

Negotiations in China

In preparing for a business trip to China, most Westerners like to arm themselves with a handy, one-page list of etiquette how-tos. These often include, for instance, carrying a boatload of business cards, bringing your own interpreter, speaking in short sentences, and wearing a conservative suit. Such advice can help get you in the door and even through the first series of business transactions. But it won't sustain the kind of prolonged, year-in, year-out associations that Chinese and Western businesses can now achieve.

Indeed, our work with dozens of companies and thousands of American and Chinese executives over the past 20 years has demonstrated to us that a superficial obedience to the rules of etiquette gets you only so far. In fact, we have witnessed breakdowns between American and Chinese businesspeople time and time again. The root cause seems to be a failure on the American side to understand the much broader context of Chinese culture and values, a problem that too often leaves Western negotiators both flummoxed and flailing.

The challenge of mutual understanding is great. American and Chinese approaches often appear incompatible. All too often, Americans see Chinese negotiators as inefficient, indirect, and even dishonest, while the Chinese see American negotiators as aggressive, impersonal, and excitable. Such differences have deep cultural origins. Yet those who know how to navigate these differences can develop thriving, mutually profitable, and satisfying business relationships.

Several caveats before we continue. First, Americans have been used as primary examples of Western negotiators not only because research has focused primarily on U.S. companies and executives but also because Americans exhibit individualism and assertiveness more strongly than other Westerners do. As a result, they tend to get into more trouble at the negotiating table. Second, it must be acknowledged that sweeping statements about a billion-plus people can be simplistic. Americans have also been stereotyped. Nevertheless, we are confident in asserting that the cultural values apply, in varying degrees, to most Chinese—whether they live in China or in other parts of the world. Finally, the Chinese reader will not be surprised by what we observe here. Our goal is to help Western and Chinese negotiators learn to work together more efficiently with mutual respect and gain the ultimate prizes.

Adapted from *Harvard Business Review*

Ex. 1 Find the words or expressions in the text which mean the following:

- 1) to equip yourself with sth: _____
- 2) convenient: _____
- 3) a lot: _____
- 4) a person who translates orally: _____
- 5) to continue to last: _____
- 6) twelve items: _____
- 7) concerning only the outside of sth: _____
- 8) a failure: _____
- 9) confused: _____
- 10) a warning or a specific condition: _____
- 11) if: _____
- 12) working with good results: _____

Ex. 2 Match the expressions from the two columns into logical collocations:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1) a business | association |
| 2) a how- | varying degrees |
| 3) a prolonged | to often |
| 4) a root | understanding |
| 5) mutual | statement |
| 6) time and time | trip |
| 7) all | again |
| 8) in | to |
| 9) a sweeping | prize |
| 10) the ultimate | cause |

Ex. 3 Provide English equivalents of these expressions:

1) korzystne dla obu stron	7) posłuszeństwo
2) asertywność	8) trwający wiele lat
3) przede wszystkim	9) tłumacz ustny
4) przejawiać (np. jakieś cechy)	10) długi (czas oczekiwania)
5) mieć pewność co do czegoś	11) być świadkiem czegoś
6) założyć coś (np. hipotezę)	12) poruszać się po czymś

Grammar corner...

In the text you've seen many words that have been made from others. It's called word formation, as you already know from previous lessons. We may make new words in English by adding something in front of the original word (it's called a prefix, e.g. im-, un-, dis-) or at the end (it's called a suffix then, e.g. -ence, -ity, -re).

Ex. 4 Without looking back in the text, make new words from the ones provided.

1) to execute =>

2) to obey =>

3) to fail =>

4) compatible =>

5) efficient =>

6) direct =>

7) honest =>

8) personal =>

9) aggression =>

10) excited =>

11) navigation =>

12) different =>

13) individual =>

14) to state sth =>

15) mutual =>

GLOSSARY	
to last	trwać
to arm yourself with sth	uzbroić się w coś (np. cierpliwość)
handy	poręczny
a boatload	mnóstwo
an interpreter	tłumacz ustny
to sustain	podtrzymywać
a dozen	tuzin
a breakdown	załamanie (np. negocjacji)
flummoxed	zagubiony
a caveat	zastrzeżenie (np. w umowie)
whether	czy
efficiently	skutecznie
a business trip	delegacja, podróż służbowa
a how-to	porada
prolonged association	długa współpraca
a root cause of sth	główna przyczyna czegoś
mutual understanding	wzajemne porozumienie
time and time again	wiele razy
all too often	zdecydowanie zbyt często
in varying degrees	w różnym stopniu
a sweeping statement	generalizacja
the ultimate prize	ostateczny cel (np. negocjacji)
mutually profitable	korzystny dla obu stron
primarily	przede wszystkim
to exhibit sth	przejawiać (np. jakieś cechy)
to assert sth	założyć coś (np. hipotezę)
to navigate	poruszać się (np. w chińskiej kulturze biznesowej)

obedience	posłuszeństwo
excitable	łatwo wpadający w podekscytowanie

ANSWER KEY:

Ex. 1

- 1) to arm yourself with sth
- 2) handy
- 3) a boatload
- 4) an interpreter
- 5) to sustain
- 6) a dozen
- 7) superficial
- 8) a breakdown
- 9) flummoxed
- 10) a caveat
- 11) whether
- 12) efficiently

Ex. 2

- 1) a business trip
- 2) a how-to
- 3) a prolonged association
- 4) a root cause
- 5) mutual understanding
- 6) time and time again
- 7) all too often
- 8) in varying degrees
- 9) a sweeping statement
- 10) the ultimate prize

Ex. 3

- 1) mutually profitable
- 2) assertiveness
- 3) primarily
- 4) to exhibit sth
- 5) to be confident in
- 6) to assert sth
- 7) obedience
- 8) year-in, year-out
- 9) an interpreter
- 10) prolonged
- 11) to witness sth
- 12) to navigate

Ex. 4

- 1) executive
- 2) obedience
- 3) failure
- 4) incompatible
- 5) inefficient
- 6) indirect
- 7) dishonest
- 8) impersonal
- 9) aggressive
- 10) excitable
- 11) navigate
- 12) difference
- 13) individualism

14)statement

15)mutually