


# YOUR APAC GLOBAL BUSINESS ETIQUETTE TRANSLATOR

Every country has unique customs and understanding these differences is essential to building strong relationships with international business associates. To avoid cultural gaps and blind spots, observe these etiquette rules and practices in the APAC region.




## CHINA

- NO** Avoid a direct “No;” use a euphemistic “maybe” or “we’ll think about it”
- Dress to impress in high quality, conservative clothing
- Always use professional titles and surnames (ex. “Director Wang”)
- Arrive early for appointments; being late is a serious offense
- Have both a Mandarin and English language side on your business card
- Avoid making any body contact such as hugging or back slapping




## JAPAN

- Respect the business hierarchy in age and seniority
- Business dining is an opportunity for team bonding
- Display all business cards on the table, neatly and face-up, until after the meeting
- Stay pleasant and positive. Smile when you can
- In business attire, conform with how local peers dress
- Don’t discuss politics or family matters




## INDIA

- Greet with a handshake or namaste with a slight bow
- An Indian headshake doesn’t necessarily mean ‘no’
- Address the most senior businessperson first and by title
- Be polite but firm. Business can be slow and difficult in India
- Use only the right hand to exchange business cards; It is proper to eat with both hands
- Do not criticize the Indian cricket team



## HONG KONG

- Hong Kongese communication is less direct than Americans but bolder than other Asians
- Dress in colors like black or navy; avoid white which symbolizes mourning
- A pause before responding indicates thought and consideration of the question
- Invest time in cultivating business relationships
- Don’t refuse a dinner invitation; if necessary, suggest a more convenient date
- Give and receive everything with two hands



## SINGAPORE

- Firmly shake hands, often with a small polite bow
- The climate is warm and humid; business shirts and pants or skirts without jackets is fine
- Address people by their professional title
- At dinner, allow the host to order all the dishes
- Communication is subtle. Observe body language and be mindful of your own
- Do not point at someone with your forefinger



## AUSTRALIA

- Australians are informal; greetings are casual and relaxed
- Appreciate the Australian’s use of humor to break the ice
- Profanity is a natural part of the local vocabulary
- Don’t oversell or be overly aggressive in negotiations
- Business attire is suits or a smart dress
- If invited out for a drink, don’t discuss business unless your host does

The world’s diversity is what makes it fascinating and interesting. By showing respect for other cultures, you’ll enhance your professional relationships and gain appreciation for the countries where you do business.