

After watching the video "awkward American and Chinese meeting", I am able to evaluate how cultural differences might lead to communication issues in this business setting, as depicted in the video.

The video reveals several instances where potential cultural differences appear to influence the communication and negotiation process:

**Approach to Time and Deadlines:** The American representatives, Mr. McDonald and Ms. Arena, repeatedly emphasize the need for urgency and adhering to a specific timeline. They mention having already done forecasting and the product needing to "hit the market with the given time frame", "be on the shelves by a given time frame", and "deliver it to our customers by the deadline". They propose going ahead with the contract while sending packaging modifications later. In contrast, the other party states, "we think we should take more time please take our card direct line to us", and later reiterates, "you got please we need more time to consider" and "we have no rush please take more time". This difference in perspective on time and the pace of negotiation is a significant point of friction visible in the video (Duke, 2010).

**Prioritizing Relationship vs. Business Specifics:** The American representatives appear eager to "get down to business" and immediately discuss the product extension, packaging modifications, and the contract, specifically mentioning section four. They seem focused on the transactional aspects and moving forward quickly. The other party, however, states that their "relationship must be longer for us to consider this proposal". This suggests a potential difference in the perceived importance of establishing a long-term relationship and trust before finalizing business agreements, compared to the American focus on efficiency and contractual details (Duke, 2010).

Giving and Receiving Feedback: When the American side presents their modified packaging and asks for an opinion ("nice right you like it"), the response is that it "could use some more Improvement" and they should "take more time for more Improvement". While this is direct feedback, it lacks specificity on what needs improvement, leading the American side to ask, "really oh man who can say no to this no you don't like it". This exchange could indicate a cultural difference in how critical feedback is delivered or how directly issues are pointed out.

Gift Giving: At the end of the meeting, the hosts offer a "gift of appreciation" and ask the guests to accept it. The American representatives decline, stating, "we must leave now thank you bye bye". Gift-giving in business is a practice with varying cultural norms, and the brief exchange in the video suggests a potential disconnect or misunderstanding regarding this gesture.

These differences, as shown in the video, can lead to communication issues such as misunderstandings about intentions and priorities (e.g., one side's urgency vs. the other's need for time and relationship building), frustration (e.g., the American side's reaction to the feedback on packaging and the mention of forecasting being done), and difficulty reaching agreement or progressing as one party wants to move quickly while the other emphasizes the need for more time and a longer relationship. The lack of explicit clarity on feedback could also slow down the process (Duke, 2010).

Based on the situations depicted in the video, effective solutions to address these communication issues could include:

Explicitly Discussing Timelines and Decision-Making Processes: From the outset, both parties could share their typical timelines for negotiation and decision-making. Understanding that one party requires more time for consideration or relationship building while the other

operates under strict deadlines is crucial. Finding a mutually agreeable pace or setting clear expectations for when decisions can be made is essential.

Although the American side is eager to "get down to business," it is vital to recognize the other party's expressed desire for a "longer relationship" to "consider this proposal". Spending time in informal settings or through preliminary talks not directly related to urgent transactions could help to create rapport and confidence, which would help to enable more seamless negotiations later.

Asking questions and giving comments helps one to understand more. Feedback should be given, much like with the packaging, by either requesting clarifying questions or offering more precise information on what is required. Likewise, when getting feedback that is ambiguous, asking for further information politely can help to avoid misinterpretations and guide effective changes.

**Studying and Honoring Cultural Norms:** Previous studies on business etiquette—including attitudes toward time, negotiation techniques, and customs like gift-giving—in the other party's culture might assist avoid uncomfortable circumstances and misconceptions. Even if one cannot accept, negotiating cultural gestures like gift-giving with care would show respect.

**Active Listening and Acknowledgment:** Ensuring each party feels heard and understood is crucial. Recognizing the other's point of view, even if it disagrees (e.g., recognizing the need for additional time while outlining the business limits), can foster bridges rather than conflict.

By addressing these potential cultural differences proactively and with sensitivity, both sides might potentially handle the commercial transaction more effectively than is represented in the brief encounter in the video.

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Reference:

Duke, D. (2010, May 14). Awkward American and Chinese meeting [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gtLi13Sf2vU>