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International Business Training Center

presents



Negotiating with French People



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FRENCH: IDEA-ORIENTED: WHY NOT?

TALK ABOUT	PROCESS	IMPACT ON COMMUNICATION
Concepts	Imaginative	Time for Discussion
Innovation Creativity	Charismatic Ego-centered	(S)he goes off On Tangents
Possibilities Grand Design	Unrealistic	Relate The Topic To A Concept
New Ways	Full of Ideas	Emphasize Future Value
Improving Problems	Provocative	From Overall To Particular Idea

Negotiating with French People

- The French tend to focus on *LONG TERM OBJECTIVES* and will try to establish *FIRM PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS* with the other negotiating party.
- During a first meeting, remain *POLITE* and *CORDIAL*, but keep in mind that the French tend to be suspicious of early friendliness.

Negotiating with French People

- You may find that the French tend to treat the business discussion as an *INTELLECTUAL EXERCISE*.
- *LOGIC* will *DOMINATE ARGUMENTS* on the French side.
- They will be quick to *CRITICIZE ANYTHING ILLOGICAL STATED* by the opposition.

Negotiating with French People

- *ARGUMENTS* tend to be made from an *ANALYTICAL, CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE* that is articulated with *ELOQUENCE* and *WIT*.
- Also, one's *PERSONAL FEELINGS* or *BELIEF* in an ideology may enter into the presentation.

Negotiating with French People

- The French can often be persuaded to change their opinions.
- They will *NOT ACCEPT ANYTHING THAT DEVIATES FROM THE CULTURAL NORM.*
- They are, however, receptive to any new information that enhances the spirit of debate.

Negotiating with French People

- The French will judge you on your *ABILITY TO DEMONSTRATE YOUR INTELLECT*.
- This often involves *DISCUSSING CONFRONTATIONAL IDEAS* and *ENGAGING IN RIGOROUS DEBATE* with them.
- You will earn their respect if you can handle yourself well in these situations.

Negotiating with French People

- In the middle of an argument, *THE FOCUS MAY CHANGE, SETTING ASIDE THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE !!!*
- *These digressions are characteristic of French business culture and sometimes INFLUENCE THE FINAL DECISION.*

Negotiating with French People

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- The French can be *VERY DIRECT, QUESTIONING, and PROBING*.
- Therefore a *CAREFULLY PLANNED, LOGICALLY ORGANIZED PROPOSAL* is very important.
- The French will focus on the aspects of your proposal that require further explanation.

Negotiating with French People

- French business protocol requires *CONSTANT FORMALITY and RESERVE IN NEGOTIATIONS*.
- Refrain from discussing your family or other personal matters during negotiations.
- The French tend to be preoccupied with *EXAMINING EVERY MINUTE DETAIL BEFORE ARRIVING AT A DECISION*.

Negotiating with French People

- Generally, the French will *NOT MAKE CONCESSIONS* in the negotiations *UNLESS THE LOGIC* used in their arguments *HAS BEEN DEFEATED*.
- *POWER* is intrinsic to French business culture.
- Only *THE HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL IN AUTHORITY* makes *THE FINAL DECISION*.

Negotiating with French People

- Therefore, be aware that the people with whom you are dealing are probably only *INTERMEDIARIES*.
- The French workplace is *HIGHLY ORGANIZED* and *STRUCTURED*.
- Generally, *BUREAUCRACY* and *ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES* are considered *FAR MORE IMPORTANT* than efficiency or flexibility

Negotiating with French People

- Business lunches are preferred to dinners.
- Actual business is *NOT* supposed to be conducted during lunch or dinner.
- Sharing a meal is intended to help *ESTABLISH A PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE*.
- If business has to be discussed, wait until dessert is served.

Negotiating with French People

- Ensure that you make appointments for both business and social occasions.
- You won't be considered late if you arrive ten minutes after the scheduled time.
- There is *AN INCREASED TOLERANCE* for arriving late as you go further south.

Negotiating with French People

- French business culture is *INTENSIVELY HIERARCHICAL*.
- So be sure to learn and use the titles of everyone you plan to encounter.
- First names are *NOT USED*.

Negotiating with French People

- *GOOD POSTURE* is considered *A SIGN OF BREEDING* in this culture
- .
- Expect to be greeted by a handshake.
- Maintaining *EYECONTACT* is important.
- Chewing gum in public is considered vulgar.

Negotiating with French People

- Keep your hands *OUT OF YOUR POCKETS* when in public.
- Slapping an open palm over a closed fist is offensive.
- Snapping fingers is also considered offensive.
- The US „O.K.“ sign (a circle with thumb and forefinger) means „zero“ or „useless“ in France.

Negotiating with French People

- The French will perceive the way you dress as a reflection of your social status and relative success.
- *DRESS* tends to be on *THE FORMAL SIDE* for both *MEN* and *WOMEN*, whether in *BUSINESS* or *SOCIAL SITUATIONS*.
- Clothing choices should be tasteful and stylish.

Negotiating with French People

- Wear only *CONSERVATIVE CLOTHING OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY*.
- *MEN* should wear *DARK SUITS*.
- *WOMEN* are advised to dress *SIMPLY* and with *ELEGANCE*.
- Especially in summer *WOMEN DO NOT WEAR STOCKINGS*.

Negotiating with French People

- You'll find that *CONVERSATIONS* often *SHIFT* into *SPIRITED DEBATES*.
- Give opinions only on subjects that you are knowledgeable about.
- Be prepared to answer questions about your own country, especially regarding political matters.

Negotiating with French People

- Don't ask an individual about his political leanings or how he voted.
- Do not criticize Napoleon, who has a lasting identity with the French spirit.
- Avoid making personal inquiries in the course of a conversation, especially during first introductions.



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The End



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Hanser Verlag München, BRD. ISBN: 3-446-40220-9.

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