

## **INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS & CUSTOMS RESEARCH PROJECT**

### **Standards:**

BMA-BC-3 Apply effective oral communication by communicating in a clear, courteous, concise, and professional manner.

BMA-BC-7 Apply skills and strategies for the delivery of effective oral communication and presentations.

BMA-BC-9 Master presentation software to create, edit, publish, and deliver professional appearing business presentations.

### **Learning Objectives:**

Students will be able to apply effective oral communication by communicating in a clear, courteous, concise, and professional manner.

Students will be able to apply skills and strategies for the delivery of effective oral communication and presentations.

Students will master presentation software to create, edit, publish, and deliver professional appearing business presentations.

**Ethics Statement:** Students will model work readiness traits required for success in the workplace including teamwork, multitasking, integrity, honesty, accountability, punctuality, time management, and respect for diversity.

### **Directions:**

- Research and design a presentation teaching coworkers about the culture of your country. You will have 4 class periods to complete this project.
  - General information about the culture (ex. dress, food, language, art, history, geography, values, beliefs, etc.)
  - Business customs
    - What to know when conducting a business meeting
    - What to know when eating a meal with business associates
  - Ethical standards
  - Taste preferences (flavors of food)
  - Famous cultural blunders (mistakes businesses have made in the country)
  - Non-verbal communication symbols important in that country

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
Product is well-designed, includes pictures, graphics, or other illustrations	5	
General information about the culture	5	
Business customs: during a meeting	5	
Business customs: during a meal	5	
Ethical standards	5	
Taste preferences	5	
Cultural blunders	5	
Non-verbal communication	5	
All content is professional and contains no errors in spelling, capitalization, mechanics, or grammar	5	
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>45</b>	

China

Japan

Brazil

Mexico

France

Germany

Canada

India

Hong Kong

Russia

South Africa

UAE

Saudi Arabia

Australia



**Germany**



Hallo, wie geht es dir

# Language

- The official language of Germany is German.
- More than 95 percent of the population speaks German as their first language
- Other languages that are spoken are
  - Serbian
  - North and West Frisian
  - Danish
  - Romani-which is an indigenous language
  - Turkish and Kurdish

# Business customs/Ethical Standards

## During a meeting:

- **Punctuality**
- You've heard it before and it's true—punctuality really does matter in Germany. Showing up even five or ten minutes late to a meeting is considered rude. Meetings generally start on time and stick to a plan. A lot of deviation off the main topic won't be taken well unless the head of the meeting invites people to share comments on other topics.
- **Handshakes & eye contact**
- A short and firm handshake is the most typical greeting. It's best to shake everyone's hand upon entering and exiting a meeting and not to shake someone's hand with one hand still in your pocket. Also, maintain eye contact. This doesn't mean to have an uncomfortable stare down. It's just considered friendly and honest to look at someone directly rather than off to the side.
- **Respect the chain of command**
- Hierarchy is respected in Germany. The chain of command is closely followed when it comes to workplace decisions. Defer to your direct manager when it comes to decision making. He or she will bring your question up to the next level of management if needed and so on.
- When introducing a group of colleagues always start with the most senior coworker.
- **Slow and steady**
- Work flow tends to go at a steady pace. Projects are expected to be completed on time and accurately. However, more priority is given to accuracy than speed. If you need to change the deadline, notify coworkers early and provide a good explanation.
- **Fashion**
- Generally, workplace dress is conservative in Germany. Start-ups, newsrooms and some environmental firms sometimes use a more casual dress code. Other businesses generally stick to a conservative.
- **Titles**
- Titles are important in Germany. You will usually see people's qualifications listed on their business cards. For e-mails and in-person communication it's always good to use a person's title and surname, as in Herr Schmidt or Frau Schmidt. If someone is a professor or doctor, it's best to use Dr. Schmidt or Professor Schmidt.

## During a meal:

### 1. Every meal starts with a greeting

"Guten Appetit" is the standard opening meal greeting. It means 'enjoy your meal' or 'have a good appetite'. This will be announced by your host before you start devouring your delicious servings of Käsespätzle, Sauerbraten, Bratwurst or whatever other delicacy you are presented with.

### 2. business at the table

Germans are not accustomed to spending too much time at the meal table. Business discussions are therefore either left until the end of the meal or not at all. If your host brings up the topic then you are free to oblige. Mealtime is a bonding experience, so expect most discussions to be about family.

### 3. Always finish your food

A clean plate is a sign of a well-enjoyed meal. If you do not finish your food it is interpreted as a criticism of the chef. It is therefore advisable to choose smaller portions for meals you are unsure of.

### 4. Be on time

This is good business sense in general, but it is even more pertinent in Germany. It is advisable to be at the given location a few minutes ahead of time. This shows that you value their time and are respectful of their customs.

# Taste preferences

- Germans like sweet and sour or savory and sour combinations.



# Cultural blunders

## 1. Be Late

Punctuality is vital in German offices. Not honoring the time agreed on, means disrespect to them. If you have to be late, the least thing you should do is to inform your counterpart of the delay.

## 2. Indulge in excessive breaks

Do not take excessive breaks. People will talk and taking excessive breaks make it seem that you are lazy and unwilling to work.

## 3. Ignore the ringing phone of your colleagues

If a phone is ringing and nobody is around to take the phone call you must take it. Not taking the phone call is a sign of arrogance and basically being lazy.

## 4. Close your office door

Keep doors open unless personal matters are being spoken of. Not keeping doors open is a sign of being arrogant.

## 5. Break into tears or make your frustration public

Germans usually strictly separate between work and personal life. Showing frustration of personal matters at work is considered unprofessional and should be separated from business.

## 7. Come unprepared

Join in a meeting without having done your part of the job will be seen as highly unprofessional. Germans tend to be very correct and stick to what has been agreed. If you had a brilliant idea between two meetings, you should not simply ignore the agreed idea and go for your new one.

## 8. Engage in long or numerous private talks

You are paid for being present in mind and body during office hours. Mostly for 8 hours a day. Even if you believe that private networking is a vital contributor to your success, your colleagues will not think so and will believe you are lazy. Likewise, avoid that your colleagues see you are active on social media. In Germany, there is zero tolerance among peers for such frivolous activities.

## 9. Jump the gun

So you think you have a brilliant idea? You will not succeed in convincing your colleagues and superiors unless you have thoroughly analyzed the pros and cons and have already a rough idea about how to implement it. Germans are uneasy with uncertainty and ambiguity. Presenting a new idea with no factual background info will most likely kill it.

## 10. Beating the bush

If you do not have anything valuable to contribute to the conversation do not say anything at all. Adding unimportant information will undermine your authority.



# Non-verbal communications

- Pressing your thumbs equates to crossing your fingers for good luck. So, if someone says they'll press their thumbs for you or makes this gesture, you'll know they have the best of intentions. A fist with a thumb inside might also come with this gesture.
- If you see a German tapping the side of their head using their index finger, it means just what you think- they're saying someone is crazy.
- If you're ordering beer in a bar, don't raise your index finger unless you want two. When Germans count, they start using the thumb, rather than the index finger.
- Be prepared for some noise if you do a presentation that meets the group's approval. Instead of polite applause, Germans are likely to rap the table using their knuckles to show approval.
- Remember that what's merely a silly gesture in one country might be extremely offensive in another. In Germany, sticking your thumbs between your first and second fingers is a rude gesture best left alone.

# History

- October 3, 1990- Germany was formed
- Chancellors of Germany- **German Empire (1871–1918)**
- Federal Republic of Germany (1949–present)
  - This was made from the British, French and American zones of occupation in **Germany**
  - Angela Merkel (2005– present)
- East Germany
  - Leader: Egon Krenz
  - 1949 to 1990
  - Was a communist state
  - This was a state of the Soviet Union
  - Occurred during the Cold War



Student Name: Savanna Moore

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
Product is well-designed, includes pictures, graphics, or other illustrations	5	5
General information about the culture	5	5
Business customs: during a meeting	5	5
Business customs: during a meal	5	5
Ethical standards	5	5
Taste preferences	5	5
Cultural blunders	5	5
Non-verbal communication	5	5
All content is professional and contains no errors in spelling, capitalization, mechanics, or grammar	5	5
<b>Total Points</b>	45	45



Germany

Grade

100/100

Private comments



Mindy Pierce  
Dec 5, 11:19 AM

Great job on this Savannah!

?

Add private comment...