



Cross-Cultural Communication Guide for Conducting All-Hands Meetings Abroad

Sources

The cultural assessment tool on pages 3 and 4, as well as the placement of country cultures on each cultural dimension, are taken from *Managing Across Cultures: The Seven Keys to Doing Business with a Global Mindset*, by Charlene Solomon and Michael S. Schell (2009). Each country's placement on each of seven cultural scales is based on averages of survey scores in those countries.

It is important to remember that every country is made up of many different geographical areas, sub-cultures, and individuals. In addition, companies and industries have their own cultures that overlay on top of country cultures. And finally, cultures are not stuck in amber, but always changing as they come into contact with other cultures.

The following grids should serve to make executives more aware of possible differences in the countries they visit to enhance their own effectiveness as communicators and to strengthen employees' perceptions of them as excellent leaders. The grids should not be seen as absolutes about each country's culture, but more as an identification of different aspects of executives' home countries and the countries they visit that they should pay attention to and appreciate when conducting group meetings. The intent is for leaders to remain authentic, but to calibrate their style to their audiences.

What type of advice is offered in this Guide

The suggestions for how to adapt All-Hands meetings from one cultural perspective to work better in another have been developed by Sinickas Communications, Inc. based on country-specific cultural differences identified by Solomon and Schell.

The grids provide suggestions when traveling to other countries for adapting several typical aspects of meetings that executives conduct with either other executives or with employees, including:

- Planning the meeting, including the timing and room set-up considerations
- The ideal tone/ambience of the meeting, including what, if anything, to do before the meeting actually starts
- Introductions of executives conducting the meeting
- The opening comments made by an executive
- Content of what is covered in the presentation portion of the meeting
- How to handle a question-and-answer session
- A call to action—closing the meeting by asking participants to do something specific that will help achieve the business goals discussed

How to use the tables in this Guide

Ideally, executives should take the 36-question self-assessment on pages 3 and 4 to identify exactly where on each cultural dimension they fall, and use that score to identify which row in each table they should start with. Then they can find the country they will be visiting in the column headings, and follow the advice that appears where the row and column meet.

If executives do not take the assessment tool, then begin each grid with their own home country in the row headings. However, be aware that few individuals exactly match their home countries on every cultural dimension. People who have traveled extensively, or whose parents were born in another country, may well be quite different on several of the scales than their “home” country would suggest.

To save space in the grids, countries are identified by the three-letter codes used in the Olympics. The legend appears below.

Legend

ARG	Argentina	IRI	Iran	ROU	Romania
AUS	Australia	IRL	Ireland	RUS	Russia
AUT	Austria	IND	India	KSA	Saudi Arabia
BEL	Belgium	INA	Indonesia	SIN	Singapore
BRA	Brazil	ISR	Israel	KOR	South Korea
BRU	Brunei	ITA	Italy	ESP	Spain
CAN	Canada	JPN	Japan	SWE	Sweden
CHI	Chile	MAS	Malaysia	SUI	Switzerland
CHN	China	MEX	Mexico	TPE	Taiwan
CZE	Czech Republic	NED	Netherlands	THA	Thailand
DEN	Denmark	NZL	New Zealand	TUR	Turkey
EGY	Egypt	NOR	Norway	UKR	Ukraine
FIN	Finland	PAK	Pakistan	UAE	United Arab Emirates
FRA	France	PHI	Philippines	GBR	United Kingdom
GER	Germany	POL	Poland	USA	United States of America
GRE	Greece	POR	Portugal	VIE	Vietnam
HKG	Hong Kong	QAT	Qatar		

An Executive's Self-Assessment on the Seven Cultural Keys¹

Add up your scores in each of the following seven sections and use these scores as your starting point when reading each of the Cross-Cultural Communication Grids.

Your Score for **Egalitarianism/Hierarchy**:

	Disagree Strongly				Agree Strongly
1. I generally prefer a formal, more structured work environment.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I believe supervisors should set priorities for their employees.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I think people should acknowledge rank in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I believe employees should have a clear definition of their roles in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I believe employees should get their work approved by their boss on an ongoing basis.	1	2	3	4	5

Your Score for **Group Focus**:

	Disagree Strongly				Agree Strongly
1. When confronted with a challenge, I prefer to solve it with a group.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I believe that team members should clear their work with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I prefer to be recognized as part of a team (rather than alone).	1	2	3	4	5
4. I think having an open office environment is the way most people enjoy working.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I prefer announcing new plans as a part of the leadership team (rather than alone).	1	2	3	4	5

Your Score for **Relationships**:

	Disagree Strongly				Agree Strongly
1. I make friends easily.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I need to build trust with people before working with them.	1	2	3	4	5
3. When I make friends, I tend to keep them for a very long time.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I believe people should try to avoid strong disagreement, even if it might solve a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
5. When choosing people for assignments, I pick people I know better first.	1	2	3	4	5

¹ Adapted from a tool © 2009 by RW3 LLC, from the book *Managing Across Cultures* by Solomon and Schell

Your Score for Communication Styles:

	Disagree Strongly			Agree Strongly	
1. I like to communicate the full story with all the details to be sure I'm understood.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When giving feedback, I'm very careful not to hurt someone's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I look for more in a message than the words spoken.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I hate when people get right to the point without concern for the listener.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I think that being thorough and sensitive is more important than being brief and concise.	1	2	3	4	5

Your Score for Time Orientation:

	Disagree Strongly			Agree Strongly	
1. I think that being prompt is a sign of respect and competence.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I think deadlines should be met regardless of the personal cost.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I think that meetings should start and end on time.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I think it's OK to interrupt people who take too long.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I see time as being completely in people's control.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I think time management is an important skill.	1	2	3	4	5

Your Score for Change Tolerance:

	Disagree Strongly			Agree Strongly	
1. I think that change generally improves process.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I believe that people should be encouraged to take prudent risks.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am comfortable introducing changes into my daily life.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I think it's OK to make modifications midstream in a process.	1	2	3	4	5
5. When communicating new business plans, I like to put a positive spin on them.	1	2	3	4	5

Your Score for Status/Work-Life Balance:

	Disagree Strongly			Agree Strongly	
1. I do not think that work should intrude on personal time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I identify myself more by my personal life than my work life.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I believe the adage "I work to live, not live to work" is correct.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I believe that stature is gained by my interests and my education, not from the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I am not prepared to sacrifice family time for rewards at work.	1	2	3	4	5

Cultural Key #1: Egalitarianism vs. Hierarchy

What this cultural dimension refers to: How formal/informal should people be with others in higher positions of power?
Is everyone considered equal? Is social mobility expected or frowned upon?

<p>Your score or home country ↓</p> <p>Country you will visit →</p>	<p>Very Egalitarian AUS CAN DEN ISR NED NZL</p>	<p>Moderately Egalitarian FIN NOR SWE USA</p>	<p>Mixed ARG BEL FRA GBR IRL POL QAT RUS SUI UKR</p>	<p>Moderately Hierarchical AUT BRA CHI CHN CZE EGY ESP GER GRE HKG ITA MEX PHI POR ROU SIN TPE THA TUR VIE</p>	<p>Very Hierarchical BRU IND INA IRI JPN KOR KSA MAS PAK UAE</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on egalitarianism/hierarchy is 5-13 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: AUS CAN DEN FIN ISR NED NOR NZL SWE USA</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 1A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 1A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 1A on next page</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on egalitarianism/hierarchy is 14-17 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: ARG BEL FRA GBR IRL POL QAT RUS SUI UKR</p>	<p>Adapt approach; see 1B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt approach; see 1B on next page</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 1A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 1A on next page</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on egalitarianism/hierarchy is 18-25 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: AUT BRA BRU CHI CHN CZE EGY ESP GER GRE HKG IND INA IRI ITA JPN KOR KSA MAS MEX PAK PHI POR ROU SIN TPE THA TUR UAE VIE</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 1B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 1B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 1B on next page</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>

Cultural Key #1: Egalitarianism vs. Hierarchy

1A: Advice to an Egalitarian Speaker Adapting to a Hierarchical Audience

Structure of meeting:

- Be serious, formal and dignified.
- Wear formal business clothing.
- Address and refer to people by Mr./Ms./Dr. Last Name.
- Set up on a stage and use a podium for speakers.
- Consider holding separate meetings for managers and non-managers.

Content:

- Reading from a script will be well accepted.
- Avoid personal self-disclosure in any stories you tell.
- Being too personal or friendly, or smiling too much, may be seen as intrusive since smiles and questions like “how are you doing?” are usually reserved for people who are well known to each other.

Handling questions:

- Do not ask questions of the audience or ask for a show of hands; asking subordinates for their opinion in the presence of their senior management may be perceived as embarrassing and inappropriate.
- Do not expect complete candor in what employees say.
- Be respectful of the local management hierarchy and do not make promises to “fix” something an employee brings up; say that you will discuss this with local management to find a solution, if the situation is deemed to warrant a change.
- Expect fewer and less challenging questions of yourself; employees are not likely to ask questions even for clarification of what you are saying.

1B: Advice to a Hierarchical Speaker Adapting to an Egalitarian Audience

Structure of meeting:

- Clothing may be slightly less formal.
- Employees may call you by your first name; you should address and refer to them the same way.
- Set up in a less formal seating for speakers.
- Use a wireless lapel microphone to walk around while speaking.
- Consider walking around the meeting room before the meeting to speak informally with employees.

Content:

- Avoid reading from a script; use bullet points to stay on track, but you will be perceived as a better leader if you can speak more informally and from the heart.
- It is appropriate to tell stories that disclose something about your personal life to help employees feel that you are similar to them and easy to talk with.

Handling questions:

- Ask for a show of hands on issues. Ask questions of the audience members.
- When an employee brings up a problem situation, ask him/her and others in the audience what they would recommend to “fix” the potential problem; this is seen as a sign of effective leadership—to ask for input from those closest to the customer or a specific situation.
- Expect to be told negative information candidly, expect to be asked challenging questions and expect that some employees may question your perspective and engage in a debate; these are not a sign of disrespect, but a cultural bias that every person’s opinion is as important as another’s.
- Make and maintain eye contact with people in a discussion to show sincerity.

Cultural Key #2: Individual vs. Group Focus

What this cultural dimension refers to: Which is more important—individual distinction or having harmonious relationships within the groups people belong to?

<p>Your score or home country ↓</p> <p>Country you will visit →</p>	<p><u>Very Individual Focused</u> CAN NZL USA</p>	<p><u>Moderately Individual Focused</u> AUS BEL CZE DEN FIN NED NOR POL SUI</p>	<p><u>Mixed</u> ARG CHI ESP FRA GBR GER HKG IND IRI IRL ISR POR ROU RUS SWE UKR</p>	<p><u>Moderately Group Focused</u> AUT BRA CHN EGY GRE ITA KSA MEX PAK PHI SIN TPE THA TUR UAE</p>	<p><u>Very Group Focused</u> BRU INA JPN KOR MAS QAT VIE</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on individual/group focus is 5-13 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: AUS BEL CAN CZE DEN FIN NED NOR NZL POL SUI USA</p>	No change from your normal approach	No change from your normal approach	Adapt your approach; see 2A on next page	Adapt your approach; see 2A on next page	Adapt your approach; see 2A on next page
<p>If your self-assessment score on individual/group focus is 14-17 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: ARG CHI ESP FRA GBR GER HKG IND IRI IRL ISR POR ROU RUS SWE UKR</p>	Adapt your approach; see 2B on next page	Adapt your approach; see 2B on next page	No change from your normal approach	Adapt your approach; see 2A on next page	Adapt your approach; see 2A on next page
<p>If your self-assessment score on individual/group focus is 18-25 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: AUT BRA BRU CHN EGY GRE INA ITA JPN KSA KOR MAS MEX PAK PHI QAT SIN TPE THA TUR UAE VIE</p>	Adapt your approach; see 2B on next page	Adapt your approach; see 2B on next page	Adapt your approach; see 2B on next page	No change from your normal approach	No change from your normal approach

Cultural Key #2: Individual vs. Group Focus

2A: Advice to an Individually Focused Speaker Adapting to a Group-Focused Audience

Structure of meeting:

- Attendance at meetings is likely to be high because there is perceived value in getting together as a group in and of itself, regardless of the meeting's stated purpose or content.
- If you are trying to achieve buy-in to what you are discussing, be sure the timing of the agenda allows for a longer discussion period so that everyone's opinions can be heard; in many Asian cultures, much of this discussion should begin well before the meeting.

Content:

- When telling stories to inspire, be sure that success is achieved by people working together, not as individuals.
- Avoid giving recognition to individuals; praise groups instead and the cooperation they exhibited.
- In your "call to action," ask the whole group to work together to achieve the goals you establish.

Handling questions:

- During the discussion period, do not call on any individuals to respond to your questions or ask the audience for ideas to help solve a problem.

2B: Advice to a Group-Focused Speaker Adapting to an Individually Focused Audience

Structure of meeting:

- Attendance at meetings is likely to be low because many will feel that whatever they are working on individually may be a better use of their time than going to a meeting—unless a decision will be made in the meeting to which they can contribute.

Content:

- An exchange of information will be expected for the meeting to be considered a good use of time.
- When telling stories to inspire, be sure that success is achieved by individuals who are rewarded for their efforts.
- Give recognition to individuals as well as groups; in fact, if a group is praised for work the audience knows was done primarily by one person, this will create bad feelings and be demotivating to all.
- In your "call to action," ask each individual to do their best to achieve the goals you establish.

Handling questions:

- During the discussion period, feel free to call on individuals to respond to your questions or ask the audience for ideas to help solve a problem.

Cultural Key #3: Transactional vs. Interpersonal Relationships

What this cultural dimension refers to: How important is it to have a personal relationship before business can be transacted? Is trust assumed or earned? Do laws and social rules apply differently to friends and family than to people you don't know?

<p>Your score or home country ↓</p> <p>Country you will visit →</p>	<p>Very Transactional CAN USA</p>	<p>Moderately Transactional AUS CZE DEN FIN NED NOR POL ROU RUS SWE SUI</p>	<p>Mixed AUT BEL GBR GER HKG IRL ISR NZL UKR VIE</p>	<p>Moderately Interpersonal ARG BRA BRU CHI EGY ESP FRA GRE IND INA ITA JPN MAS MEX PAK PHI POR QAT SIN TPE THA TUR</p>	<p>Very Interpersonal CHN IRI KOR KSA UAE</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on transactional/interpersonal relationships is 5-13 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: AUS CAN CZE DEN FIN NED NOR POL ROU RUS SWE SUI USA</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 3A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 3A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 3A on next page</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on transactional/interpersonal relationships is 14-17 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: AUT BEL GBR GER HKG IRL ISR NZL UKR VIE</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 3B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 3B on next page</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 3A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 3A on next page</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on transactional/interpersonal relationships is 18-25 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: ARG BRA BRU CHI CHN EGY ESP FRA GRE IND INA IRI ITA JPN KSA MAS MEX PAK PHI POR QAT SIN TPE THA TUR UAE</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 3B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 3B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 3B on next page</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>

Cultural Key #3: Transactional vs. Interpersonal Relationships

3A: Advice to a Transactional-Relationship Speaker Adapting to an Interpersonal-Relationship Audience

Structure of the meeting:

- It is important to establish trust; have the most trusted executive in the country you are visiting who knows you well provide an introduction of you to the group.
- Be sure to visit these locations more often than others because multiple meetings will be required before you are trusted on your own merits.
- In the countries listed here that are either egalitarian or balanced rather than hierarchical (ARG, BEL, FRA, GBR, IRL, NZL, QAT, UKR), mingle with meeting participants in advance of the meeting's start time.
- Be prepared to participate in social events during your visit where people can get to know you.

Content:

- Do not just jump into the substance of your talk.
- Introduce yourself with some business anecdotes that reveal something about your character and trustworthiness, especially by showing yourself to be knowledgeable/ competent, that you have integrity (do what you say) and that you are concerned about the welfare of employees.

3B: Advice to an Interpersonal-Relationship Speaker Adapting to a Transactional-Relationship Audience

Structure of the meeting:

- Be prepared for people to welcome you easily, but this may not mean a relationship with mutual obligations is being established; however, this has nothing to do with their trustworthiness.
- People here will assume you are trustworthy because of your own innate drive to do well, unless your actions are inconsistent with your words.
- Before the meeting, ask to be introduced to outstanding employees so you can thank them for their contributions.

Content:

- Jump quickly into the substance of the talk.
- The audience will expect the meeting to stay on schedule, and not be sidetracked by discussions that are not focused on strategy and action.

Cultural Key #4: Direct (Low-Context) vs. Indirect (High-Context) Communication

What this cultural dimension refers to: How important are nonverbal cues and verbal nuances to understanding someone's meaning? How much background information is needed for understanding? Which is appreciated more—eloquence or brevity?

<p>Your score or home country ↓</p> <p>Country you will visit →</p>	<p>Very Direct DEN GER ISR NED NOR SUI SWE</p>	<p>Moderately Direct AUS AUT BEL CAN NZL USA</p>	<p>Mixed ARG BRA CHI CZE ESP FIN FRA GBR IRL POL POR ROU RUS UKR VIE</p>	<p>Moderately Indirect CHN EGY GRE HKG IRI ITA KOR KSA MEX QAT SIN THA TPE TUR UAE</p>	<p>Very Indirect BRU IND INA JPN MAS PAK PHI</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on direct/indirect communication is 5-13 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: AUS AUT BEL CAN DEN GER ISR NED NOR NZL SUI SWE USA</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 4A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 4A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 4A on next page</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on direct/indirect communication is 14-17 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: ARG BRA CHI CZE ESP FIN FRA GBR IRL POL POR ROU RUS UKR VIE</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 4B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 4B on next page</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 4A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 4A on next page</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on direct/indirect communication is 18-25 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: BRU CHI EGY GRE HKG INA IND IRI ITA JPN KOR KSA MAS MEX PAK PHI QAT SIN THA TPE TUR UAE</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 4B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 4B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 4B on next page</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>

Cultural Key #4: Direct (Low-Context) vs. Indirect (High-Context) Communication

4A: Advice to a Direct-Communication Speaker Adapting to an Indirect Communication Audience

Structure of the meeting:

- Be careful to consider where the meeting will be held because that will signify something in and of itself in a high-context, indirect culture.

Content:

- Provide background information and detail, not just bullet points.
- Provide a comprehensive picture of the entire situation and the role different people play in it.
- Your message, and your overall leadership ability, will be judged partially based on your eloquence and ability to elaborate.
- Direct, overly frank statements may be perceived as rude.
- Do not expect to gain consensus for an issue in the meeting.
- Do not reprimand groups or individuals during the meeting or you will be perceived as coarse and unsophisticated.
- Do not lose your temper, raise your voice or show impatience, or you may be seen as immature.

Handling questions:

- Listen very carefully to the nuances hidden in comments and questions from the group; ask for clarification before making assumptions.
- Do not be impatient or annoyed by questions that seem irrelevant, because they are important questions for full understanding in high-context cultures.
- Do not expect the group to ask difficult questions or raise controversial issues in the meeting.
- Pay attention to tone of voice, body language and facial expressions when trying to understand audience questions and reactions.
- Be aware that silence when you ask a question may simply indicate respect for the speaker for a short time while your message is being contemplated and an appropriate answer is being formulated. Do not expect to get “a straight story” in response to your own questions; information will be sweetened to make it more palatable for you.

4B: Advice to an Indirect Communication Speaker Adapting to a Direct-Communication Audience

Structure of the meeting:

- Do not try to “send a message” by where the meeting is being held. Direct, low-context communicators are not likely to read meaning into the context of the meeting.

Content:

- Be direct, though still tactful, even when sharing bad news. Do not try to “soften” negative information or cushion it between positive messages or the main point might be missed by the audience.
- Get to the point quickly. Provide only the information needed for audience members to know what they are expected to do next—not a lot of background or context for complete understanding.
- Make sure your message is explicitly stated in words; do not rely on nuances, gestures or body language to be understood.
- Being simple and direct will be perceived as intelligence; being indirect will be perceived as being untruthful.
- Your audience will expect to hear information in the meeting that they do not yet know or else they may feel the meeting was a waste of time.
- Audience members will expect to have a final decision reached at the end of the meeting or a specific “call to action” for what you would like them to do with the information you provided.

Handling questions:

- Be prepared for questions or comments that might seem to be challenging or disrespectful; they will be neither. Direct cultures value honesty and meaningful discussion for its own sake; there is no “face” involved.

Cultural Key #5: Low vs. High Time Orientation

What this cultural dimension refers to: Is time controllable? What's more important—schedules or relationships? Is short-term or long-term planning more comfortable?

<p>Your score or home country ↓</p> <p>Country you will visit →</p>	<p>Very Low Time Orientation ESP KSA THA UAE</p>	<p>Moderately Low Time Orientation BRA BRU CHI EGY GRE INA IND IRI MAS MEX PAK PHI POR QAT VIE</p>	<p>Mixed ARG CHN CZE FRA IRL ITA NZL NOR POL ROU RUS SIN TPE TUR UKR</p>	<p>Moderately High Time Orientation AUS AUT BEL CAN FIN GBR HKG ISR JPN KOR NED SWE</p>	<p>Very High Time Orientation DEN GER SUI USA</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on low/high time orientation is 6-15 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: BRA BRU CHI EGY ESP GRE INA IND IRI KSA MAS MEX PAK PHI POR QAT THA UAE VIE</p>	No change from your normal approach	No change from your normal approach	Adapt your approach; see 5A on next page	Adapt your approach; see 5A on next page	Adapt your approach; see 5A on next page
<p>If your self-assessment score on low/high time orientation is 16-20 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: ARG CHI CZE FRA IRL ITA NZL NOR POL ROU RUS SIN TPE TUR UKR</p>	Adapt your approach; see 5B on next page	Adapt your approach; see 5B on next page	No change from your normal approach	Adapt your approach; see 5A on next page	Adapt your approach; see 5A on next page
<p>If your self-assessment score on low/high time orientation is 21-30 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: AUS AUT BEL CAN DEN FIN GBR GER HKG ISR JPN KOR NED SUI SWE USA</p>	Adapt your approach; see 5B on next page	Adapt your approach; see 5B on next page	Adapt your approach; see 5B on next page	No change from your normal approach	No change from your normal approach

Cultural Key #5: Low vs. High Time Orientation

5A: Advice to a Low-Time-Oriented Speaker Adapting to an High-Time-Oriented Audience

Structure of the meeting:

- Set the date and time for the meeting far in advance; this is a sign of respect for people's time.
- Once the meeting time is established, do not change it because other people's schedules are being built around your meeting.
- Start and end the meeting on time. Showing up late may be perceived as the sign of a disorganized or disrespectful leader.
- Announce the agenda at the beginning, with estimated length of time for each section. Your effectiveness as a leader is being judged by on-time performance.
- End the meeting on time even if there is a productive discussion going on.
- If the meeting goes beyond the stated ending time, be prepared for people to leave for their next meetings; this will not be considered rude in the culture you are visiting—you may be considered insensitive to their schedules for going on too long.

5B: Advice to an High-Time-Oriented Speaker Adapting to a Low-Time-Oriented Audience

Structure of the meeting:

- Long lead times for setting up the meeting may not be needed.
- Be prepared for the meeting to start and end late; in these cultures time is not seen as controllable.
- Do not end a meeting abruptly because you have "run out of time" if there is still a good discussion going on.
- Do not schedule another meeting immediately after this meeting, but allow some buffer time. The audience may see a pre-set ending time for the meeting as arbitrary, not necessarily allowing enough time for all who want to participate.
- The audience will value building a relationship with you during the amount of time it will take more than they will value ending on time.
- Be prepared for the audience to talk with each other while you are talking; this is not considered rude.

Cultural Key #6: Low vs. High Change Tolerance

What this cultural dimension refers to: How open are people to change and innovation? How willing are people to take risks? How are taking initiative and failures handled? Do people control their destiny or does environment control people?

<p style="color: green; font-weight: bold;">Your score or home country</p> <p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">Country you will visit →</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Very Low Change Tolerance</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">IRI KSA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Moderately Low Change Tolerance</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">BRU CHI CZE EGY INA MEX PHI RUS THA UAE VIE</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Mixed</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">ARG AUT BEL BRA CHN DEN ESP FIN FRA GER GRE IND IRL ITA KOR MAS PAK POL POR QAT ROU SUI SWE TPE TUR UKR USA</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Moderately High Change Tolerance</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">GBR HKG ISR JPN NED NZL NOR SIN</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Very High Change Tolerance</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">AUS CAN</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on low/high change tolerance is 5-13 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: BRU CHI CZE EGY INA IRI KSA MEX PHI RUS THA UAE VIE</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 6A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 6A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 6A on next page</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on low/high change tolerance is 14-17 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: ARG AUT BEL BRA CHN DEN ESP FIN FRA GER GRE IND IRL ITA KOR MAS PAK POL POR QAT ROU SUI SWE TPE TUR UKR USA</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 6B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 6B on next page</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 6A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 6A on next page</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on low/high change tolerance is 18-25 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: AUS CAN GBR HKG ISR JPN NED NZL NOR SIN</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 6B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 6B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 6B on next page</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>

Cultural Key #6: Low vs. High Change Tolerance

6A: Advice to a Low-Change-Tolerance Speaker Adapting to a High-Change-Tolerance Audience

Structure of the meeting:

- Leaders are expected to be change agents, like a prime minister or president.
- You will be expected to be flexible in how the change will actually occur based on unexpected situations or changes in the environment.

Content:

- When talking about change, first describe the benefits to be gained, which is what the audience will need to hear to get on-board with the idea—that it will be worthwhile.
- Describe broad plans and guidelines for the change, and focus on how innovation, creativity and experimentation will be part of the change process.
- Do not be surprised if some of your best people start looking for jobs elsewhere if you do not make a compelling case for how they will thrive during the change.
- Explicitly state how performance during this change will be rewarded based on merit.

6B: Advice to a High-Change-Tolerance Speaker Adapting to a Low-Change-Tolerance Audience

Structure of the meeting:

- Leaders are expected to be champions of tradition, like a king or queen.

Content:

- When talking about change, be clear about the reasons change is necessary at this time.
- Describe the risks involved, which is what the audience will be thinking about, before describing the benefits.
- Describe how structure will be brought to the change: requirements, rules, policies, systems, processes, instructions, etc.
- Your expectations for the change need to be expressed specifically and clearly, not in broad terms.
- Expect that the change will take longer.
- Avoid saying things like “get with the program or get out.” Greater job security in these cultures is often the norm, supported by local laws.

Cultural Key #7: Status vs. Work-Life Balance

What this cultural dimension refers to: Do people live to work, or work to live? How do people define themselves—by who they are in their personal lives or by what they do at work? What’s more motivating—money and title or time off?

<p>Your score or home country ↓</p> <p>Country you will visit →</p>	<p>Very High Status Orientation CHN JPN USA</p>	<p>Moderately High Status Orientation AUS CAN HKG KOR SIN TPE</p>	<p>Mixed ARG AUT BEL DEN FIN GBR IRL ISR ITA NED PAK PHI POL ROU RUS SWE UKR VIE</p>	<p>Moderately High Work-Life Balance BRA BRU CHI CZE EGY ESP FRA GER GRE INA IND IRI MAS MEX NZL POR QAT SUI THA TUR</p>	<p>Very High Work-Life Balance KSA NOR UAE</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on status/work-life balance is 5-13 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: AUS CAN CHI HKG JPN KOR SIN TPE USA</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 7A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 7A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 7A on next page</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on status/work-life balance is 14-17 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: ARG AUT BEL DEN FIN GBR IRL ISR ITA NED PAK PHI POL ROU RUS SWE UKR VIE</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 7B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 7B on next page</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 7A on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 7A on next page</p>
<p>If your self-assessment score on status/work-life balance is 18-25 →</p> <p>Or, if your home country is: BRA BRU CHI CZE EGY ESP FRA GER GRE INA IND IRI KSA MAS MEX NOR NZL POR QAT SUI THA TUR UAE</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 7B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 7B on next page</p>	<p>Adapt your approach; see 7B on next page</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>	<p>No change from your normal approach</p>

Cultural Key #7: Status vs. Work-Life Balance

7A: Advice to a Status-Oriented Speaker Adapting to a Work/Life Balance-Oriented Audience

Structure of the meeting:

- Avoid scheduling meetings outside of the normal working hours because it will reduce attendance significantly.

Content:

- In your “call to action,” do not ask people to put in extra hours, but rather to be as efficient and effective as possible in the way they spend their normal work hours.
- Be prepared for relatively lower interest in information about progress made in reaching organizational goals.

7B: Advice to a Work/Life Balance-Oriented Speaker Adapting to a Status-Oriented Audience

Structure of the meeting:

- Expect people to be checking their smart phones throughout the meeting or leaving the room to take phone calls.

Content:

- When providing recognition, it is appropriate to thank people for the extra hours they have worked at a sacrifice to their personal lives.
- Expect high interest in the progress being made in reaching organizational goals, and expect questions about how individual units are doing in contributing to those results.

General guidance on communicating in new cultures

Klopf defines communication as “the process by which persons share information, meanings and feelings through the exchange of verbal and nonverbal messages.... The message that ultimately counts is the one that the other person gets or creates in their mind, not the one we send.”

In order for your intended messages to get through better, here are some general tips when conducting meetings in a different country:

- Remember that the visiting executive is an honored guest in the country he/she is visiting. The local leadership team should play a key role in the meeting.
- Ask local communication or HR staff for guidance about how people typically greet each other and say goodbye—handshakes (limp or firm?) or air kisses (one, two or three?) or bows (how deep?). Also be aware that the acceptable greetings may vary by gender.
- Ask local communication or HR staff for guidance about personal space and touching in the particular country in which you are speaking. Be aware that the comfortable distance between people in a conversation may be different within the same country for someone of the same sex than the opposite sex.
- Ask local communication or HR staff about facial expressions and body language that indicate agreement, disagreement and uncertainty in that culture. E.g., in India up-and-down head movement means the person is trying to understand what you’re saying; sideways movement means “I get it.” In Japan, smiling can mean not only agreement, but it can also mask disagreement that will not be spoken out loud. In the Middle East, a negative response can be indicated by raising eyebrows while the head is tilted back and making a “tsk” sound; shaking the head sideways may mean they don’t understand instead of disagreement. Avoid any hand gestures for “OK” because they tend to mean something quite different in other cultures (e.g., thumb up or down, connecting the thumb and forefinger, etc.).
- Become aware of any local holidays, religious observances or dietary taboos during the visit. For example, drinking a latte on stage in a Moslem country while the audience is fasting for Ramadan would not be well received.

- Be familiar with local examples of topics you may be discussing. For example, know the names of the country's leader, be familiar with names of the heroes and villains and the most significant folktales that might be relevant to the content of your presentation. Know the names of the local competitors for your business.
- When speaking, speak slower and use simpler word choices. This will make it easier for those who speak your language as a second language to follow what you are saying, and it will make it easier for simultaneous translators to capture more of what you are saying. Also avoid using abbreviations and jargon because the translators may not be able to capture your meaning.
- Be aware that when people are listening to you in a language that is not their home one, it may affect the spontaneity of the group and their willingness to participate in a question-and-answer session for fear that they may not be able to express themselves clearly. It would be a good idea to let participants write down their questions in their home language and have those questions brought up to the front of the room to be translated for you to respond to.
- Direct or prolonged eye contact may be misinterpreted as challenge, aggression or lack of respect to someone in a senior position in Latin American cultures and some Asian cultures, such as China and Japan. In Japan, closed eyes may simply mean a person is respecting privacy in a meeting. In Middle Eastern cultures, glancing away from a speaker shows lack of interest.
- Avoid using phrases or analogies, especially related to sports, that may not mean anything in other cultures, even in different countries where the same language is in use. E.g., "from soup to nuts" is meaningful only in the US, and not in the UK or Australia. It would be better to say "from beginning to end" in this example. Other examples to avoid in English include bootstrap operation, grassroots support, skunkworks, and movers and shakers.

If there are conflicts among suggestions in these grids

If you assemble the advice from the grids for an executive going to a particular country, some of the suggestions may seem to be in conflict. For example, some countries are both hierarchical and value interpersonal relationships. While talking informally with employees before a meeting would satisfy the inter-personal relationship needs in that country, it might create tension on the hierarchical front because deferential status is not being maintained when a high-level person talks with non-managers on a peer basis. In all such situations, choose an approach that is least likely to create a problem.