

La relation commerciale est-elle identique dans tous les pays ?

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Agenda

- **Introductions – Round table**
- **What is different**
- **What is similar**
- **Conclusions**

What's different?

The way of trading in the various parts of the world is somehow specific to each Region – and even to each country

- In most of countries - it's important to demonstrate you are able to speak the other party's language (or have your own translator)

Some examples:

- Italy : almost no one speaks English – some speak French
- France : no foreign language skills – which is the main reason why so many Anglo-Saxon firms fail to penetrate this market
- Belgium : in some parts of the country – no Flemish = no business
- Poland – and most of Central Eastern European countries: a bit of German, English, French, Russian – however people will respect you more if you speak Polish
- UK and USA: forget about trading in these countries if you don't speak English
- Japan: have your own translator (99% of Japanese don't speak any foreign language)
- China: English is acceptable – but Mandarin is better! Better to have a translator, too.

What's different?

- Adapting yourself to the local working rhythm is essential

Some Examples:

- Working hours in Spain
 - Lunch negotiations in France
 - Non-stop working day in UK or USA
 - Respect of appointment times in Germany
 - Avoid the “American meeting style” in most of the EU countries (working lunch, day-long meetings, 100 slides without any concrete content, ...)
- Do not consider that your own commercial deontology rules apply in all EU countries

Some Examples:

- Respect of delivery commitments in Italy
- Respect of commercial agreements in the Central Eastern countries
- “Pots de vin” in Poland, Russia or Romania
- Respect of quality committed
 - No control required in Scotland or Germany
 - Ongoing quality checks required in Bulgaria, Russia, etc

What's different?

- Understand the local commercial habits and embrace them
 - Is a signed agreement required – or can you trust somebody by simply shaking hands?
 - What are the usual payment terms (320 days in Italy, ...)?
 - Are commercial agreements solely based on the content of the agreement (UK) or on jurisprudence (e.g. commercial agent status) ?
 - Which laws rule the trading relations locally?
 - Follow a precise protocol for any discussion/negotiation with foreign people
 - In Japan: exchange of visit cards -> offering gifts -> discovering what the role of each person present is -> share your requirements/expectations/needs with the other party -> listen -> never try to reach an agreement during your first contact
 - If you are a woman – make sure you'll be able to trade in the country (cf. Japan)
- Be careful when deciphering what people's answers mean – Don't send yourself any verbal or physical signals which might be misinterpreted
 - Answering No is considered as impolite in many Asian countries – Therefore when you'll be answered Yes, make sure this means "I agree" or "I understand" and not "I hear what you say"
- Definitely consider that the rules of the game are different for each country – and try if possible to be backed by a local commercial representative.

And what's similar?

The basics for buying or selling are the same throughout the world

- **If you are a buyer:**
 - Find out which are the best countries where to source your suppliers
 - Don't take for granted they know your company: introduce yourself and your company in an attractive way. Ensure that your business is interesting for your suppliers
 - Make sure no language barriers will prevent you from trading with them
 - Specify clearly your needs – Carefully check until which extent your needs are understood
 - Manage your call-to-tender in a transparent and credible way
 - Create a competitive field where any offer comparison is made on a like-for-like base
 - Let suppliers know what they have to do in order to get your business
 - Before striking a deal with the best-offering supplier – validate all aspects of your future collaboration (technical and financial audits)
- **Agentrics experience:**
 - Expanding the European online negotiation methodology to Asia Pacific and Americas

And what's similar?

- **If you are a seller:**
 - Prospect your market
 - Understand who your potential customers are and what they are looking for
 - Qualify them exactly in the same way as they'll do for you (commercial and financial audits)
 - Understand the culture and commercial habits of buyer's country
 - If your language skills don't enable you to exchange in buyer's language – seek for a translator support or use a language which you know will be understood by the buyer
 - Prepare your meetings with them as carefully as if you were visiting a customer in your own country
 - Be prepared to negotiate – Assess your cost breakdown – Define your negotiation limit and respect it
 - Accept to have your agreement ruled by the buyer's country legal authorities (make sure these rules are acceptable for you)
 - Behave commercially in a way which forces buyers to respect you
 - Make sure that you have access to the right type of support offered by organisations such as the Coface, etc

Conclusion

- **Trading in a foreign country requires that**
 - You apply the basic rules of your industry
 - And in the mean time understand the specifics of each country and adapt your commercial approach to them.

- **And now ... let's start the group discussion!**