

# AICI GLOBAL

## Are You Monochronic or Polychronic?

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Chronemics is the study of how people communicate through the use of time based on how they perceive and value time. Cultures tend to fall into two time system categories, according to Wikipedia:

**MONOCHRONIC TIME:** A system whereby things are done one at a time and time is segmented into precise, small units. Time is scheduled, arranged and managed.

**POLYCHRONIC TIME:** A system whereby several things can be done at once and a more fluid approach is taken to scheduling time.

**CULTURAL DIFFERENCES** (source: *The Articulate CEO*):

### Monochronic Cultures:

- Do one thing at a time
- Value order
- Do not value interruptions
- Take deadlines very seriously
- Adhere to rules of privacy and pre-determined plans
- Consider tasks and objectives as “must do’s”

### Polychronic Cultures:

- Do multiple things at the same time
- Manage interruptions well
- Willing to make changes often
- Concerned with close relations more than privacy
- Consider tasks and objectives as relationship-based desirable outcomes

### EXAMPLES OF BOTH CULTURES

#### Monochronic Cultures

Australia  
Denmark  
France (northern)  
Germany  
Japan  
New Zealand  
Russia (northern)  
Switzerland  
United Kingdom  
United States

#### Polychronic Cultures

Brazil  
China  
Egypt  
India  
Italy  
Mexico  
Pakistan  
Philippines  
Spain  
Saudi Arabia

Cross-chronemic communications may be impaired by these differences as they may be misinterpreted as insulting or unreasonable. Understand your audience’s cultural communication differences for successful business and social interactions.

