without preparation:
- quickly have a friendly relationship with someone:
- feel uncomfortable in an unfamiliar situation:
- say or do something without thinking carefully, so that you embarrass or upset someone:
- disagree with someone:
- an experience where you learn something surprising or something you did not know before:
- make someone you have met less nervous and more willing to talk:
- get into trouble:

V. Project: oral exercise

Alone or with a partner, choose a country (not twice the same country in the classroom). Look for information about this country basing yourself on the questions here below, in order to present the business etiquette of this country to your colleagues.

- Prepare a short presentation about the business culture of the country you have been given.
- Make some research in order to learn about your country's business etiquette.
- Consider the different topics you can find here below and use the list of questions to structure your talk.
- Be ready to answer questions.
- Your presentation should last about five minutes.

Facts to gather about your country:

Appearance

How do men and women dress in business?

Is casual dress permitted in business meetings?

How do people dress on social occasions, e.g. at an informal dinner?

Behaviour

Do people like a lot of personal space?

Do they usually stand close or far away from another person when talking to colleagues? Do staff use first or family names when addressing each other?

Entertainment

Do businesspeople prefer to entertain guests at home or in a restaurant? What advice can you give about gifts?

What are good/bad topics of conversation?

Meetings

How important is punctuality in that culture? Is a person's status important in meetings?

Is decision-making slow or fast in business?

Chinese business protocol and etiquette

Greetings

- You must greet the oldest person first.
- You don't have to be serious all the time. The Chinese have a great sense of humour. You should be ready to laugh at yourself sometimes.
- You mustn't move to a first-name basis until advised to. You should address the person by an honorific title and their surname.

Business cards

- You should exchange cards after the initial introduction.
- You should hold the card in both hands when offering it.
- You mustn't write on someone's card unless asked to.

Gift-giving

- You shouldn't give flowers, as many Chinese associate these with funerals.
- You mustn't give four of anything, as four is an unlucky number.

Entertaining at home

- It is a great honour to be invited to someone's home. If you cannot accept the invitation, you must offer a very good excuse.
- You should arrive on time, remove your shoes, bring a small gift and eat well to show you are enjoying the food.
- You don't have to eat loudly, but if you slurp or belch, it shows that you are enjoying your food.

N. B.:

Even if your company **isn't international**, your workforce or your customers may have **roots** in different cultures. Learning to master **different cultural etiquette and protocol** can go a long way toward making **a good first impression**, second impression and all the impressions after that. Your team should practice the same principles.

Learn languages. Even **a few key phrases** may help create **a good first impression**. If you're dealing with one particular culture, such as Indian or Israeli, make an effort to learn more of their language.

Encourage employees to be open-minded. If your team includes people from different cultures, encourage them to **share their perspectives**. Remind your employees that you want them to be accepting of each others' differences, not intolerant.

Try new things. Have lunch with a client or employee and try their cuisine, whether it's Ethiopian, Korean or kosher. Don't compromise your principles - don't eat meat when you're vegan - but if you're comfortable experimenting, you can create a good first impression.

Accommodate differences. Jews and Muslims, for example, have different holy days from Christians. They have food restrictions, such as not eating pork. Scheduling mandatory corporate training on Yom Kippur or buying your team pork tacos, with no alternative, for lunch makes you look clueless.

Treat people as individuals. Don't assume that every Brit or Korean or Mexican conforms to the same type or follows the same etiquette. There's no such thing as a generic Swede or Mexican or American. People are as individual as their fingerprints. ²

Credits: Stéphanie Hayen 21-22, Hélène Briamont 20-21

² <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/cross-cultural-business-etiquette-2907.html>