

Listen to the audio and do the exercises below

Choose the correct to complete the sentences

- 1) The project is important because ...
 - a. it will improve what the company is offering the customer
 - b. it involves working with people from other departments
 - c. the head office is closely following its progress
- 2) Matteo is concerned about ...
 - a. communication in the team
 - b. taking on work that they have little experience of both
 - c. not having to work on the project
- 3) Akiko is the best person to do the customer survey questionnaire because ...
 - a. she normally handles the company's marketing initiatives
 - b. she has worked with John on similar tasks
 - c. she has studied the subject
- 4) Matteo initially asks for ...
 - a. Paid overtime
 - b. an assistant
 - c. a reduction in his targets
- 5) John's immediate response to Barbara's offer to help Matteo is ...
 - a. Enthusiastic
 - b. not entirely positive
 - c. a definite no
- 6) It's important that Matteo does the design because ...
 - a. a client has asked specifically for him
 - b. no one else knows how to do them
 - c. he has the software to do them at home

Read the text and do the tasks below

Much of today's business is conducted across international borders, and while the majority of the global business community might share the use of English as a common language, the nuances and expectations of business communication might differ greatly from culture to culture. A lack of understanding of the cultural norms and practices of our business acquaintances can result in unfair judgements, misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication. Here are three basic areas of differences in the business etiquette around the world that could help stand you in good stead when you next find yourself working with someone from a different culture.

Addressing someone

When discussing this topic in a training course, a German trainee and a British trainee got into a hot debate about whether it was appropriate for someone with a doctorate to use the corresponding title on their business card. The British trainee maintained that anyone who wasn't a medical doctor expecting to be addressed as 'Dr' was disgustingly pompous and full of themselves. The German trainee, however, argued that the hard work and years of education put into earning that PhD should give them full rights to expect to be addressed as 'Dr'.

This stark difference in opinion over something that could be conceived as minor and thus easily overlooked goes to show that we often attach meaning to even the most mundane practices. When things that we are used to are done differently, it could spark the strongest reactions in us. While many Continental Europeans and Latin Americans prefer to be addressed with a title, for example Mr or Ms and their surname when meeting someone in a business context for the first time, Americans, and increasingly the British, now tend to prefer using their first names. The best thing to do is to listen and observe how your conversation partner addresses you and, if you are still unsure, do not be afraid to ask them how they would like to be addressed.

Smiling

A famous Russian proverb states that 'a smile without reason is a sign of idiocy' and a so-called 'smile of respect' is seen as insincere and often regarded with suspicion in Russia. Yet in countries like the United States, Australia and Britain, smiling is often interpreted as a sign of openness, friendship and respect, and is frequently used to break the ice.

In a piece of research done on smiles across cultures, the researchers found that smiling individuals were considered more intelligent than non-smiling people in countries such as Germany, Switzerland, China and Malaysia. However, in countries like Russia, Japan, South Korea and Iran, pictures of smiling faces were rated as less intelligent than the non-smiling ones. Meanwhile, in countries like India, Argentina and the Maldives, smiling was associated with dishonesty.

Eye contact

An American or British person might be looking their client in the eye to show that they are paying full attention to what is being said, but if that client is from Japan or Korea, they might find the direct eye contact awkward or even disrespectful. In parts of South America and Africa, prolonged eye contact could also be seen as challenging authority. In the Middle East, eye contact across genders is considered inappropriate, although eye contact within a gender could signify honesty and truthfulness.

Having an increased awareness of the possible differences in expectations and behaviour can help us avoid cases of miscommunication, but it is vital that we also remember that cultural stereotypes can be detrimental to building good business relationships. Although national cultures could play a part in shaping the way we behave and think, we are also largely influenced by the region we come from, the communities we associate with, our age and gender, our corporate culture and our individual experiences of the world. The knowledge of the potential differences should therefore be something we keep at the back of our minds, rather than something that we use to pigeonhole the individuals of an entire nation.

Choose the correct answer

- 7) The British trainee felt that the people who want to be addressed as 'Dr' must be ...
- a. hard-working
 - b. conceited and self-important
 - c. doing a medical degree
 - d. from Germany
- 8) If you are not sure how to address someone, you should ...
- a. use the title you see on their business card
 - b. make your decision based on cultural stereotypes about their country
 - c. Address them the way you'd like to be addressed
 - d. Ask them what they would like to call them
- 9) There might be a misunderstanding if an American smiles at a Russian business associate because the Russian might think that the American is...
- a. being fake
 - b. challenging their authority
 - c. trying to break the ice
 - d. disrespectful
- 10) The Japanese, the South Koreans and Iranians might interpret a smiling face as being ...
- a. friendlier
 - b. less open
 - c. not as intelligent
 - d. dishonest
- 11) Americans and British people sometimes use eye contact to show that they
- a. like the speaker
 - b. are really listening to what is being said
 - c. are honest and truthful
 - d. are attending to every need of the speaker
- 12) The last paragraph warns the reader not to ...
- a. engage in an international business
 - b. let national cultures shape the way we behave and think
 - c. let miscommunication damage our business relationships
 - d. overgeneralise using our knowledge of cultural stereotypes

Are these sentences true or false?

13) When doing business internationally, there is a possibility that we might misinterpret what each other is saying even though we are speaking the same language. TRUE / FALSE

14) To the German trainee, having a PhD is equivalent to being a medical doctor. TRUE / FALSE

15) Sometimes, the smallest things can trigger a huge emotional response in us, especially when they are things we are not used to. TRUE / FALSE

16) In the research done to the perceptions of smiles, people from different countries were asked to rate photos of smiling faces and non-smiling faces. TRUE / FALSE

17) Making eye contact can be interpreted in different ways in different cultures but is almost always a positive thing. TRUE / FALSE

18) The writer recommends keeping possible cultural differences in the forefront of our minds when doing business with people with different cultures. TRUE / FALSE

Read the text below about cultural change in companies.

Choose the best word to fill each gap from A, B, C or D below.

There is an example at the beginning.

American President J.F. Kennedy and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill were both 'nappers'. They had short sleeps – 'naps' – during the day to help them work (0) A. It might be just what you need to wake up your company and improve your (1) ____.

Do energy levels drop in the afternoon? Do your (2) ____ seem a bit slow and sleepy after lunch? In Spain the traditional siesta is making a comeback in good companies who want their workers to work smarter, not (3) _____. These companies are realizing that their (4) _____ work better with a rest in the afternoon. They are more productive, make fewer mistakes and are happier. It's not a case of decreasing their (5) _____ – they do even more work.

In California's Silicon Valley, hi-tech companies provide chill-out rooms for employees to relax in, along with pool tables and gyms. Even family pets, such as dogs, are allowed to go to work (6) _____ their owners. A New Zealand company achieved change in the whole company by encouraging staff in one (7) _____ to go home when they had done all the assignments they could do that day, without any loss of pay.

Other employers want their employees to take responsibility (8) _____ their own success by letting them set their personal work (9) _____. Like all these ideas, this only works when everyone in the company (10) _____ believes in the changes. Even the best intentions of written (11) _____ can mean nothing if one person does not follow them. Everyone from the (12) _____ on down should (13) _____ the new rules and follow them themselves.

But perhaps the most important thing to remember is to have a good life-work (14) _____. Go home at five, on time, and enjoy the rest of your life. Take control. Life's too short to let anyone else (15) _____ it for you.

0	A. better	B. best	C. good	D. worse
1	A. attitudes	B. profitability	C. working	D. shareholders
2	A. employers	B. employed	C. employ	D. employees
3	A. hard	B. harder	C. hardest	D. well
4	A. company	B. managers	C. staff	D. interns
5	A. workforce	B. workspace	C. working	D. workload
6	A. by	B. with	C. for	D. together
7	A. company	B. organization	C. unit	D. place
8	A. in	B. with	C. to	D. for
9	A. ideas	B. objectives	C. criteria	D. jobs
10	A. corporation	B. structure	C. subsidiary	D. department
11	A. guidelines	B. rule	C. complaints	D. instructions
12	A. project leader	B. director	C. manager	D. supervisor
13	A. write	B. ensure	C. focus	D. enforce
14	A. situation	B. routine	C. balance	D. plan
15	A. set	B. run	C. rule	D. decide

Read the article below about unwritten rules.

In most of the lines 33–50 there is one extra word. It is either grammatically incorrect or does not fit in with the meaning of the text. Some lines, however, are correct. If the line is correct, write CORRECT in the space provided.

If there is an extra word in the line, write the extra word in CAPITAL LETTERS in the space provided.

There are two examples at the beginning.

00 In many businesses, an unwritten rule states that a working long hours is	<u>A</u>
0 more important than achieving results. In one medium-sized company,	<u>CORRECT</u>
33 the boss never leaves the office until it is in dark. Outside in the car park,	<u></u>
34 he checks to see who is still working, and whose office windows are dark.	<u></u>
35 Staff who risk leaving soon earlier now leave their office lights on all night.	<u></u>
36 Other common unwritten rules state that the important boss is always right,	<u></u>
37 even when he's wrong; if you're not at your desk, you're not working;	<u></u>
38 nobody complains, often because nothing ever changes; women, ethnic	<u></u>
39 minorities and the over 50s are not promoted; the customer is the king, but	<u></u>
40 don't tell anyone, because a management are more interested in profitability.	<u></u>
41 Often nobody really knows where these real unwritten rules came from; but	<u></u>
42 like new monkeys, new recruits pick them up very quickly, despite	<u></u>
43 the good best intentions of induction and orientation programmes. The way	<u></u>
44 staff speak to management, to customers and to each other gives out subtle	<u></u>
45 but the strategic clues to an organization's culture, as do the differences	<u></u>
46 between what is said, made, decided or promised, and what actually gets	<u></u>
done.	
47 New staff quickly learn when their ideas and opinions are listened to and	<u></u>
48 valued, and when it's better to keep them to themselves. They learn which	<u></u>
49 assignments and aspects of their high performance will be checked and	<u></u>
50 evaluated, and whose own objectives and instructions they can safely	<u></u>
ignore.	