

国际商业文化 简明教程

A SHORT COURSE IN
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CULTURE

主编 Charles Mitchell / 何明霞

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总序

进入“十三五”，我国高等英语教育迎来深化改革和创新发展的关键期，商务英语专业也随之从规模发展进入内涵发展和质量提升的新常态。全国已有超过300所高校开办了商务英语本科专业，有500多所高校的英语类专业开设了商务方向或课程。2017年，教育部制订的《高等学校商务英语专业本科教学质量国家标准》（以下简称《国家标准》）也将颁布，《国家标准》对商务英语人才培养提出了明确要求，以满足对外开放的国家战略和需求。

为了认真贯彻落实《国家标准》，全国高等学校商务英语专业教学协作组与上海外语教育出版社密切合作，对入选“十二五”普通高等教育本科国家级规划教材的“新世纪商务英语专业本科系列教材”进行全面修订。修订后的“新世纪商务英语专业本科系列教材（第二版）”体系更加完整，涵盖英语知识与技能和商务知识与技能两个模块，很好地体现出《国家标准》对商务英语专业学生知识和能力的要求。

本系列教材中，英语知识与技能模块包含《商务英语综合教程》、《商务英语视听说教程》、《商务英语阅读教程》、《商务英语写作教程》、《商务英语论文写作》、《商务英语口译教程》、《商务英汉翻译教程》等。

商务知识与技能模块包含《国际贸易实务与操作》和《国际商业伦理》、《国际商务合同》、《国际经济学》、《国际知识产权》、《国际营销》、《国际支付》、《国际贸易单证》等简明教程。

本系列教材具有以下四个鲜明的特色：

第一，完全对接《国家标准》规定的培养目标和课程体系，突出打牢英语基本功，拓宽国际视野，提升人文素养，培养商务意识和素养，着重提高英语应用能力、商务实践能力、跨文化交流能力、思辨与创新能力、自主学习能力。

第二，编写理念先进，选材新颖，充满时代感，坚持语言、文化、商务三者有机结合，充分体现国际化、人文性、复合型、应用性的特点和全人教育的理念。

第三，体系完整，覆盖商务英语专业核心课程，英语知识与技能教材突出听、说、读、写、译、跨文化交际等技能训练导向；商务知识与技能教材理论体系完整，知识讲解简明扼要，语言原汁原味，配套练习实用性和可操作性强，注重中外真实案例分析，培养思辨和创新能力。

第四，课堂任务设计多样化和立体化的特色鲜明，突出网络多媒体技术的应用，提供丰富的视频材料和教学资源，加大了英语学习的趣味性和输入的有效性。

本系列教材是全国高等学校商务英语专业教学协作组重点推荐教材，由国内商务英语教学专家编写，可供一、二年级商务英语专业本科生、英语专业商贸方向学生、财经类院校本科生以及各类经管专业本科生使用，同时也可作为大学英语ESP课程模块的商务英语教材，以及各类企业培训和社会商务英语学习者的参考书。本套教材的修订得到上海外语教育出版社领导和编辑的大力支持，在此表示衷心感谢。

王立非

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前言

《国际商业文化简明教程》是在美国学者查尔斯·米切尔(Charles Mitchell)的《国际商业文化》(*International Business Culture*)一书的基础上编著而成。按照原作的主题,本教程共分十八章,每章通过八个板块对原作内容进行了拓展和解读。本书编写总体上遵循循序渐进及知识性与趣味性相结合的原则。

原作本身就采用了循序渐进的撰写原则。原作由描述国际商业文化所涉及的各种基本知识入手,指出理解文化差异对国际商务活动的重要性(第一至第五章),并结合具体的例证,从非语言交际、书面交际、女性文化雷区、馈赠礼物、跨文化幽默等国际商务活动中可能遇到的文化差异及文化休克等问题进行了剖析(第六至第十一章),最后提出了一系列避免各种文化误区及成功组织跨文化国际商务活动的建议:跨文化商务会谈、跨文化谈判、跨文化营销、跨文化顾问、企业文化、企业道德(第十二至第十八章)。各章节虽彼此独立,但又相互关联,承前启后,内容由浅入深,循序渐进。本书完全遵循原作的编写逻辑,并在每个章节的编写体例上尽量遵循循序渐进这一编写原则。本书每个章节的前四个板块(本章概要、学习指南、专业术语和知识链接)是对原作的概括和提炼,属基础性解读部分;紧接着的三个板块(练一练、讨论和案例分析)是在掌握本章基础知识的前提下的巩固训练与知识拓展,属提升、拓展部分;最后一个板块(拓展阅读)则选取了与本章知识点相关的并能给予读者进一步深层思考的阅读素材,属升华和内化部分。此外,本书的各章节除对原作中知识点进行系统梳理之外,还通过通俗的知识导读、有趣的知识链接及经典的跨文化交际案例,帮助读者更为系统、更为全面地掌握国际商务活动中跨文化交际的原则和准绳。

本书可作为高校国际贸易、商务英语、商务管理等专业开设国际商业文化课程的教材,也可作为企业人士的商业文化入门教材,还可作为对商务文化感兴趣的学习者的参考用书。国际商业文化受国别、历史、宗教、教育、性别、心理等诸多因素的影响,庞杂多变,建议读者在丰富知识和拓展视野的基础上,不应拘泥于本书的思路和观点,而应不断培养自身的批判性思维,举一反三,活学活用,努力形成独立的观点和思想。由于编者经验有限,书中难免疏漏,不足之处敬请广大读者批评指正。

何明霞

2018年5月于武汉

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Understanding Cultural Differences

理解文化的差异

CHAPTER 1

本章概要：

本章主要介绍跨文化交际的内涵、跨文化交际能力在商务活动中的重要性、文化的概念、文化的构成要素、文化的演变、应对另一种文化、宗教与伊斯兰银行。

学习指南：

只要有我们有过跨国经商的经历，我们就一定有过文化差异带来的困扰。时间和距离曾经被认为是跨国经商中最大的障碍，随着国际化的浪潮，这些已渐成过去。如今，“国际生意人”越来越发现他们生活在一个多元文化的环境中，适应一种新的文化对他们“做生意”至关重要。犹如富兰克林所言“时间就是金钱”，国际商业活动中，国际生意人还要加上一条“意识到文化的差异及其敏感性也是金钱”。国际商业文化涉及商业活动中的各种礼仪、禁忌、风俗、习俗以及沟通、谈判的技巧等，涉猎面广，牵涉人类学、语言学、心理学、传播学、社会学、宗教学等学科内容，属于跨文化交际学研究的范畴。

通过学习本章，你将能够达到以下学习目标：

1. 基本目标 (Text-based Goals)

- 掌握本章涉及话题的基本专业术语、词汇，如：文化、文化要素、跨文化交际、多元文化环境等。
- 掌握本章的主要知识点，如：他国文化对跨国公司的重要性、文化的多重定义、文化的基本构成要素、文化的发展变化性以及宗教对文化的影响。

2. 拓展目标 (Extended Goals)

- 思考本章引言，为什么赫尔曼·黑塞说“当两种文化发生碰撞是令人苦恼的”？
- 进一步了解本章出现的主要文化差异产生的背景、内涵及其影响。

The only time when true suffering occurs is when two cultures collide. (最令人苦恼的莫过于两种文化发生碰撞。)

——Hermann Hesse 赫尔曼·黑塞

拥有跨国经商经历的人都有过因为文化差异带来的可怕体验,比如:茫然的对视、僵化的微笑和晦涩的自语所带来的惶恐不安。在过去,距离和时间一度是跨国经营的最大障碍,现如今,它们已是最不值得关注的。国际商人越来越多地发现自己身处多元文化环境中,面临从沟通方式、社交礼仪到核心价值观的各种差异。文化影响个人和企业互动的形式,影响企业的内部结构,从决策到管理风格。

ANYONE WHO HAS done business internationally knows that dreadful feeling brought on by the blank stares, the forced half-smiles, the murmured comments in a language that seems **indecipherable** — when what you say doesn't connect, and when something seems missing. The **paranoia** is inescapable. You had your check-list of cultural do's and don'ts and followed them religiously. You broke no taboos, committed no cultural **faux pas**, insulted no one — yet you failed to break through. Why?

Distance and time were once the biggest obstacles to doing business internationally. They are now among the least of concerns for any organization that has decided to go global. Today, international businessmen and businesswomen increasingly find themselves working in multi-cultural environments, dealing with real differences in everything from communication styles to social **etiquette** to core values. While many **savvy** international business travelers may not be able to give a textbook definition of what constitutes culture, they know it when they see it. And they also know they had better be prepared to deal with it beyond a superficial level. After all, winning acceptance from foreign colleagues and turning cultural differences into a competitive advantage means more than making sure you know how to properly accept the business card of a Japanese colleague or avoid serving cocktails to a Moslem banker. People from different cultures process information in different ways, value different traits and measure the concepts of time and space in dramatically different fashions.

Why is cross-cultural knowledge and understanding so important? The American statesman and inventor Benjamin Franklin wrote that time is money. Globe-trotting businesspeople would add that being aware of cultural differences and sensitivities is money, too. Failing to grasp the **subtleties** that lie beyond such public cultural displays like greeting rituals and seating arrangements can make the difference between a truly successful international business transaction and one that fails to connect. Culture affects the most basic forms of personal and business interaction from decision making to management style. National culture, in turn, determines corporate culture, affecting a firm's internal structure, its marketing behavior and its view of foreign business partners. If you have doubts that cultural insensitivity can translate into business problems on a **megascale**, consider the case of the Disney Corp's French adventure — EuroDisney.

Word Study

indecipherable

/ˌɪndɪˈsɑɪfərəbl/ *adj.*

破译不出的,难辨
认的

paranoia /pəˈrɔɪniə/

n. 多疑,无端恐惧

faux pas 失礼;失言

etiquette /ˈetɪkət/ *n.*

礼仪,礼节

savvy /ˈsævi/ *adj.* 有见

识的,有实际知识的

subtlety /ˈsʌtlɪ/ *n.* 细

微,精细,巧妙

megascale /ˈmegəskel/

n. 超大规模

Mosieur Mickey

Bring the wonders of Disneyland to a foreign country must have seemed like old hat for Disney. After all, only a few years earlier the company had successfully opened a Disney theme park in Japan, bridging the enormous differences between Japanese and American cultures. EuroDisney, at least initially, proved to be another story entirely. The company, it seems, failed to do its cultural homework on everything from French business negotiating styles to employee flexibility and dress habits to consumer spending patterns and eating preferences. The company had a system that worked in the United States and Japan — two very diverse cultures — and evidently saw no good reason to change it to adapt to European sensibilities.

Day one began with a nightmare. The French people, who tend to wear their cultural hearts on their sleeves, howled about **Yankee** cultural **imperialism** when Disney managed to buy 1,950 hectares (4,400 acres) of prime farmland for a fraction of the market price after the government used its right of **eminent** domain to find Mickey and friends a home. The farmers whose families had worked the land for centuries were bounced. French newspapers railed at the American invaders in a very public display of anger and insult. Before a single building foundation had been dug or a brick laid, the company had managed to **alienate** the community, partly because it had underestimated the attachment to the land of one segment of French society.

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Next, Disney offended French sensibilities and created a **wellspring** of ill will when it used lawyers rather than its executives to negotiate construction and other contracts for EuroDisney. It was simply not a French thing to do. In France, lawyers are considered a negotiating tool of absolute last resort. The use of lawyers early on in the process was a sign of mistrust and backhand rejection of French ways. Then, according to the French trade and popular press, the company insisted during the construction of Disney-run hotels that a sprinkler system be included. While required under American law, such a system was unnecessary under French law which demands only adequate fire escapes and alarms and access to an emergency water supply. Disney's insistence on the sprinkler system was perceived as a negative comment on French safety standards and an **assertion** that the "American way" was better. The battle **ruffled** the feathers of Disney's French partners and management, generating even more ill will made public in a stream of negative press reports.

In terms of operations, Disney's ignorance of European culture and French working norms caused more problems. The company, which prides itself on the **squeaky-clean** All-American look of its employees, instituted a strict dress code for its local employees, barring facial hair, dictating a maximum length for fingernails and limiting the size of hooped earrings. The staff and its unions rebelled at this perceived attack on everyday French fashion. Morale plunged.

米奇先生

迪士尼在成功进军日本后雄心勃勃向法国进发,不料却遭遇惨败:先是因低价购买土地遭媒体炮轰,继而在谈判时因派出律师而为人诟病。迪士尼还犯下许多其他文化错误:强制规定在各旅馆安装消防喷头;对员工着装严格要求;忽视欧洲人的生活和消费习惯,致使餐厅拥挤,前台人流涌动,纪念品滞销,收入下滑。好在迪士尼吸取教训,及时改进,欧洲迪士尼乐园便不再亏损。

Word Study

Yankee /'jæŋki/ *n.* 美国佬

imperialism /ɪm'piəriəlɪzəm/ *n.* 帝国主义,帝国主义政策

eminent /'emɪnənt/ *adj.* 明显的,显著的

alienate /'eɪliəneɪt/ *v.* 使疏远

wellspring /'wel.sprɪŋ/ *n.* 源泉

assertion /ə'sɜːʃən/ *n.* 声称,主张

ruffle /'rʌfl/ *v.* 激怒; 扰乱

squeaky-clean 无可指责的

Word Study

commuter /kə'mju:tə/
n. (远距离)上下班
往返的人

logjam /lɒg,dʒæm/ n.
困境,僵局

graze /greɪz/ v. 吃零
食

foible /fɔɪbl/ n. 小缺
点,小癖好

spree /spri:/ n. 狂欢,
纵乐

irate /aɪ'reɪt/ adj. 发
怒的

THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS

Disney got several other important details wrong. For example, the company believed that Europeans do not generally have sit-down breakfasts. Relative to the normal workday lifestyle of the European **commuter**, they were correct. But the exact opposite is true when Europeans vacation. As a result of this incorrect notion, hotel dining rooms at Disney hotels were kept small, creating **logjams** and angry customers when the overcrowded rooms that seat a maximum of 400 guests tried to serve upwards of 2,500 sit-down breakfasters every morning. Lunchtimes inside EuroDisney also bordered on disaster. While Americans visiting Disneyland prefer to **graze**, that is, eat at irregular intervals, as they wander the park confines, Europeans are used to set lunchtimes. As a result, the park's restaurants became jammed at the lunch hour as everyone tried to eat at once and were empty the rest of the day. Customers complained of long lunch-time lines and pressure to eat quickly. The staff complained of being overworked at lunchtime and underworked during the rest of their shifts. To top it off, Disney, in keeping with the "family friendly" theme, barred the serving of alcohol — perhaps the ultimate insult in a country where the consumption of wine at mealtimes is a birthright.

HOSPITALITY HEADACHES

The company committed other marketing **foibles**. While the park did hit its initial attendance target of more than 10 million visitors in the first year, its revenue projections were way off. The reason: unlike Americans or Japanese visiting Disney parks in their home countries, the European visitors to EuroDisney did not spend money on souvenirs. Europeans, it seems, are more used to taking month-long vacations and as a rule do not go on short spending **sprees** like the Americans and Japanese when visiting a theme park. Finally, Disney found that checkout at its official hotels had turned into a nightmare because of different consumer patterns. Unlike the Americans or the Japanese, the European visitor to EuroDisney tends to stay only one night at a hotel, not three or four nights common at other Disney parks. The result: the hotels had too few computers to handle the **irate** guests as they all tried to check out of the hotel at the same time after a single night's stay.

"It was so unlike Disney to get so many details so wrong," says one U.S.-based securities analyst who follows the company. "Maybe it's not such a small world after all. The company's cultural insensitivities cost it a lot of money and goodwill. I think it is a good reminder to any company or individual doing business in another country — the devil is often in the cultural details. They can make or break you." But for Disney at least, all's well that ends well. After making some significant "cultural adjustments," EuroDisney is no longer the economic drain it once was on company coffers.

CULTURE CAUTION: It should be noted that for all of Disney's faults the French government was more than happy to have them set up shop. The government also bears some responsibility for not making Disney's transition smoother. The French have claimed for centuries that Americans have no culture but nowadays, it seems, they believe Americans have too much and need to export some.

What Is Culture, Anyway?

It may seem obvious but culture is what makes the Japanese, Japanese; the Germans, German; and the Brazilians, Brazilian. The noted Dutch writer and academic Geert Hofstede referred to culture as “the software of the mind” — the social programming that runs the way we think, act and perceive ourselves and others. In other words, your brain is simply the hardware that runs the cultural programming. The implication is that culture is not **innate**. There is no gene that forces Americans to treasure individualism and brashness, or Germans to value **rigid** order. It is learned behavior and hence can be changed. Just alter the internal programming and you, too, can think like a Yank, a Brit, or a Kuwaiti. While this is certainly a useful and encouraging metaphor for anyone dealing in global business affairs, it is more difficult to implement than it sounds. It takes study, a keen sense of observation, and, above all, a willingness to learn and **relinquish** the notion that one's native culture is superior. When was the last time you heard a foreign colleague admit that their way of doing things is inferior to yours? It doesn't happen. When dealing in a multi-cultural environment the “adapt or die” philosophy is a good one to remember.

A more formal definition is that culture is a set of learned core values, beliefs, standards, knowledge, morals, laws, and behaviors shared by individuals and societies that determines how an individual acts, feels, and views oneself and others. A society's culture is passed from generation to generation, and aspects such as language, religion, customs and laws are interrelated — that is, a society's view of authority, morals and ethics will eventually manifest itself in how an individual does business, negotiates a contract or deals with a potential business relationship. Understanding the cultural context and mind-set of a potential foreign business partner or competitor can help in developing sound strategy for negotiations and deal-making. What once seemed mysterious may become more predictable — and can ultimately be used to your advantage.

Cultural Components

Viewing a national culture from the outside can be **intimidating**. But breaking it down into its components and understanding how each component is related to the whole can help unwrap the enigma and provide some logic and motivation behind behaviors, including business behaviors.

Word Study

innate /ɪˈneɪt/ *adj.* 天生的; 内在的
rigid /ˈrɪdʒɪd/ *adj.* 僵硬的, 死板的
relinquish /rɪˈlɪŋkwɪʃ/ *v.* 放弃
intimidating /ɪnˈtɪmɪdeɪtɪŋ/ *adj.* 吓人的

究竟什么是文化?

一种不言自明的界定认为,文化就是让日本人成为日本人,德国人成为德国人,巴西人成为巴西人的那些东西。荷兰学者格尔特·霍夫斯泰德将文化定义为“大脑的软件”——让我们思考、行动和观察自我及他人的社会运行程序。

文化的定义成百上千,只是定义的角度和出发点不同而已。广义而言,文化是一切物质财富和精神财富的总和;狭义而言,文化则是除了政治、经济、军事之外的一种观念形态或精神活动的产物。文化的确实不是人类先天所有的。

文化的要素

由外界来审视一国的文化可能会有一种压迫感,但是,如果我们将文化所包含的要素拆开来并理解其中的相互关系,可以帮助我们揭开一些谜团,也可以解释行为包括商业行为背后的动机和逻辑。同商业活动相关的最为重要的文化三要素包括:语言、宗教和相冲突的价值观。

更为细致地,可以有三个维度来划分影响跨文化商务沟通的文化因素,分别是语言维度,包括语言的和非语言的因素;物理维度,包括由于自然或人为因素产生的环境差异及人类行为;心理维度,包括知识、宗教、教育等差异性导致的心理差异以及因为行为过程造成的心理差异。

The three most important cultural components that relate to business transactions are:

LANGUAGE

Often, it's not what you say, but what you don't say, that counts.

Language is more than just spoken and written words. Non-verbal communication, gestures, body language, facial expressions all convey a message. When two people do not speak a common language and are forced to use an interpreter, this non-verbal form of communication is the only direct contact and method available for individuals to take a direct read of each other. By failing to understand the cultural context in which such non-verbal communication occurs you run the risk of not only failing to read your colleague across the table but of actually sending the entirely wrong signal.

This can be true even in situations where two people speak the same (almost) language — as in the following case involving an American businesswoman and a British businessman.

“We seemed to get along great on the telephone. It was a relief after several years in Eastern Europe to actually be doing business with the British. At least we spoke the same language,” says the American businesswoman. “We thought alike. I trusted him.”

All went well until the American traveled to London to meet face-to-face with her British colleague to sign a research and development contract. The first meeting did not go well. “There was something that didn't seem right,” she says. “Throughout the presentation none of the Brits, not even the guy I had developed a phone relationship with, would look us in the eye. It was like they were hiding something. After a lot of internal discussion, we decided to sign the contract, but many of us still felt uneasy. Even when we talked on the phone later I just couldn't get that failure of them to look me in the eye out of my head. It almost ruined the relationship and sunk the deal.”

All that doubt could have been avoided if the American had been **cognizant** of one subtle cultural difference: Whereas Americans believe that looking someone directly in the eye during negotiations indicates honesty and sincerity, the British believe such a gesture to be a mark of rudeness until a more familiar relationship is established. “I guess I shouldn't have taken it so personally,” says the American. “I understand it now, but I still don't like it.”

RELIGION

God may have a deeper influence on business strategy than you think.

The dominant religious philosophy within a culture can have a much greater impact on an individual's approach to business than most people expect — even if that individual is not a **devout** follower of a particular religion. In the Arab world, conversations are sprinkled with the phrase

Word Study

cognizant /kɒɡnɪzənt/

adj. 察知的, 认识
(某事物)的

devout /dɪ'vaʊt/ adj.
虔诚的; 真诚的

Inshallah — if God will. The **deference** to a higher power, a lack of control over many matters here on earth and the general **what-will-be-will-be** attitude that the phrase **epitomizes** carry over into everything from the airline schedules to the pace of business negotiations.

Take the case of a German investment banker recently sent to negotiate a finance deal for a manufacturing plant in Vietnam — a country that is heavily influenced by a centuries-old **Confucian** philosophy that emphasizes consensus and places a premium on harmony. After all, lighting incense at a family shrine is as much a part of contemporary Vietnamese life as watching videos.

“The negotiations seemed to drag on for months and it was impossible to find anyone prepared to make a decision,” says the banker. “I began losing patience. They didn’t seem to understand that this deal could mean a lot of money for their factory, for my bank and for me. I was shouting, trying to make my point. I banged my fist. I was out of control. Days later the Vietnamese broke off the talks and suggested I leave.”

Obviously, it was the failure to fully understand the influence of Confucian thought on Vietnamese perceptions that **sabotaged** the mission. Decision making is slow in Vietnam partially because Confucian beliefs dictate decision by consensus. **Adversity** — and contract talks — is faced with calm and patience. Lastly, the Vietnamese have little respect for anyone who loses patience (the German banker’s first mistake) or appears selfish (banker mistake number two — by highlighting how much money he could make from the deal). A little more homework and understanding of the cultural context in which the banker was dealing and the deal might have been saved.

CONFLICTING ATTITUDES

Obviously, cultural values have an enormous impact on the way business is conducted. Two of the most basic value differences to be considered are whether a culture emphasizes **individualism**, like the United States, or **collectivism** like China, and whether societies are task-driven — like the United States or Canada, or relationship-driven — like Latin America. (Individualist and collectivist societies are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.)

The cultural values that are manifested in daily life are not only reflected to business but are sometimes exaggerated. Failing to understand the cultural basics can translate into a deal killer even before the negotiations begin. Often visitors will be left scratching their heads as to why things have fallen apart.

A talented young Canadian representative of a consumer products company ran into just such a situation in China. Keen to make his mark, the Canadian was sent to Shanghai by his company to begin talks about setting up a sales and manufacturing distribution network in China. The investment was worth hundreds of millions of dollars. In their initial correspondence,

Word Study

deference /defərəns/

n. 顺从

what-will-be-will-be

听其自然

epitomize /i'pitəmaɪz/

v. 集中体现

Confucian

/kən'fjuːf(ə)n/

adj. 孔夫子的, 儒学的

sabotage

/sə'boʊtɑːʒ/ *v.* 蓄意

破坏

adversity /əd'vɜːsɪti/

n. 逆境, 不幸

individualism

/ɪndrɪ'vɪdʒʊəlɪz(ə)m/

n. 个人主义

collectivism

/kə'lektɪvɪzəm/ *n.*

集体主义

Word Study

nuisance /'nju:snəs/ *n.*

讨厌的人或者事

salvage /'sælvɪdʒ/ *v.*

挽救

meritocracy

/,merɪ'tɒkrəsi/ *n.* 精英管理

英管理

manifestation

/,mænɪfes'teɪʃən/ *n.*

表示, 显示

the Chinese appeared eager to participate. A group of high-level executives visited the Canadian company's headquarters and were warmly feted by the CEO and senior management. The mistake came when they assigned the young executive to travel to China to hammer out the details.

"I could tell by their written correspondence that they were eager to do business and when I arrived I was treated like royalty," the Canadian says, "but a few days into the trip, their attitude seemed to turn cold. They began treating me like just another foreign **nuisance**. The difference in their attitude was night and day between their visit to Canada and my visit to China. I just didn't understand it." The mystery was solved when a group of concerned Chinese middle managers took the visitor aside and explained. They told him that despite his qualifications, the senior management of the Chinese firm believed he was simply too young to do such important business. "They explained that in Chinese culture, age and experience are highly valued and Chinese business leaders look down on young negotiators. They cannot take them seriously. They said, that because I was the one chosen to come to China — someone so young — that our home office somehow had devalued the deal and the relationship."

The damage was repaired and the deal **salvaged** when headquarters flew a more senior — and older — executive to China to act as a front for the business and to deal with senior Chinese executives. The younger executive still ran the show on a day-to-day basis but kept a lower profile.

CULTURE CAUTION: This example illustrates how a lack of understanding on both sides can cause confusion. The Chinese must also understand that Western culture is based on **meritocracy** and that young executives in the West are given far more training and responsibility than their Chinese counterparts.

Other Key Components

Familiarity with these other basic building blocks of culture can provide insight into what to expect at the negotiating table as well as in relationships with foreign colleagues or partners. Each piece contributes to the whole that is a national or regional culture. Many of the most obvious clues can simply be discovered by reading some history, current publications, and through general observation. Some of the best lessons about cultural mindset are available free — on the street — if only you train yourself to observe and then put these observations into the proper context.

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

Basic rules of etiquette, how much physical contact is acceptable, how much physical space do people expect, how formal are greetings — clues to all these **manifestations** of a national cultural mindset are available the minute you step off an airplane in a different country.

文化的其他要素

对文化的基本要素熟知为我们在谈判桌上达到理想的预期打下了基础,也对我们与外籍同事或合作伙伴建立良好的关系有所帮助。除这些基本要素之外,文化的其他关键要素还包括:风俗习惯、艺术、教育、幽默和社会组织。

THE ARTS

Drama, music, literature and architecture are all manifestations of a cultural mind-set that can provide insight into the thought patterns of a society and, in turn, of an individual that you might be dealing with. Clues to evolving attitudes and tolerance levels can often be found in current pop culture.

CULTURE CAUTION: Don't make the mistake that some people do by trying to figure out American or Indian cultures simply by reading books and watching movies. The entertainment industry does not always reflect reality.

EDUCATION

Some cultures place greater value on formal education than others. Understanding this attitude and tailoring a presentation or even designing a business card (listing academic qualifications and higher degrees) can win instant respect. However, if you boast of such qualifications in a business culture that cares little for such credentials, you run the risk of being labeled **pretentious** windbag. Understanding how a society values education can also help determine how a business partner processes information and how you might need to construct a presentation or sales pitch. A company from a society that values education is also likely to be interested in the type of special training a foreign business can offer.

HUMOR

Some societies are simply more lighthearted than others and have a larger capacity for humor. Clues to the length of the national **funny bone** are often reflected in local advertising campaigns and the media. For example, British television is laden with situation comedies whereas this genre is relatively **sparse** on German airwaves. Cultural indicator — the British may appreciate a touch of levity in their business dealings. Germans believe business is far too serious a matter for humorous asides.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

The formalities of government, the basic organizational chart of a corporation, the **propensity** for individuals to join groups and how these groups are led can reveal much about a culture's decision making process. These in turn can give you insight into how you can expect business decisions to be made and how much autonomy your counterpart may have in negotiations. A highly structured culture usually means longer decision time and less autonomy for a negotiator.

Do Cultures Evolve?

A society's culture is far from **stagnant**; rather, it is forever evolving and re-inventing itself. While certain cultural traditions may remain constant,

Word Study

pretentious
/prɪ'tenʃəs/ *adj.* 虚
伪的, 做作的

funny bone 幽默感

sparse /spɑ:s/ *adj.* 稀
疏的, 稀少的

propensity
/prə'pensɪti/ *n.* 倾
向, 偏好

stagnant /stægnənt/
adj. 停滞的, 不流
动的

文化是发展演变的吗?

文化是发展演变的吗? 答案当然是肯定的。文化不但永久向前发展, 还不断重新再造。或许某些特定文化传统保持稳定, 但社会的容忍度及根深蒂固、长期存在的信仰的确会发生变化。十年前的社会禁忌现今可能已为人所接受。20世纪商业文化信条发生翻天覆地变化的两个国家当属俄罗斯和日本。

Word Study

- deep-seated 根深蒂固的
long-standing 长期存在的
hallmark /'hɔ:lmark/ *n.* 标记, 特征
armament /'ɑ:məmənt/ *n.* 军备
prevalent /'prevalənt/ *adj.* 流行的, 盛行的
elite /'eɪli:t/ *n.* 精英阶层
coddle /'kɒd(ə)l/ *v.* 悉心照料, 娇惯
dacha /'dætʃə/ *n.* 俄国郊外的别墅
assault /ə'sɔ:lt/ *n.* 攻击; 袭击

a society's tolerance level and the application of **deep-seated**, **long-standing** beliefs do change. What was forbidden in a society a decade ago may be accepted practice and norm now. Perhaps the most sweeping and rapid change in business culture attitudes to take place this century is currently under way in Russia. Meanwhile, in Japan, there are increasing signs of change in attitudes and traditions concerning business and employment that have been **hallmarks** of the society for centuries.

THE MOSCOW MORPH

In Russia, only a few years ago, the central government was business. It owned everything from **armaments** factories to retail stores. Now, the sale (some would contend, giveaway) of the century is almost done. More than 120,000 state-owned enterprises have been privatized, including 75 percent of manufacturing firms and 85 percent of wholesale and retail trade. New millionaires have been created along with a new class of poor Russians.

Today, the “you eat what you kill” attitude of Russia's new market economy, coupled with the frontier mentality **prevalent** in major cities that says anything goes, especially in money and sex, is essentially contrary to previous mores under communist rule. By 1991, virtually overnight, the social order of the past 70 years in Russia vanished. What were previously crimes — economic speculation and private ownership of property — are now virtues. The ability to think and act independently, traits that even ancient Russians shunned, are now the essence of not only success but survival. It is difficult to find a foreign businessperson who has not experienced difficulty in doing business in Russia. The confusion and the chaos of the basic cultural transformation that dominates Russia today may not necessarily mean that Russians are bad at private enterprise, just that they are new to it.

Those involved in commerce are the new **elite**, replacing the **coddled** and heavily subsidized intellectuals, the “haves” of previous eras. The writer, the professor, and the thinker led a charmed life of special shops with imported goods, summer **dachas** and high respect in Soviet society as in earlier Russian society. Today, these people are near the bottom of the social heap.

“What is happening in Russia is well beyond a change in economic or market systems. It is a change in the very fabric of what defined the Russian character and Russian culture,” says an Italian businesswoman who has resided in Moscow since the early 1970s. “This is an all-out **assault** on the culture, even on the language, on perceptions of such basic concepts as good and evil. The Russian value system has changed; formal education — unless it is an MBA from some European university — used to be a ticket to respect and even relative material wealth. Now the admired aren't writers or dancers, they are the businessmen,” she says.

“The Russian culture that I studied and lived with for several decades has vanished. To be honest Moscow is getting to be pretty much the same as any other big European city, right down to the McDonald's.”