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Over half of South Korea's population – 25.6 million people – live in the Seoul Capital Area (which includes the surrounding Incheon metropolis and Gyeonggi province). Over 630,000 are expatriate residents.

Source: Source: Statistics Korea

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Get Ready: Assignment to South Korea

Dean Quinn

If you are considering an assignment to South Korea, you need some orientation to the culture. Below, I present a high-level overview of the country and its people, then focus on the “culture of business” you should expect while working there. Of course, for the purposes of this overview, I have had to make some broad generalizations. Your mileage may vary – particularly when it comes to interpersonal relations.

Overview

Geography: The Republic of Korea (South Korea), situated on the Korean Peninsula, lies on the northeastern section of the Asian continent. The country's northern border is the Demilitarized Zone, created in 1953 by the Korean Armistice Agreement. To the east is the East Sea, to the south the Korea Strait, and to the west the Yellow Sea.

South Korea includes 3,000 islands, only 67 of which have an area of 10 square kilometers or more. Most of the country consists of

hills and mountains, and 30% of the flat plain contains the majority of the population and farmland.

Seoul: The capital is Seoul, the fifth largest city in the world – and, not surprisingly, Korea's most populous city (10.6 million). Seoul's extreme population density (16,700 per square kilometer) is the highest among cities in OECD countries – more than eight times the population density in New York City.

Seoul is Korea's center for business, education, and culture. It is a thriving center of trade and industry, and houses textiles, agriculture, fisheries, and electronic products. Seoul's location in northwest Korea has encouraged expansion of trade and industry in the city, especially trade with Japan and China. Seoul acts as a sort of land bridge between Europe and Northeastern Asia, which makes it an international center of logistics and business.

The Korean people: Sharing distinct physical characteristics, the Korean people are believed to be descendants of several



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Mongol tribes that migrated onto the Korean Peninsula from Central Asia thousands of years ago. The major population centers are in the northwest area of Seoul-Inchon and in the fertile southern plain. Koreans speak and write one language, although several different dialects exist in addition to the standard used in Seoul. The Korean alphabet, called Hangeul, is easy to learn and write, and has contributed significantly to South Korea's very high literacy rate (98%) and advanced publication industry.

The concept of "face" is crucial to Koreans. You should always take care not to behave in a manner that would humiliate or embarrass a Korean and thereby cause him or her to "lose face." Avoid arguing or criticizing others in public, no matter how subtly, as this could result in your "losing face." Losing control and being emotional in public is unacceptable, even considered dreadful. You should remain calm and refrain from showing frustration or anger. Doing so will gain you respect and trust. Outbursts of laughter do not always indicate amusement; more often, laughter masks loss of face, nervousness, shyness, or disapproval.

Social etiquette: Korean society's reliance on Confucian principles means that older or more senior persons are shown more respect.

Before you have been introduced, Koreans can seem cold and serious. But after you are introduced, they can be extremely gracious and generous. If a relationship has not been established, then strangers cannot work into the system. There is no requirement to be polite to strangers. In Korea, where personal space is smaller, there is no reason to apologize if you bump into someone in the street. For Koreans, if someone unknown smiles at them on the bus, they are considered crazy.

Religion: Religious freedom is guaranteed by South Korea's constitution. Of the 300 or so registered religions, Buddhism and Confucianism were dominant in the past, and have shaped both the way of life and the attitudes of Koreans since the Three Kingdoms Period (57–668 CE). More recently, Christianity has developed a vast following since its introduction in the late 18th century, and its influence is now being felt throughout society. A significant plurality of South Koreans now identify as Christian.

General business practices: Generally, business conduct is formal, with great value placed on punctuality and efficiency. South Koreans prefer to do business with people with whom they have a personal connection; it is crucial to be introduced by a third party.

As in many other Asian cultures, business cards are critical. At the first meeting, handshakes or bows are followed by a formal exchange of cards, with text in Korean on one side. Business cards should have your name, title, organization, business address, and work and home phone numbers. Begin by presenting your card to the highest ranked or senior member of the group. Use both hands, and present the Korean-translated side first. When receiving a card, do not just put it in your pocket. Take a few moments to study the card and respond to it with the proper respect. Put the business cards in a business card case or a portfolio. Never write on someone's business card in their presence.

Business meetings are very formal, and prior appointments are important. You should be punctual and arrange for the necessary background materials and subject introductions, giving as much detail as possible to be communicated beforehand. A person's status is very important, and until everyone's status is clear, Koreans may seem a bit uneasy. The highest-ranked businessperson, whether female or male, is expected to enter and exit a meeting room first. The most senior executives will seat themselves at the head of the table or be introduced by a third party.



furthest from the door in meetings. Questions about one's education, parents, place of birth, or age all help to determine status.

Koreans are more at ease as a group than as individuals, and become uncomfortable when people speak as individuals or make statements not in harmony with the stated group view. If you are part of a group, one person (the group's senior member) should be the spokesperson. The seriousness of your dealings will be judged by the status of the representatives in your group. Communicating a list of those who are to attend a meeting outlining their status within the company is advisable. Your Korean counterpart is likely to do the same.

Koreans are generally highly disciplined and hard working, but they can also be distrustful of outsiders and extremely nationalistic. Much Korean behavior is determined by Confucianism, which teaches respect for superiors, duty to family, and loyalty to friends. Workers generally respect the companies they work for and are driven to help their business succeed. Among co-workers, people of higher status and age are respected by those of a lower rank. Business friends trust and respect each other, and help each other succeed. Employees work hard and are generally efficient and productive. Management styles often combine Confucianism and Western behavior, depending on background.

Business communications: Developing good business relationships often requires a lot of personal contact. Face-to-face meetings are preferred to telephone contact. It is important to show respect for your Korean counterparts and endeavor to maintain harmony and dignity in business relationships. Before any action is taken or a decision made, there must be consensus from everyone involved, reached by circulating written memos that

must receive unanimous approval. Koreans try not to say "no" or to deliver bad news. If a project or negotiation develops problems, no one wants to admit there are difficulties; it may be necessary to look for subtle signs that something has gone wrong. When you hear a "yes," it may simply mean that you have been understood, not necessarily that your Korean counterpart agrees with what you are saying. It is advisable to get any contractual agreements in writing and make allowances for an inefficient bureaucracy and labor troubles when setting deadlines.

The traditional respect for age rather than position may mean that a young (or young-looking) non-Korean executive may encounter problems in meeting senior Korean personnel, and particularly in convincing Korean counterparts that his or her company is taking the business seriously. But increasingly, companies are promoting and raising an employee's salary according to creativity and abilities.

Women in business: It is rare to find Korean women in positions of authority. This is slowly changing, but some companies continue with a policy of employing women only until they are 30 or married. Foreign businesswomen will encounter chauvinism, but as a foreigner will be treated much the same as a foreign businessman. Nevertheless, they are expected to be highly professional, appropriate, and neither aggressive nor confrontational.

Dressing for business: Businessmen are expected to wear a suit and tie and to be well groomed. In business settings, standard attire for men includes a white shirt and a conservative tie. Recently, though, more people, especially young men in their 20s and 30s, have started wearing colored shirts and bright colored ties. Professional women typically wear conservative business suits or dresses.

Since many people sit on the floor in some restaurants, tight skirts are best avoided. Sleeveless tops and short skirts are considered unprofessional in most business settings. Businesswomen are expected to dress conservatively, both in and out of the office. Koreans admire quality clothing and will notice your attire as well as accessories and jewelry. However, it is best to avoid excessively expensive or showy jewelry or accessories. Men should avoid wearing jewelry other than a watch or a wedding ring.

Business Etiquette Tips

- Appointments are required and should be made three to four weeks in advance. You should arrive on time; it demonstrates respect for the person you are meeting.
- Do not remove your jacket unless the most senior South Korean does so.
- Have all written materials available in both English and Korean.
- If Koreans shake hands, they hold their ribs with their other hand out of respect.
- Western business people tend to base trust on the other party's ability to stick to an agreement. But for a Korean, trust is based on understanding the company's situation and why they might not be able to agree to something.
- Koreans do not sign financial papers with a signature, but use a family stamp instead. This is considered more secure than a signature, and the responsibility is on the owner to make sure that the "name chop" does not get into the wrong hands. The stamp uses red ink, although this color is usually used to write a dead person's name.

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Quality of Living Summary for Seoul

Political and Social Environment

Relations between South and North Korea are a perennial source of concern. Tension between South Korea and Japan is elevated due to the disputed island of Dokodo. The internal political situation is relatively stable. Demonstrations and strikes might occur but do not normally affect everyday life. Seoul is a relatively safe city, but with the increase of tourists and foreigners, the number of petty crimes (such as bag snatching) and violent crimes (such as sexual assault) has risen. Generally, foreign nationals require only a valid passport to enter South Korea, and work permits are relatively easy to obtain.

Economic Environment

To exchange foreign currency in amounts over USD 10,000 or equivalent, a customs declaration is necessary. Banks and hotels offer exchange services. Most banking services are available. A number of foreign banks have branches in Seoul. International banking services are of a very good standard. 24-hour ATMs are widely available in Seoul. Credit cards are widely accepted in most establishments.

Socio-Cultural Environment

Freedom of speech and religion is permitted. Local media may be under political pressure, especially when covering delicate subjects such as North Korea. International newspapers can be found at major hotels. Cable and satellite television is available.

Medical and Health Considerations

Medical treatment is of good standard in both public and private hospitals, and most medicines are readily available. Inoculations against cholera, typhoid, and polio are recommended but not required. Waste removal and sewage services are usually functional. Pollution remains a major concern despite efforts to curb it.

Schools and Education

Seoul offers a good choice of international schools. International, American, British, French, German, and Japanese schools all offer primary and secondary education.

Public Services and Transport

Telephone, mail, water, and electricity services operate to a very high standard. Seoul has an excellent public transport network, including an underground and an urban railway system. Road traffic is often congested even beyond rush hour. Incheon International Airport is 52 km from Seoul's city center. Improved links from downtown to the airport make the trip under an hour. It offers flights to most worldwide destinations.

Recreation

There is good choice of restaurants serving quality food. Seoul has a varied entertainment scene. There is a good selection of cultural events such as operas, theatres, concerts, and cinemas. Sports and leisure activities are readily available at private clubs and hotels.

Consumer Goods

Most daily consumables are in good supply in Seoul, and fresh food is widely available. Imported items can still be difficult to find.

Housing

Unfurnished accommodation is widely available, although it is not always possible to find accommodation of a good standard at a reasonable cost. The supply of furnished accommodation is limited. Many expatriates live in residential areas with walled compounds and 24-hour security guards. Areas popular with expatriates include Dogok-dong, Daechi-dong, Seongbuk-dong, Pyungchang-dong, the Yongsan area (Itaewon-dong, Hannam-dong, UN Village), and Ichon-dong. The availability and quality of household appliances and repair services is very good.

Natural Environment

The climate is moderate and has four distinct seasons. The hottest part of the year is during the rainy season in July and August, while the coolest is during December and January. Seoul is vulnerable to typhoons – not the storms themselves, but the intense rain and flooding that they can bring. The rain and flooding can cause landslides, damage to property, and disruption to traffic and communications. Seoul is located in an area of seismic activity, but the risk of severe earthquakes is thought to be low.

Greetings

Greetings follow strict rules of protocol:

- Wait to be introduced at a social gathering. A nod or bow is considered respectful when greeting someone or departing. Many South Koreans shake hands with expatriates after the bow, thereby blending both cultural styles. Koreans generally bow to each other, but with foreigners handshaking is now the accepted greeting. In very formal situations, and if dealing with an older person, bowing is appropriate. The person of lower status bows to the person of higher status, yet it is the most senior person who initiates the handshake. The person who initiates the bow says, “man-na-suh pan-gop-sumnida,” which means “pleased to meet you.” If you are not sure whether to bow or shake hands, allow the Koreans to take the lead. When you leave a social gathering, say good-bye and bow to each person individually.
- The use of titles is important, even when you become good friends with your Korean counterparts. Although it is customary for Westerners to invite better-known acquaintances to use your first name, this may embarrass a Korean, as it is disrespectful.
- Over half the population has Lee, Kim, Park, or Choi (perhaps with variant spellings) as surnames. Most Koreans have three names. The name consists of a surname + given name. In addressing Koreans, use surnames preceded by Mr., Mrs., or Miss (Mr. Kim, Miss Lee).
- Surnames are used in business. People with the same name are distinguished by title and position (for example, Site 11 Production Manager Lee). When getting a person’s name, record as much identifying information as possible.

Entertaining & Gift Giving

Entertainment is usually lavish, and Koreans may sometimes be offended if their hospitality is refused. It is customary to take a small gift for the host/hostess when invited to a Korean home. Gifts should be given or received with both hands. Gifts are not opened when received, but later in private. Gifts express a great deal about a relationship and are always reciprocated.

- It is inconsiderate to give someone an expensive gift if you know that they cannot afford to reciprocate accordingly.
- Bring fruit or good quality chocolates or flowers if invited to a Korean’s home.
- Gifts should be wrapped attractively.
- The number 4 is considered unlucky, so gifts should not be given in multiples of 4.
- Giving seven of an item is considered lucky.
- Wrap gifts in red or yellow paper, because these are royal colors. Or use yellow or pink paper because they denote happiness. Do not wrap gifts in green, white, or black paper.
- Do not sign a card in red ink.

If you are the host, you are expected to pay, and a Western-style restaurant is a popular place to entertain Korean guests.

Koreans tend to work long hours, and socializing often revolves around the office and colleagues, involving drinks after work and company picnics. In business, gift giving is acceptable. Your Korean counterpart is likely to give you a small memento from the region. The gift should be accepted with both hands. A gift from your region or an item with the company logo is an acceptable reciprocal gift.

Etiquette Tips & Taboos

- Korea has a collective culture; the group is more important than the individual. For example, when Koreans are talking about their house, they do not say “my house,” but “uri jip,” which literally means “our house.”
- It is common for guests to meet at a common spot and travel together.
- If Koreans offer their food, it is a sign of friendship. When you are shopping and you buy four apples, the vendor will for example often give you more apples, and might want you to take the extra two pieces, as taking only one means that you are not so friendly.
- You can arrive up to 30 minutes late without giving offense.
- You should remove your shoes before entering a Korean home.
- Avoid pouring your own drink. It is usually done for you, and you should often pour for others. The hostess does not pour drinks.
- The hosts usually accompany guests to the gate or to their car because they believe that it is insulting to wish your guests farewell indoors.
- Send a thank you note the day after being invited to dinner.
- Blowing your nose in public is considered rude. Also, dispose of tissues rather than returning them to pocket or purse.
- The correct way to beckon someone is to extend the arm, palm down and make a scratching motion. Moving your hand towards your face, arm and hand up, is used to beckon only dogs.
- Someone might walk between you and the person you are talking to. You should make way and let the person pass. The

reason is that it is considered impolite to walk behind a person's back.

- Avoid touching, gripping, or patting on the arm shoulder or back unless you are very good friends.

Smoking and Drinking

South Korea is making serious efforts to tackle its smoking problem, as a nationwide law that made smoking illegal in some crowded public places came into force in March 2011. The smoking ban means smokers will face a fine if caught smoking in the protected public zones. In Seoul, a ban on pedestrians smoking on the streets went into effect in August 2010. In September 2011, a ban on smoking in Seoul parks was introduced, with smoking banned at the city's bus stops in December 2011.

More than one-third (36%) of South Korean men smoke, and smoking is generally increasing among youth and women. Smokers generally refrain from lighting up in the presence of social superiors, or at least seek permission beforehand. The bans apply only to public places. Currently, larger restaurants must

designate at least half of their facilities as non-smoking. There are plans to introduce complete smoking bans in restaurants starting in 2016.

The legal age for drinking alcohol in South Korea is 20. Koreans like drinking alcohol; they drink alcohol to socialize, especially during business dinners. Koreans think that only when somebody has been drinking do they reveal their true self and therefore you know if you can trust a potential business partner.

Koreans drink alcohol in bars or in tents, called soju tents. They often eat something while they drink, and the snacks usually served with alcohol are called anju. Korea is home to a heavy drinking culture, and this culture can cross in the business field. The expatriate will inevitably encounter a situation where alcohol is served, whether it is at a bar or at a meal with Koran associates. If you are a light drinker, are unsure of the potency of the alcohol, or prefer to enjoy the evening with a clear mind, you can keep your glass half-full. You can also indicate, from the beginning, that for health or personal reasons, you will only drink a little or just have one glass or even not have any. Your

colleagues or clients may try to persuade you to have another at first or call for a "one-shot" contest, but in this era of increased health consciousness and well-being in Korea, your refusal to drink will usually be accepted, especially if you show that you are sociable and do want to get to know them better.

Know Before You Go

Keep this overview in mind as you prepare for your possible assignment to South Korea. Although its economic growth has been slowing lately, South Korea is still the fourth largest economy in Asia. Being sensitive to its culture and the expectations of your counterparts in business will go a long way toward helping you acclimate and succeed there. Know before you go...

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Know Before You Go: Business Protocol in the United Arab Emirates

Carrie Shearer

Doing business in the United Arab Emirates has its own patterns and unspoken expectations. More specifically, you need to get “the lay of the land” before either conducting business or succeeding in an assignment there. Below, we look very briefly at the UAE’s geography and economy. Then we look at specific norms and expectations you should know before trying to conduct business there.

UAE’s Geography and Economy

In this land of seven emirates, the southern and western regions are mostly sand dunes, salt flats, and the occasional desert oasis. In the north, the sand dunes give way to gravel plains formed by the Hajar Mountains that run from the UAE south into Oman. The east coast is primarily a fertile plain, along which are long, unspoiled beaches and over 100 islands and many shallow inlets.

Abu Dhabi is the largest emirate, occupying about 80% of the land mass. The city of Abu Dhabi is both the capital and federal capital of the UAE, and the most populated. It was the first emirate to export oil and remains the richest. Despite the presence of the modern city of Abu Dhabi, however, the country retains much of its ancient heritage, with old building yards demonstrating craftsmen’s skills that have remained unchanged.

Although Dubai encompasses only 5% of the UAE landmass, it is the second wealthiest emirate whose income is mainly derived from trade. The discovery of oil eased the transition into an international trading port, business

center, and tourist destination. With more than 400 international hotels that serve alcoholic beverages to expatriates, Dubai is fast becoming a sophisticated, cosmopolitan destination.

Most workers in these two emirates are foreigners. Abu Dhabi and Dubai, more commercially developed than the other emirates, are not fundamentalist Muslim states. Generally

Business Protocol in the UAE

Meeting and Greeting – Emirati businesspeople are somewhat formal and extremely hospitable in business dealings, going out of their way to be generous and gracious hosts. In return, they expect you to strive to understand the norms of behavior in their country and act appropriately:

- The common greeting is “salaam alaikum” (peace be with you), to which you should respond “alaikum as-salaam” (and with you).
- Greetings can be eloquent and effusive; Emiratis lavish praise and compliments on those they are meeting. To rush a greeting is extremely rude.
- Men greet each other with a handshake. Male friends may embrace and kiss each cheek, starting with the right, and shake hands. Some Emirati men will shake hands with foreign businesswomen, although many will not. Handshakes are held longer than in many other cultures. Shake hands at the beginning and end of meetings.
- Titles are important. Use the honorific “Mister,” any academic or political title, and the first name. Do not use only the first name until expressly invited to drop the titles.

Business Attire – Men should wear lightweight, good-quality, conservative suits, at least to the initial meeting; dressing well gives a good impression and demonstrates respect. Women should avoid giving offense by wearing extremely conservative clothing. Although they do not need to wear skirts that reach the ground, skirts should cover the knee, and sleeves should cover the elbow, with blouses buttoned at the neck.

Business Entertaining – Emiratis maintain strong business contacts through socializing. Lavish business entertainment is generally male-only, and often takes place in restaurants or hotels. You will be expected to eat a great deal. If you host a meal, urge your guests to take second and even third helpings. If you invite someone to a meal, be prepared because they may not show up, or may bring another person along. It is best to wait to extend an invitation until after your Emirati colleague has entertained you.

Source: RW³

educated in England, the sheiks have very strong ties with the United Kingdom. Both government officials and business people tend to be pro-western. Expatriates from all over the world live and work in the UAE, often leading very separate lives from the Emiratis.

Management Essentials When Working in the UAE

The most important cultural attributes to pay attention to when conducting business in the UAE are:

- Hierarchical structures
- Formal style
- Interpersonal relationships
- Fluid time

In business it is important to maintain formality and treat everyone with respect. (See sidebar, “Business Protocol in the UAE.”) Patience is critical to successful business dealings. Emiratis prefer to deal with people they know, so spend a great deal of time in relationship-

building. This process is crucial, and you would be wise not to rush it. It may take several meetings to accomplish what an American would expect to handle with a telephone call at home.

As a manager, keep in mind that each person has a distinct role within the organization, and maintaining that role helps to keep order. People believe that their supervisors have been chosen because they have more experience and greater knowledge. Consequently, junior people do not expect their seniors to consult with lower-ranking individuals when making a decision. Managers may also take a somewhat paternalistic attitude toward their employees, demonstrating a concern that may go beyond the workplace and strictly professional matters to include involvement in their family, housing, health, and other practical life issues.

Business Meeting Essentials

The meeting style depends upon nationalities of the participants: If meeting with Western expatriates, expect to adhere to traditional business practices; if meeting with Arabs, the session will begin and end with a fair amount of small talk. Having said that, many younger Arabs who have worked in the international arena may be willing to condense the amount of communication and get to the matter at hand more quickly. It is always best to allow the most senior person from the UAE company to initiate the business discussions (see sidebar, “Meeting Protocol in the UAE”) and to keep in mind the following points:

- Meetings may appear quite relaxed due to the number and frequency of interruptions. If others are in the room when you arrive, greet each of them individually and wait until the person you have come to see addresses his words to you. If others arrive when you are in the room, stand to greet them, thus demonstrating respect.
- The UAE has a hierarchical culture where decisions are reached at the top of the company. Although Emiratis do not seek advice from lower-level staff, they may consult with technical experts and key stakeholders to gather a consensus. The top person makes the ultimate decision, but will consult with trusted advisors.
- It is common to have several meetings, often explaining the same material, allowing a broad cross-section of staff to have an opportunity to form an impression about you as a person – and hence the company you represent. Personal relationships are the cornerstone of business in the UAE, so even if you have presented

Meeting Protocol in the UAE

- **Structure** – Agendas, agreed in advance, may act as a springboard to further discussions.
- **Leader’s role** – The leader calls the meeting, agrees to the agenda, facilitates the meeting, and sets the pace.
- **Purpose** – With decision-makers, the leader finalizes commitments or conveys the overview of proposals; when dealing with lower-level or technical staff, the leader may convey positive information.
- **Who attends** – Key stakeholders generally attend. Lower-level or technical staff may also be present.
- **Who participates/speaks** – Lower-level or technical staff speak only to those at their level and respond to questions from superiors; they may corroborate information but do not offer personal opinions.

Source: RW³

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When in Rome...

How well do you know your way around other cultures? Would you be fitting right in, or committing a faux pas, if you are doing the following in each country?

1. China: You take a new contact's business card and immediately neatly place it in your wallet or business card case.

___ Fit right in ___ Faux Pas

2. Japan: You address a Japanese senior colleague by their first name and add 'san' out of respect.

___ Fit right in ___ Faux Pas

3. Brazil: You dig into some French fries ... with your fork.

___ Fit right in ___ Faux Pas

4. South Korea: You often share credit and substitute 'we' for 'I' in a work discussion.

___ Fit right in ___ Faux Pas

5. Poland: You start off a meeting by discussing everyone's weekend plans.

___ Fit right in ___ Faux Pas

6. Vietnam: When an associate asks your age, you politely decline to answer the invasive question.

___ Fit right in ___ Faux Pas

7. Russia: A Russian colleague pays a compliment on your latest presentation, but you modestly point out some areas where you stumbled.

___ Fit right in ___ Faux Pas

8. China: You are served tea before a jam-packed meeting, but don't drink it; you are in a hurry to begin discussing business matters

___ Fit right in ___ Faux Pas

9. Australia: A colleague comes to the office overdressed and you poke fun at them

___ Fit right in ___ Faux Pas

10. United States: An acquaintance asks, "How are you doing?" while passing in the hallway, and you tell them about the latest difficulties you are encountering in your apartment search.

___ Fit right in ___ Faux Pas

Source: CulturalTrainingPassport (see imercer.com/ctpassport for info)

the same material several times, do not display impatience. You can never be certain who in the room has a longstanding relationship with the ultimate decision maker.

- Meetings with foreign visitors generally have agendas, agreed to in advance. If Emiratis prefer not to discuss an issue, they may ignore it. If they wish to discuss something not on the agenda, they will raise it. It is best not to emulate this behavior. Emiratis will not discuss problems in a meeting with many in the room; such matters require privacy and the

issues may be raised in an after-hour one-on-one meeting. Even then, an intermediary is likely to give bad news rather than the key person from the UAE company, allowing that person to retain honor.

- Meetings do not generally have a set ending time. The meeting ends when the business discussion is completed or when the most senior person from the UAE company decides it is over.

Becoming familiar with local expectations and perceptions can help you avoid miscommunication and mistakes. An awareness of cultural and business protocol will help you

achieve broad corporate goals – and your own personal career goals – during an assignment in the UAE.

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When in Rome...

Answers

- 1. Faux Pas.** In China, you should read business cards right away. Take and present them with both hands, so they can be easily read.
- 2. Faux Pas.** You should use the Japanese colleague's last name before adding 'san' at the end, or use their title and surname.
- 3. Fit right in.** Don't eat with your fingers when in Brazil.
- 4. Fit right in.** South Koreans value teamwork.
- 5. Fit right in.** There is a lot of small talk during business meetings in Poland. That is how Poles size up business associates and improve rapport.
- 6. Faux Pas.** It is not impolite to ask someone's age in Vietnam. Rank or status is often based on age there, and your contact is just trying to determine where you stand.
- 7. Fit right in.** It is common to downplay compliments in Russia, although you are encouraged to give them.
- 8. Faux Pas.** Traditions are still important in China. There may be tea service even before a busy meetings and you should partake.
- 9. Fit right in.** Australians enjoy humor and don't take themselves too seriously.
- 10. Faux Pas.** A question like "How are you doing?" is often rhetorical and part of polite small talk. The expected response is often "Fine, thank you" or "OK, thank you."



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