



foreign exchanges Japan

Each issue, we take a look at a foreign culture and point out a few pitfalls for the unwary.

Before you start. The exchange of business cards, known as 'meishi' must occur. Always present and receive cards with both hands and treat the card you receive with the utmost respect. Ideally, your card should be printed in English and also Japanese.

Never confront, criticise or insult your business partner, or show negative emotions during business negotiations. It's OK to be open about your opinions but avoid being aggressive. 'Face' is an important concept in Japanese protocol and it is essential to preserve and foster this within business relationships.

Be aware of the concept of gift giving. It has long been an important part of business practice and today, although not expected, will still be accepted with gratitude. The gift should not be too expensive or excessive, as this could be considered a bribe.

Watch out for using the number four, as it sounds like the Japanese word for death.

The final word. Contracts are not necessarily confirmation that a business relationship is successful. It is important to maintain contact in order to build trust for a long-term relationship.

Source: Communicaid International: Global Communication - www.communicaid.com