

DOING BUSINESS WITH CHINESE

BUSINESS ETIQUETTES

➤ Appearance

- ✧ Conservative suits for men with subtle colors are the norm.
- ✧ Casual dress should be conservative as well.
- ✧ Subtle, neutral colors should be worn by both men and women.
- ✧ Women should avoid high heels and short sleeved blouses.
- ✧ Revealing clothing for women is considered offensive to Chinese businessmen.
- ✧ Men and women can wear jeans. However, jeans are not acceptable for business meetings.

➤ Behavior

- ✧ Always arrive on time or early if you are the guest.
- ✧ Handshaking is the accepted greeting, with a light handshake encouraged, lasting as long as ten seconds.
- ✧ Chinese lower their eyes slightly as a sign of respect.

- ✧ Do not use large hand movements.
- ✧ Staring may make Chinese uncomfortable.
- ✧ Body contact must be avoided at all cost. It is highly inappropriate for a man to touch a woman in public.
- ✧ Do not point when speaking.

➤ Communications

- ✧ Appointments are a must for business.
- ✧ Contacts should be made prior to your trip.
- ✧ Introductions are formal. Use formal titles.
- ✧ During the meeting it is customary to address your Chinese colleagues with the title that signifies their status: "Professor Zhang" or "Mr. Li" with the name that follows the title being the surname and not a first name.
- ✧ It is important, during the course of the conversation, to be aware of the speech culture in China. Avoid saying "no". Instead, you can respond with "I'll look into that" or "I'll see what I can do in this matter", etc.

✧ When presenting your position at a meeting, speak slowly with short pauses between the sentences. It is worthwhile to allow your Chinese counterpart to understand your intentions properly.

✧ Business cards are important, especially in Chinese. On accepting a business card from your Chinese colleagues, show your interest by glancing at the details of the card. Putting the card immediately into your wallet or briefcase without reading it is an unforgivable insult to the Chinese business culture.

✧ Present and receive business cards with both hands.

✧ Never write on a business card or put it in your wallet or pocket. Carry a small card case.

➤ Gift

✧ Gifts are important, although expensive gifts could be taken the wrong way.

✧ It is more acceptable to give gifts either in private or to a group as a whole to avoid embarrassment.

✧ The most acceptable gift is a banquet.

✧ Never give clocks as gift since they are associated with death.

BUSINESS CULTURE

➤ It is very important for Chinese people to "maintaining face" in everything they do. Therefore, never insult or openly criticize someone in front of others; avoid unintentional criticism of others; don't poke fun at someone, even if in fun.

➤ The relationship you develop with a person represents your relationship with his or her entire company.

➤ Be aware of all favors done for you and prepare to respond in kind.

➤ In China, business relationships are personal relationships; establish a trusting personal relationship that demonstrates your respect.

➤ Become friends with local influential officials.

➤ Do not arrange business meetings around the times of Chinese festivals.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

➤ Confucius rules

✧ China's ethical system involves respect for superiors, duty to family, and loyalty to friends, sincerity and courtesy.

✧ Age brings increased respect and status.

✧ Working in China requires recognition of guanxi, or networks of dependent relationships. For example, gifts are given as a token of respect and allow

individuals to build obligations between themselves and others who can assist them in China's business and social world.

➤ Numbers

- ✧ The Number Four: Considered very unlucky, as the word is pronounced similarly to the word for death.
- ✧ The Number Eight: Very lucky, and any association with the number eight means lots of good luck, wealth, health and happiness.
- ✧ The Number Six: Lucky, the word means things going successfully.

➤ Color

- ✧ Red: Symbolic of wealth and success when used with products and services.
- ✧ Gold and Yellow: Associated with success and power.
- ✧ White and Black: Typically associated with funerals, so they are to be avoided.

➤ Beliefs

- ✧ Feng Shui: Don't move things around in a home or office. They may have been placed there auspiciously.
- ✧ Chicken Heads: Kept at the business banquet table facing the host (if the head points to anyone else at the table, it is a symbol that they will be fired).
- ✧ Chopsticks: At the banquet table, never stick your chopsticks into the rice standing up (a symbol used at funerals), and always lay them down parallel on the side of your plate when you are done. Never make an "X" with them or separate them on either side of the plate.

➤ Eating customs

- ✧ As a cultural courtesy, you should taste all the dishes you are offered.
- ✧ Do not start to eat or drink prior to the host.
- ✧ Never serve yourself a drink at the banquet table; always fill your neighbor's glass. This is his cue to fill yours.
- ✧ You should not take the last bit of food on the serving plate, and always leave a little food on your own plate to indicate you are finished.