Country/Culture Selected: Japan

Type(s) of Business Interactions:

* Communication between coworkers.
* A negotiation between a worker and a manager or supervisor.

Japan

Japan is the eleventh most populous country in the world as well as the most densely populated and urbanized. Japan is the third-largest national economy in the world, after the United States and China. Japanese culture combines influences from Asia, Europe and North America. The prevalence of English speakers in Japan is actually very low, with less than 30% able to speak English, and less than 10% able to speak it fluently. This is despite English being very widely taught in schools for many years.

Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication:

Since different cultures bring different customs, the delegation have to keep multiple aspects of communication in check, both in Verbal and Non-Verbal communication.

* Kinesics:
  + The study of the way in which certain body movements and gestures serve as a form of non-verbal communication.
  + Japanese people show respect to each other by bowing. Bowing is considered as a very important gesture when greeting someone, especially someone older than you.
  + Moreover, most Japanese people exchange visiting cards when they meet, while exchanging visiting cards it is very important to give and receive the cards with both hands.
* Proxemics:
  + The branch of knowledge that deals with the amount of space that people feel it necessary to set between themselves and others.
  + In the Japanese culture, people stand at a considerable distance in public. Since it is a densely populated country, people stand close but avoid physical touch.
  + Generally Japanese greeting is bow but English speaking people greet with handshake, hug or other physical contact.
* Vocalics:
  + Vocalics is the pitch, volume, intonation etc. That is used during verbal communication.
  + The pitch of Japanese people is higher than that of other nations when taking about females. However, males have the usual low pith voices.
  + Japanese people like to talk in a low volume, especially in public. For example if someone’s music is leaking out from their headphones it will be considered rude and they will be asked to stop it.
  + The intonation in their voices is due the dialect of the Japanese language.
* Chronemics:
  + Chronemics is the study of the use of time in nonverbal communication.
  + Japanese people usually follow on a monochromic time orientation in most cases. But when eating, they follow a polychromic orientation.
  + Japanese are very strict of time. They value time very much. The trains arrive precisely on time and if they are late over a minute then they issue a letter form public transportation which explains the delay in travel time.
  + Japanese employees also work over-time on no additional pay to show their dedication.
* Dress Code:
  + How you dress in Japan when doing business.
* People are often judged on the way they are dressed in Japan.
* Dark suit, shirt and tie is the norm in Japanese mainstream business. Other colors are also seen, however it is safest to maintain a conservative approach.
* For women, business dress should be restrained and formal – women do not commonly wear trousers in business in Japan. Accessories should be upmarket but not ostentatious.
* Bear in mind that the climate in Japan is very varied through the seasons, so take appropriate wear for the season – overcoats/raincoats may be needed in the winter.

Things to avoid in Japan:

* Silence is golden there. Resist the urge to fill the silence with more talk about an issue your Japanese counterpart would rather avoid at the moment.
* Japan requires you to learn a few rules about gift-giving. A business gift exchange is an important tradition in Japanese business. Flowers such as lilies, lotus blossoms and camellias are used for funeral services and should, therefore, be avoided. The same applies to any white flowers.
* Do not be late to a meeting. That shows you are not a reliable person. Reliability is a key trait to Japanese. if you can't be on time, be sure to notify your Japanese counterpart well in advance and apologize.
* Don’t Leave a tip as I may be taken as an insult in Japan.
* Don’t point! Rather wave your hands to the person you are addressing to. It’s also rude to point your chopstick at someone.
* Avoid giving and receiving things with one hand.

Things to Remember in Japan:

* When in doubt, it is better be on the side of conservatism in matters of Japanese business culture.
* Japan is a group-oriented culture—group solidarity can often be valued over individualism. In Japan, the team concept is crucial for Japanese employees, so give public credit to the entire group.
* A business card (meishi) is an extension of their identity. When a Japenese gives his card to you accept it with both hands. When you give your card to them, make sure the Japanese printed side is facing the person.
* Age Equals Seniority in Japan. Make sure you great the most senior person before you great others.
* Compared to some Westerners, Japanese people can be private and reserved. It would be a breach of Japanese etiquette rules to ask many personal questions at the beginning of the relationship, which may be regarded as pushy or rude.
* One of the common Japanese etiquette rules include taking your shoes off at the door and wearing the slippers your Japanese host will provide.

Conclusion:

Although, an interpreter will be provided, the team should learn basic Japanese phrases to make the communication more seamless. Moreover, the cultural difference should be accepted with an open mind and the delegates should try adapt to the situation when needed by using the Verbal and Non-verbal communication customs and culture mentioned above.

References:

* [https://www.worldbusinessculture.com/country-profiles/japan/business-dress-code/#:~:text=Business%20Dress%20Code%20in%20Japan,-Appearance%20is%20vitally&text=The%20business%20convention%20of%20dark,to%20maintain%20a%20conservative%20approach](https://www.worldbusinessculture.com/country-profiles/japan/business-dress-code/%23:~:text=Business%2520Dress%2520Code%2520in%2520Japan,-Appearance%2520is%2520vitally&text=The%2520business%2520convention%2520of%2520dark,to%2520maintain%2520a%2520conservative%2520approach).
* <https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/doing-business-in-japan-10-etiquette-rules-you-should-know/>
* [https://www.businessinsider.com/12-things-you-should-never-do-in-japan-2017-9#9-dont-point-9](https://www.businessinsider.com/12-things-you-should-never-do-in-japan-2017-9%239-dont-point-9)

Group Members:

* Muhammad Bilal
* Ahmer Zaidi
* Laraib Akhtar