



## ***Commentaries and Insights from Allawos & Company***

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### ***International Business Communication***

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In the international scene, knowing and identifying cultural differences can make a deciding difference between successful business negotiations and mortifying rejections. International business communication plays a major role in knowing how to communicate through “their” point of view is a great advantage.

Each country and sub-cultures has their own way of saying things, what may not be offending to you, but may be offending to them. International business communication is all about knowing the important thing that lies behind people’s words in the international arena.

International business communication is communicating across cultures and the first thing you must always put in mind is the basic understanding that one size doesn’t fit all. Always putting in mind that the cultural practices or habits you have does not mean that everyone else around the globe does. As they say, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do”.

The most important and worrying variables in the international scene of business are the cultural differences that most international business executives fail to comprehend resulting in most international business slip-ups. The failure to identify and adapt to these differences through effective international business communication can mean the difference between a closed deal and a faceless failure. Assuming cultures affect the way people communicate with each other and language above all else, is the core of culture.

Culture is the different ways in which people behave, act, or think towards themselves, families, and other people in the society. It includes customs connected with social, political, family, and religious values. Different cultures have differing values for time and its use, for personal space, and for family

values and chats. These differences must be identified and recognized to bridge the gaps between cultures and for real communication to take place.

Some of the effective international business communication guidelines that may help you swing that deal are:

Listening with an open mind communicating across cultures is all about putting aside personal feelings and listening deeply to the person talking. Develop your listening skills and learn how to “hold your tongue”, you were given two ears and one mouth for a reason. Knowing your own culture and the other’s culture as well will give you a better chance of bridging the differences. Keeping an open mind and sensitivity to these differences is a key factor for better communication.

Non-verbal and Verbal behavior, every language has their own linguistic preferences, and these preferences will give clues about those particular cultures’ behavior, manners, and thinking. The English use modesty and understatement, and are sometimes purposely unclear to avoid confrontation and very polite. Eloquence, expressiveness, and flowery of words are most common among Italians and Spaniards, Germans on the other hand are very logical in manner. Knowing what people mean when they say “yes” is very important; it may mean “yes, I understand” but not “yes, I agree”.

Gestures involve sensitivity and awareness, as gestures that are not offending to you might be very offending to the other, as in the case of beckoning someone to come over, some would hold out their hand with the palm up and then move the fingers gesturing the person to come. In Asian culture however, this gesture is considered rude. To gesture someone to come in Asian culture should be done with the palm facing down and then rolling the fingers.

Learning effective international business communication is communicating across cultures, and it takes great sensitivity, awareness and respect by studying cultures and becoming more perceptive and adaptable in communication efforts. There are many online resources for understanding the world’s cultures such as: <http://www.culturecrossing.net/index.php>; <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook> and <http://www.culturegrams.com>.

## **About Allawos and Company, LLC**

Allawos & Company is a comprehensive global business-consulting firm, tuned to enable organizations identify and exploit opportunities through creative engagement built on a foundation of decades of senior management experience.

Whether in corporate development, strategic planning, alliances, market development, diplomatic engagement or manufacturing optimization, our team is focused on client-specific value creation.

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