

Building Global Diversity Intelligence

Global Diversity Tips: Greetings

by Nara Venditti, Ph.D.



What does diversity have to do with s-business? In order to have dealings and interactions with individuals from all across the globe, you must understand their values, customs, and social and business practices. A person entering another culture must adapt to that culture's conditions in order to show respect, connect, and build relationships. One such condition is the *greeting*



protocol. The first impression makes the most impression; thus its significance. When dealing with global communications, it is essential to be aware and make use of domestic protocols in order to show the appropriate amount of esteem that the recipient is accustomed to.

When in Denmark and the U.S., it is very appropriate to use the first name when greeting a business associate or professional. Both the Danish and Americans appreciate this type of casualness in greetings. In Canada, it is appropriate to use the first name with peers having equal rank. However, it is not so appropriate to use the first name with the elderly or people in an upward rank of professional status.

It is improper to use a first name in business situations in Japan, Finland, China, and Germany. Keep in mind, though, that in China (and in Armenia and Japan) the surname comes first, followed by the first name. However, there is a trend in these countries to adopt Western ways of putting the first name before the family name. If you are unsure, ask politely.

In business situations in Russia, you must use the individual's first name and patronymic name (that is, a derivative from the father's first name). In addition, a woman's patronymic name has a different ending from the man's.

Use the correct form of address when you are headed for foreign shores or dealing with your international customers, suppliers, or partners. It's critical to make a positive first impression by showing that you are eager to respect the customs of their country. ▼

Nara Venditti, Ph.D., is president of Succeed in America!, a Danbury, Connecticut-based company specializing in cross-cultural understanding and career development. She may be reached at 203-733-6068 or EdinaSoboleski@SucceedinAmerica.com. Additional information is available at www.SucceedinAmerica.com.