

Working Effectively with Japanese Colleagues

Course Overview

How You Will Benefit

North Americans who work with Japanese usually have many questions about how to improve relationships and communication, but no good place to get the answers. This cultural training seminar is an opportunity to get those questions answered by an expert who is highly skilled in explaining the intricacies of Japanese business and society.

This cross-cultural training seminar on working with Japanese colleagues goes beyond business card presentation and chopstick use to provide substantial insights that will affect your business. This interactive session uses group discussions, case studies, and lively examples from the facilitator's own business experience to keep the pace fast and stimulating. Our unique "self-customizing" format ensures that each session is tailored to the specific needs of the participants. This seminar helps participants better understand the cultural mindset of their colleagues, and develop practical strategies for building relationships and achieving business goals together.

Topics covered include Japanese communication style, common Japanese business practices, techniques for overcoming the language barrier, how decisions are made in Japanese organizations, and how to make meetings with Japanese more effective. This Japanese cultural training seminar will be invaluable for anyone doing business with Japanese—either within the same company, or with Japanese customers, joint venture partners, licensees or investors.

Course Objectives

This course will accomplish the following objectives:

- Provide participants with information about how U.S. and Japanese cultures differ, and how to bridge these cultural differences effectively.
- Increase participants' knowledge of their own cultural background as well as the cultural characteristics of their colleagues.
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Course Objectives (cont.)

- Provide an opportunity for participants to discuss how cultural differences affect the organization and their work together.
- Provide a "space" to discuss cultural issues that affect work but typically remain buried and un-addressed, in a positive and carefully facilitated environment.
- Provide practical knowledge of cultural tendencies such as nonverbal and indirect communication style that will help employees better understand and communicate with their Japanese colleagues.
- Provide basic information about Japanese culture, history, and etiquette, to give participants a background for understanding the Japanese they interact with, and a sense of the environment at a Japanese company.
- Give participants an idea of how the Japanese culture and economy is changing today, and what kinds of traditional customs and beliefs continue to affect the business environment.
- Identify the characteristics of an effective leader, analyze different leadership styles, and gain specific strategies for leadership in a cross-cultural setting.
- Offer participants specific strategies they can use in meetings with Japanese colleagues, on trips to Japan, and in day-to-day interactions in order to effectively build relationships.

Key Topics Covered

Thinking about culture

- Range of diversity within every culture
- The "iceberg": a way of thinking about culture
- How much should both sides adjust?

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Key Topics Covered (cont.)

Overview of Japanese history and culture

- Demographics
- Prehistory to modernity
- The imperial family and the samurai
- The Japanese economy today

Case studies: Business culture differences between Japan and the U.S.

- Verbal vs. non-verbal communication
- Communication and conflict resolution style
- Attitudes toward risk
- Decision-making process and meeting styles
- Egalitarian vs. hierarchical power structures
- Role clarity
- Task vs. relationship orientation
- Individual/group relationship
- Value of time
- Process vs. results orientation

Practical tips for communicating effectively with Japanese colleagues

- Language barrier
- Working with translators
- Effective email communication

Japanese Etiquette

- How to build trusting relationships with Japanese colleagues
- Exchanging business cards
- Basic verbal greetings in Japanese
- Bowing
- Mealtime etiquette and introduction to Japanese foods
- Small talk
- Seating arrangements

Key Topics Covered (cont.)

- Formality
- Gift-giving
- Japanese holidays
- Hosting Japanese visitors

What the Course Offers

- Highly experienced instructor fluent in the norms of Japanese business culture and language
- Interactive learning setting
- Practical, case-study-based discussion format
- Participant workbook that will serve as a reference guide and classroom PowerPoint presentation