

2

Culture and entertainment

AIMS

- Cross-cultural understanding (2)
- Inviting, and accepting or declining
- Eating out

1 Cross-cultural understanding (2)

- 1 The following text is about cultural diversity. Read it through once and decide which of the three statements (A, B or C) given below the extract offers the most accurate summary.

The impact of culture on business

Take a look at the new breed of international managers, educated according to the most modern management philosophies. They all know that in the SBU, TQM should reign, with products delivered JIT, where CFTs distribute products while subject to MBO. (SBU = strategic business unit, TQM = total quality management, JIT = just-in-time, CFT = customer first team, MBO = management by objectives.)

But just how universal are these management solutions? Are these 'truths' about what effective management really is: truths that can be applied anywhere, under any circumstances?

Even with experienced international companies, many well-intended 'universal' applications of management theory have turned out badly. For example, pay-for-performance has in many instances been a failure on the African continent because there are particular, though unspoken, rules about the sequence and timing of reward and promotions. Similarly, management by objectives schemes have generally failed within subsidiaries of multinationals in southern Europe, because managers have not wanted to conform to the abstract nature of preconceived policy guidelines.

Even the notion of human-resource management is difficult to translate to other cultures, coming as it does from a typically Anglo-Saxon doctrine. It borrows from economics the idea that human beings are 'resources' like physical and monetary resources. It tends to assume almost unlimited capacities for individual development. In countries without these beliefs, this concept is hard to grasp and unpopular once it is understood. International managers have it tough. They must operate on a number of different premises at any one time. These premises arise from their culture of origin, the culture in which they are working, and the culture of the organisation which employs them.

In every culture in the world such phenomena as authority, bureaucracy, creativity, good fellowship, verification and accountability are experienced in different ways. That we use the same words to describe them tends to make us unaware that our cultural biases and our accustomed conduct may not be appropriate, or shared.

From Riding the Waves of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business by Fons Trompenaars, Irwin Professional Publishing, Burr Ridge, Illinois 1994.

- A There are certain popular universal truths about management which can successfully be applied in various cultural contexts.
- B Cultures are so varied and so different throughout the world that management has to take account of differences rather than simply assume similarities.
- C Effective management of human resources is the key to everyone achieving their full potential.

2 Read the text again. Identify the following:


- a) the problem with 'universal' management solutions
- b) an example of the failure of pay-for-performance
- c) an example of the failure of management by objectives schemes
- d) the problem with human-resource management
- e) three cultures affecting international managers
- f) six areas in which different cultural interpretations apply.

2 Inviting, and accepting or declining



What kinds of social activities in your town could be appropriate ways of entertaining visitors from other countries?

- 1 Listen to the first example on the recording. You will hear a conversation in which someone invites a business associate to a social event. Identify:
- a) what is being suggested
 - b) the response
 - c) what will happen next.
- 2 Listen to the second example, where someone else invites a different business associate to a social event. Identify:
- a) what is being suggested
 - b) the response
 - c) what will happen next.

-  3 Listen to the recording of three short extracts, where hosts invite their visitors to take part in a social activity. The invitations are rejected.
- Identify each suggested activity.
 - Give the reasons for each rejection.
 - Do you think each rejection is appropriate? Explain your answer.

Activity	Reason for rejection	Comments
1		
2		
3		

- 4 Work in pairs. Use the advertisements below to invite your partner to something. He/she should respond. Then change roles so you both get to invite and accept or reject in each situation.
- tomorrow night / a show or visit the town / or have a meal.
 - this evening / a meal in a restaurant / different colleagues.
 - when you come / what would you like to do?

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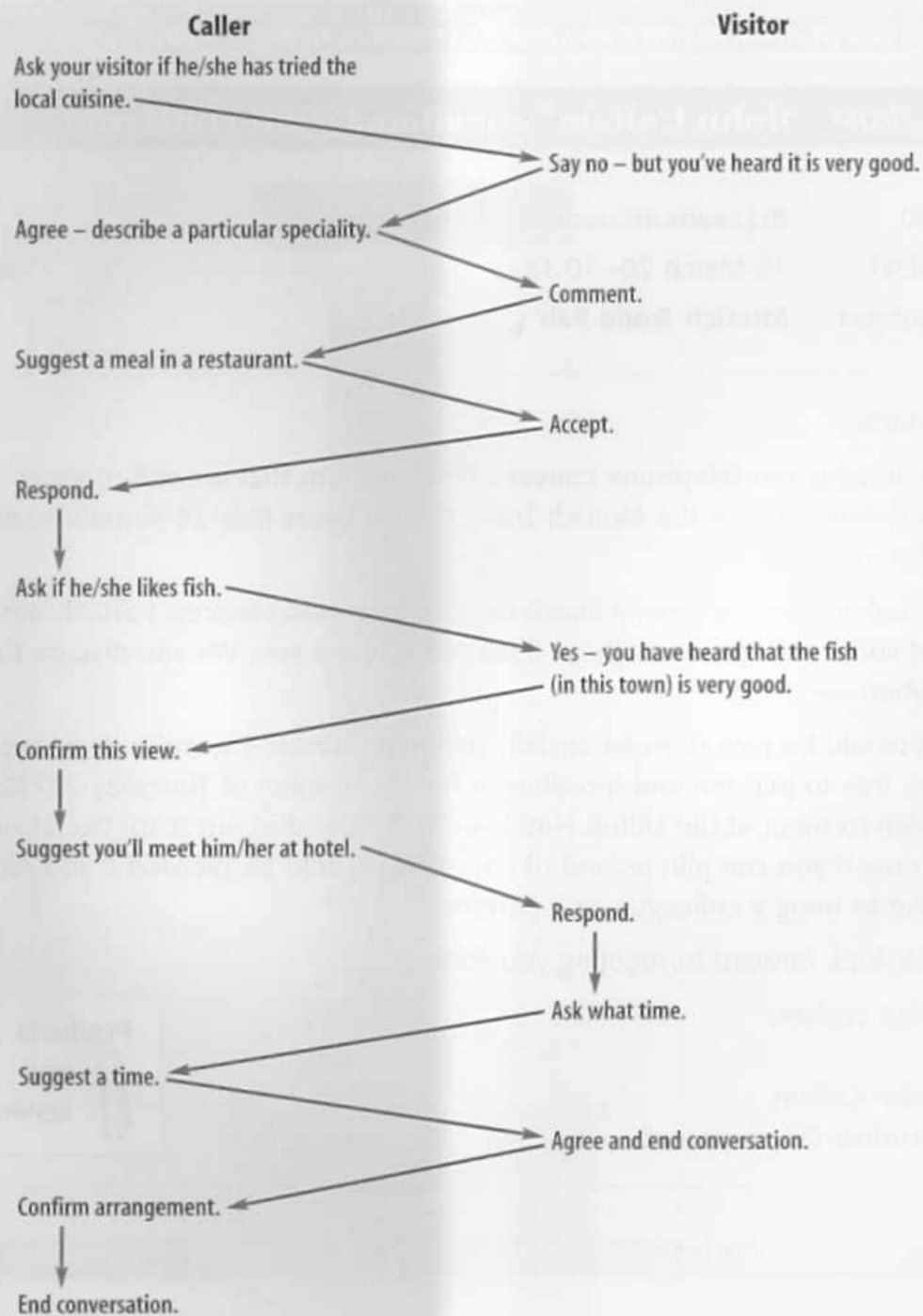
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-  Finally, listen to the recording of model versions.

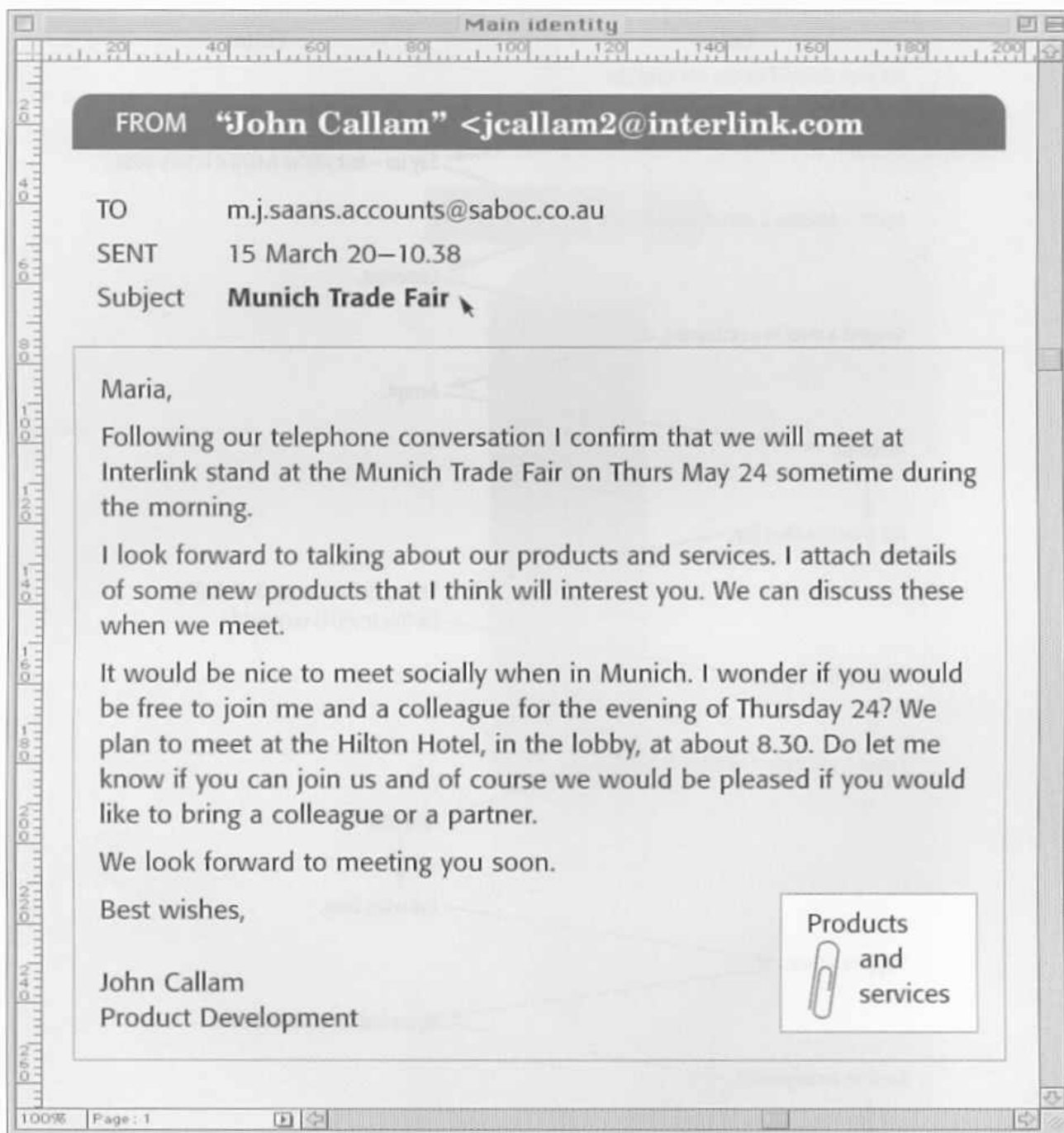
Practice

- 1 Use the following flow chart to construct a dialogue. The situation is a semi-formal business meeting in your country.



  Now listen to the recording of a model answer.

- 2 You receive the email below from a business partner confirming a meeting with you at a trade fair in Munich. Unfortunately you have to leave Munich after your meeting, but you expect to be in London a week later. Write a reply suggesting a different arrangement which you can confirm nearer the time.



Role play 1

Work in pairs. Student A should look at File card 3A. Student B should look at File card 3B.

3 Eating out

- 1 Imagine you are in a restaurant with a business colleague. Work in groups of three. Brainstorm as many examples as you can of the language indicated below.



Group one

recommending what to eat expressing preference ordering

Group two

commenting on the food asking for the bill offering to pay


Group three

insisting on paying inviting thanking

- 2 Divide into fresh groups of three and together in your new groups share all the examples you have of different ways of saying the nine functions above.

Complete the grid below with possible phrases:

Recommending what to eat	Expressing preference	Ordering
Commenting on the food	Asking for the bill	Offering to pay
Insisting on paying	Inviting	Thanking

-  3 Now listen to a conversation recorded in a restaurant. The recording contains parts of a conversation between Patricia Cork and Sandra Martinez. They are colleagues in a joint venture between two American companies.

Note any similarities between your suggestions and the language in the recording. Note also any phrases used on the tape that you did not suggest.

Role play 2

Student A should turn to File card 4A and Student B should turn to File card 4B.

TRANSFER

Think of any professional or business contact you have with other countries. Think about any conventions that are different from those in your country and may affect your dealings with people from these countries. Consider for example:

- conventions of dress
- conventions regarding alcohol and food
- socialising
- shaking hands
- physical contact
- gestures
- eye contact
- humour
- the relationship between work and pleasure
- the relationship between family and work
- family matters.

Language Checklist

Socialising (2)

Saying what's on and what's available

There's a (good) film / play / concert / on at ...

We have a good theatre in the city ...

There are some ...

– interesting museums / public buildings ...

– good restaurants

Are you interested in ...

– eating out?

– visiting / seeing ... ?

Inviting

Would you be interested in going to see ... ?

I'd like to invite you to have dinner this evening.

Is that a good idea?

Responding to an invitation

That would be very nice.

I'd like that.

Thank you. That would be a pleasure.

Declining an invitation

I'd like to, but I'm afraid ...

That would be nice, but unfortunately ...

– I'm rather tired ...

– I have an appointment this evening ...

– I'm rather busy ...

– I have some work to do ...

Stating preference

I like (Japanese) cuisine very much ...

I think I'd like to ...

I think I'd prefer ...

I particularly like (classical) music ...

Looking at a menu

The (fish) sounds nice ...

I think I'd like to try ...

I think I'll have ...

Shall we have a bottle of ... ?

Commenting on an evening out

It's been a lovely evening.

It's been very nice.

Thank you very much for your hospitality.

I enjoyed it very much.

Skills Checklist

Socialising (2)

Before receiving visitors to your company,

be prepared to talk in English about your

professional field and / or your company

and business:

- the professional field you are involved in
- your professional activities
- current research and other projects
- future plans
- the history of your company
- company organisation
- who owns the company
- the number of employees
- the international involvement of your company
- products and services
- the market
- competition.

Be able to talk about:

- your country and your town
- history
- tourism
- museums and public buildings
- entertainment
- cultural and religious centres of interest.

You may wish to talk about:

- education
- transport systems
- the economy
- companies
- exports and imports.

Quick Communication Check

1 Inviting

Choose the correct ending to make the invitations below.

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Do you have any | a) to meet this evening? |
| 2 There's a good | b) free time this week? |
| 3 We could go for | c) you some interesting places. |
| 4 Would you like | d) museum near here. |
| 5 I'd like to show | e) a meal in a restaurant. |

2 Accepting or declining

A Which of these words indicate an acceptance (A) of an invitation?

Which words indicate a rejection (R) of an invitation?

nice idea	very kind	unfortunately	rather busy	have to
thank you, but	I'm sorry	excellent	very kind	

B Complete the sentences below with words from the box.

- a) I'd like that _____ unfortunately I _____ leave very early in the morning.
- b) That's very _____ of you, I'd _____ that very much.
- c) Thank you, that _____ be very interesting.
- d) It is nice of you to _____ me, but I already have an _____ tonight. I'm sorry about that.
- e) Another _____ perhaps?
- f) I'd like _____, thank you very much.

time
kind
but
have to
would
invite
appointment
that
like

3 Eating out

Make correct sentences from the jumbled words below.

- a) the can menu have I please
- b) I'd start like soup please vegetable to with
- c) casserole have I'll chicken then
- d) a the water and of please côtes-du-rhône mineral bottle
- e) a may bill I have the coffee and please

Key

1 1b), 2d), 3e), 4a) 5c)

A

nice idea (A), very kind (A), unfortunately (R), rather busy (R), have to (R), thank you, but (R), I'm sorry (R), excellent (A), very kind (A)

B

a) but, have to, b) kind, like, c) would, d) invite, appointment, e) time, f) that

3 a) Can I have the menu, please?

b) I'd like to start with vegetable soup, please.

c) Then I'll have chicken casserole

d) The côtes-du-rhône and a bottle of mineral water, please.

e) May I have a coffee and the bill, please.