

**PROTOCOL AND ETIQUETTE TOOLKIT**

**Overview**

Prior to engaging across cultures hosts and outbound delegations should prepare for visits by learning about the customs and cultures of their counterparts and apply the knowledge and skills obtained to the interactions with their partners. Below are key elements of protocol and etiquette that should be taken into consideration.

**Greetings**

Kiss, bow, or shake hands? It is important to know the appropriate greeting when meeting or receiving your international counterparts. Furthermore, delegates need to be aware of the variations that may exist depending on the gender, age, social status, or various other factors.

**Names**

Every attempt should be made to pronounce your counterparts name clearly and correctly using their preferred name and appropriate title and form of address. This also includes developing an understanding of the preference for given name vs. surname and the use of nicknames or diminutives.

**Titles and Forms of Address**

In written and verbal communication, the appropriate title and form of address should be used for each individual. It is best to err on the side of formality and wait until invited to use more casual forms of address or drop titles.

**Rank**

Showing deference to the rank and status of delegates when facilitating introductions and making seating arrangements will assist in meeting the expectations of your counterparts from more hierarchical cultures. Also, providing a roster to your host will a rank order of your delegates will inform your hosts so they can reciprocate the appropriate respect and courtesies.

**Behavior**

Manners are not universal, and it is important to be aware of the taboos and prescribed behaviors that exist in other countries you are visiting. Specific areas of consideration should include personal space and touching, gestures, and gender issues.

**Communication**

Communications styles vary by culture with some being very direct and others being more indirect and requiring an understanding of the context to fully comprehend the meaning. Delegates should make an attempt to learn the language or at the very least key phrases and greetings, keeping in mind that variations in formality and gender use may exist.

**Time**

Scheduling and time orientation vary greatly around the world. When engaging with counterparts from more monochronic cultures that emphasize punctuality it is important to be disciplined. In cultures that are more polychronic and flexible it is important to be patient.

**Attire**

In addition to packing your suitcase with weather appropriate clothes, it is important to take into consideration the dress code and customs, such as removing shoes indoors, before visiting your host country. When receiving delegations, hosts should notify their visitors and guests of the expectations with specific examples, since terms like “business casual” can have different interpretations.

**Gift Giving**

The gift exchange is a common practice in international exchange and time and consideration should be given to the selecting the memento. To avoid gaffs you should research the taboos and traditions of your counterpart’s culture. Colors, numbers, and materials may carry with them meanings due to superstitions or religious beliefs, so it is best to seek advice before presenting a gift.

**Food and Drink**

Delegates should research and practice the appropriate dinning etiquette when visiting their host country. When hosting international visitors, you will need to take into consideration dietary restrictions and religious prohibitions to accommodate your guests.

**Online Resources**

The following list of online resources will assist in your preparation.

**Culture Crossing Guide**

<http://guide.culturecrossing.net/>

Countries and their Cultures: World Culture Encyclopedia

<https://www.everyculture.com/>

CIA World Factbook

<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>

Honor and Respect: The Official Guide to Names, Titles, & Forms of Address

<https://www.formsofaddress.info/>