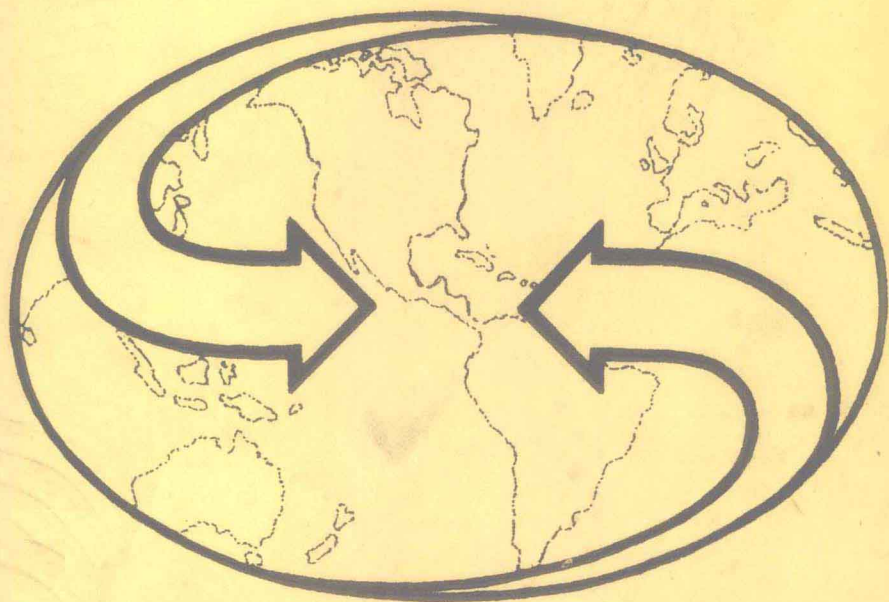


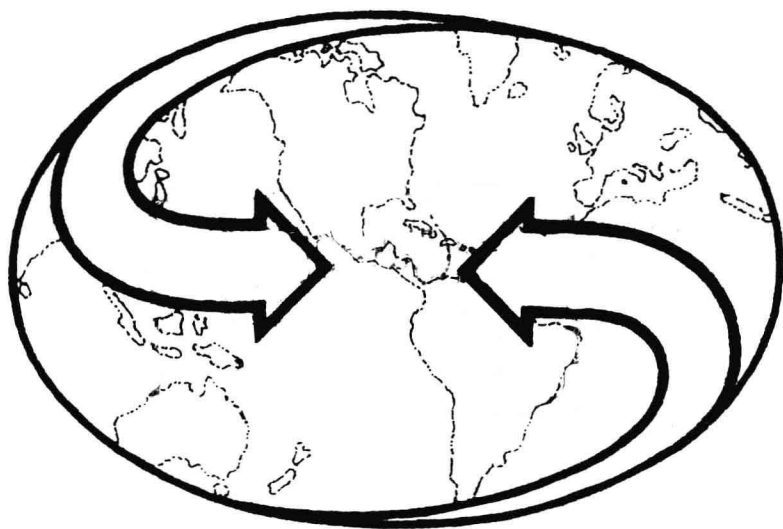
AMERICAN BUSINESS *ENCOUNTERS*



Roger E. W.-B. Olsen

The Alemany Press

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Edited by Gerry Ryan

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american business encounters

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Introduction

American Business Encounters is designed for the newcomer involved with, or soon to become involved with, running a business in the United States. This collection is intended to stimulate discussion of differences between business practices in the United States and those of other countries.

The situations presented here pose real problems that the newcomer merchant will have to face and resolve in his own business. We have chosen the Shoe Repair Shop as the setting for these problems, but they are also found in other businesses. We hope this book will create a better understanding of American business customs and culture.

American Business Encounters presents situations in the Culture Assimulator format first developed by Harry Triandis of the University of Illinois: A short description of the "problem" situation is followed by several possible solutions. Students are asked to choose one solution and to discuss the reasons they chose it. Each solution is then discussed in the back of the book, with the best alternative identified, if there is a "best answer." Some situations really do not have a single best solution -- the best answer may lie within certain culturally defined behaviors (e.g., a or b might be okay but c would be unacceptable) or the best answer may only be found in terms of the businessman's individual priorities.

The situations are grouped according to subject topics: Relations with Customers, Relations with Employees, and Relations with Suppliers.

The situations are also labeled according to general topic: Cultural Considerations, Business Etiquette, Standard Business Practices, and Decision-Making for business owners. In the last category particularly, it should be stressed that there is not necessarily one right answer: the solutions are presented as alternatives for consideration and discussion.

H o w t o U s e t h i s B o o k

To break the ice and facilitate discussion, teachers may wish to put students in pairs or in small groups to discuss the possible choices, or to discuss what they would do in similar situations in their native countries. Small groups can provide a less threatening environment for some students to ask questions and share experiences, and may help prepare students to speak out in a larger group. A leader might be chosen from each group to summarize the group's discussion for the rest of the class.

Advanced students may use American Business Encounters for independent study, or for writing assignments. A lesson might be presented, the vocabulary reviewed, and the students asked to write 1) what they would do in their native countries, 2) what they think is the best answer for their business in the United States, 3) why they chose one solution over other possible solutions, or 4) why they did not choose a possible solution.

The Glossary presents short definitions of words that might need to be taught or reviewed. Several lessons have listings of the words that are glossed, so the student could immediately look up the difficult words if necessary.

Most of these situations can be readily adapted for further classwork or study at home. With the Customer Relations situations, for example, students could create parallel problems for other businesses or industries. *Do it Over, Please* could be adapted to other situations:

the grocery store	(the milk is sour)
the hardware store	(a light bulb doesn't work)
the post office	(the stamps won't stick to packages)

Advanced classes might develop parallel situations and solutions in the Service Industries:

the dentist	(a filling came out)
the lawyer	
the family doctor	

The class could be asked first to develop the parallel situation and to present just the situation to the rest of the class. Other students would provide their own solutions. After all the solutions have been offered and discussed, the class could decide which might be the best solution.

These situations can also be inverted. Customer Relations situations can be inverted to become Supplier Relations situations. In the inverted adaptation, the businessman would be unhappy with something his supplier has provided. Ask first what the inverted situation is. Then ask for (a) the solutions the supplier might offer as well as (b) the solutions that the businessman might want.

Employee Relations situations can also be inverted, creating an "Employer Relations unit. What alternatives would the employee expect? Prefer? What alternatives might the employer want? Inverting the Employee Relations situations can be helpful for students entering the traditional job market.

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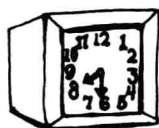
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supplier relations

Supplier Relations



- ☒ culture
- ☐ decision
- ☐ etiquette
- ☐ practices
- ☐ strategies

Keeping an Appointment

You made an appointment with a salesman to be at your store at 9:00, one hour before you open for business. You plan to be there at:

- a. 8:30
- b. 9:00
- c. 9:30
- d. 10:00

After selecting your choice, turn to page 43.

Supplier Relations



- x culture
- decision
- etiquette
- practices
- strategies

I've Got to Go

You are talking with a salesman after placing your order and want to end the conversation because you have more work to do.

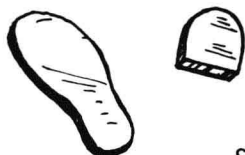
You:

- a. Say nothing because you feel it would be rude to end the conversation.
- b. Say, "I don't want to talk anymore."
- c. Just wave goodbye and walk away.
- d. Say, "Well, excuse me, I've got to go now."

After discussing this problem, turn to page 44.

rude

Supplier Relations



- culture
- x decision
- etiquette
- practices
- strategies

Specials

One of your suppliers has sent you a letter saying that they have acquired some slightly defective soles. They are the same brand and style that you usually put on dress shoes, but they are not perfect around the edges.

What do you do?

- a. You order the soles in large sizes, planning to cut them down for smaller sized shoes. You still have to use the perfect, first quality soles for the larger sized shoes you repair, but the extra savings on smaller sizes is worth it.
- b. Decline this offer, as you want to use and sell only the best quality materials you can obtain.
- c. Wonder why the supplier is trying to be so cheap by substituting a cheap grade for first quality. You do not want to appear greedy and decline the offer.
- d. Remember the last time you bought some close out merchandise and that it took a long time to finally get rid of it (finish the supply). You ask for samples.

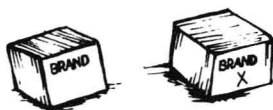
Write down your own reaction and talk about it.
When you have finished studying the alternatives,
turn to page 45.

close out
cut down
defective

extent
first quality
get rid of

greedy
soles

Supplier Relations



— culture
x decision
— etiquette
— practices
x strategies

Name Brand or Off-Brand

One of your suppliers is offering off brand merchandise at a discount. Their advertising says that the value is just as good as a name brand you already sell. This product could retail at half the price.

You want to maintain sales, but think it is better to stick with the name brand: you know what profit you are making. On the other hand, if you offer both lines to your customers, you might make more sales. Customers who aren't concerned about the brand could get the same kind of product at a lower price. Name Brand products would be available, too.

After considering the offer, you:

- Decide to only sell the name brand product, keeping the quality reputation of your store.
- Decide to stock the off-brand merchandise and the name brand merchandise, to give your customers a choice.
- Ask the supplier to send a sample, or at least a sample order, so you can look at the off brand merchandise. You want to look at the sample before you decide to put it in your inventory.

After talking or writing about these alternatives,
turn to page 46.

available
to consider
inventory
in vogue

lines
to look at
name brand
off brand
on the other hand

over all
retail
stick with
top dollar

Supplier Relations



- culture
- decision
- x — etiquette
- practices
- strategies

Telephoning an Order

You are telephoning an order to one of your suppliers. As you read the list of items you need, the supplier asks what brand of polish you want. You can't remember the brand. This supplier carries 15 different brands of "medium brown" and he has to know the exact brand before he can fill your order.

You:

- a. Describe the polish the best you can, so the supplier can figure out the brand you use.
- b. Ask them to check their records to see what kind they have been shipping in the past.
- c. Ask when the salesman can come by, because he knows the brands of the supplies you need.
- d. Repeat the other items from your list and ask for a representative to come by right away.

After discussing this situation turn to page 47.

check
figure out
right away