

GLOBAL WORK SOLUTIONS

At GW Solutions, we recognize the importance of cross-cultural training for U.S. employees working abroad. Lack of cultural understanding results in lost contracts and less business. Here are some examples of what our courses can teach you.

In the U.S.A., we say that time is money. For American workers, punctuality and timetables are always important. At work, people concentrate on the task they are doing. They usually do not spend a lot of time on small talk. However, it's important to realize that not all cultures see time in this way. In many African countries, for example, getting work done isn't the only valuable use of time. Spending time at work to build close relationships with colleagues is equally important. It's important to ask about your colleague's personal life. Understanding these cultural differences is essential for working in a global team. If an American doesn't realize this, he or she might think that an African colleague who spends a lot of time chatting with co-workers is being lazy or avoiding doing his or her work. And an African worker might think their American colleague is the rudest person they've ever met!

In the U.S.A., written agreements are essential. Business deals are always agreed through a contract and once it has been signed, we consider it to be final. The conditions of the agreement don't usually change without the signing of another contract. But you may do business in places where this is not the case. In China, for example, people generally place more trust in a person's word than in a signed contract. Once a good relationship exists, a simple handshake might be enough to reach a business deal.



In the U.S.A., workers generally speak directly, and they openly disagree with colleagues. This kind of "straight talk" is seen as a mark of honesty. But where we see honesty, others may see rudeness. In some parts of Asia, open disagreement with colleagues may not be acceptable because it makes people feel embarrassed. Instead, you should stop and think for a while. Afterward you could say, "I agree in general, but could a different idea work in this situation?" And your body language is important, too. In the West, direct eye contact is good because it's a sign of honesty. In some Asian cultures, it's polite to avoid looking directly at your colleagues in order to show respect.

Did you learn something new? Need to know more? Sign up for one of our training courses and learn how to do business wherever you go.

1. According to the text, how do Americans typically view time at work?

- A. As a chance to build personal relationships
- B. As something to be spent slowly and casually
- C. As a resource to be used efficiently
- D. As less important than social interactions

2. What is the main difference in business communication between the U.S. and some Asian cultures?

- A. Americans prefer written contracts
- B. Asians use more direct communication
- C. Americans are more likely to avoid eye contact
- D. Asians tend to be more confrontational

3. How do African work cultures differ from American work cultures regarding time?

- A. They are exactly the same
- B. Personal relationships are equally important as task completion
- C. They only focus on task completion
- D. They completely ignore work schedules

4. In the context of the text, what does a handshake represent in Chinese business culture?

- A. A legally binding contract
- B. A formal greeting
- C. A sign of potential business trust
- D. An unnecessary social gesture

5. What does the text suggest about communication styles in different cultures?

- A. All cultures communicate exactly the same way
- B. Direct disagreement is universally acceptable
- C. Communication styles vary significantly between cultures
- D. Written agreements are the same everywhere

6. How do Americans typically view direct communication?

- A. As a sign of rudeness
- B. As a mark of honesty
- C. As unnecessary in business
- D. As a way to avoid conflict

7. What is the main purpose of the text?

- A. To criticize different cultural work practices
- B. To explain cultural differences in workplace communication
- C. To promote a specific business training course
- D. To compare salary differences across cultures