

Cultural Etiquette & Global Leadership

There are so many wonderful nuances to learn about people throughout the world. Enhancing your cultural etiquette will help you become a more effective global leader.

People from China

- Have family as the main focus
- Typically list the traditional family name first while the last name is their given name – use family name until you're invited to use the given name (i.e. Chang Wu Jiang is Mr. Chang)
- Dislike being touched by strangers
- Point with their open hand so don't point with your index finger
- Place chopsticks neatly on the table or on a chopstick rest when done eating – don't tap them on table, as it's considered rude
- Find it difficult to say "no" so may say "maybe" or "we'll see" instead

People from India

- Appreciate greetings with "namaste" (na-mas-tay), both hands together and a slight bow
- Value personal space
- Do not touch anyone's head and consider feet unclean—apologize immediately if your shoes or feet accidentally touch someone
- Most Hindus, especially women, and strict orthodox Muslims don't drink alcohol
- Often say "I will try" as a polite "no"

People from Mexico

- Often stand close together when talking – moving away out of discomfort would be considered rude
- Can hold a hug, handshake or arm squeeze longer than Canadians and Americans do
- Bring flowers when visiting someone's home
- Often see deadlines as general target dates
- Appreciate the attempts of others to communicate in Spanish and to share appreciation of Mexican culture
- Usually have two surnames: one from their father, which comes first, followed by one from their mother. Sometimes the two surnames are sepa-

rated by "y." Miguel Eduardo Cela y Banderas' father was Señor Cela, so that's what you call him.

People from Turkey

- See family as the most important social unit
- Shake hands with all present, going to elders first, and may cheek-kiss when meeting and parting
- Say "yes" with a slight downward head nod and say "no" with a slight upward head nod, accompanied by a sound like "tsk" made by sucking through the front teeth
- May avoid looking you directly in the eyes as a display of humble behavior, due to being devout Muslims
- View putting thumb between first two fingers the same as raising your middle finger in the U.S.

People from Germany

- Value order, punctuality, hard work, privacy and perfectionism
- Introduce themselves by last name only – use first names once you've been invited to
- Consider the "okay" sign as a rude gesture
- May appear reserved until you get to know them better
- View tardiness as thoughtless and rude
- Place knife and fork side by side on the plate in the 5 o'clock position when done eating
- See correcting others' behavior as a social duty, not an offense
- May be embarrassed by compliments rather than pleased

Sources: Learn more about other cultures at www.ediplomat.com and www.getcustoms.com/2004GTC/Quizzes/name2.htm

Your Cultural IQ

At www.getcustoms.com/2004GTC/quiz.html, you'll find Cultural IQ quizzes on topics from water to hand gestures to understanding names. What a great way to educate yourself and others!