

Analysis of the Differences and Reasons of Chinese and Western Business Etiquette

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Abstract: *Business etiquette mainly refers to the etiquette that companies, enterprise personnel and all other persons engaged in economic activities should abide by in economic transactions. Good business etiquette promotes good relationships, which in turn benefit the development of various causes. With the development of China's economy, China's international business activities have become more and more frequent, and more and more Chinese have contacts with foreigners. In foreign exchanges, good and proper etiquette is not only a reflection of personal qualities, but also represents the current image of the country. Therefore, more and more people began to learn etiquette and apply etiquette. But due to the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, business etiquette is also very different. Understanding the differences between different etiquette can make people better use business etiquette, reducing or eliminating misunderstandings, frictions and conflicts caused by differences, and play a very important role in effectively engaging in international business activities and improving communication effects.*

Keywords: difference; Chinese and western; business etiquette.

1. INTRODUCTION

Business etiquette mainly refers to the etiquette that companies, enterprise personnel and all other people engaged in economic activities should abide by in economic transactions. The code of conduct is reflected in mutual respect in business activities. China is one of the important birthplaces of mankind and one of the centers of civilization in the world, with a long history and culture. Business etiquette is divided into appearance etiquette, manners etiquette, conversation etiquette and meeting etiquette. There are huge cultural differences between China, with Confucianism at its core, and the West, with Christian culture at its core, which inevitably leads to a wide difference in business etiquette between China and the West. This article mainly analyzes and explains the differences between Chinese and Western business etiquette through the comparison of Chinese and Western clothing, diet, conversation and communication processes.

2. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHINESE AND WESTERN BUSINESS ETIQUETTE

2.1 Differences in clothing

In business situations, dress is very important, successful dress can reflect a person's identity, status, cultivation and taste, but also an important embodiment of paying attention to etiquette. In business activities, dress should not be too personal, too casual, and dignified.

Chinese have their own traditional costumes. Zhongshan clothing, Tang clothing, cheongsam, etc. are all clothing with our national characteristics. Although Chinese dress gradually became Westernized and formalized in business situations. But sometimes we still wear traditional clothes to some events. And Westerners don't wear traditional clothing at important business events. Men generally wear suits to business events, while women wear dress suits for formal occasions.^[1]

2.2 Differences in diet

Dining is very common and important in business activities. If you behave inappropriately when it comes to meals, you will leave a bad impression.

2.2.1 Eating habits

Chinese diets are varied and have a wide range of choices. Rice, pasta, vegetables, meat dishes, fruits, etc. Our diet has become much simpler, usually with rice as the main food, plus a few side dishes. Occasionally we also eat noodles and dumplings. Despite this, the diet of Westerners is relatively simple and the way of cooking is not complex. Their food is mainly bread, ham, beef, etc, and the choice of dishes is small.

2.2.2 Hospitality

Chinese are hospitable by nature and strive to make guests feel comfortable and feel at home as much as possible. When eating, it will also be more casual and lively. Chinese will chat and laugh at the dinner table, creating a harmonious and warm dining atmosphere. Sometimes they also use his own tableware to serve dishes for guests, and also likes to persuade guest to drink more alcoholic beverage. Westerners, however, do not like such behavior. They think that eating should be quiet, and eating while

talking is not healthy. Serving dishes for others is even more disgusting. They thought it was unhygienic. Therefore, in foreign-related activities, such behavior will cause them to be disgusted.^[2]

2.2.3 Seating Position

Chinese respects the left side. When entertaining guests, distinguished guests should be placed on the left seat, and then arranged in turn. In the West, the right side is respected, and men and women sit apart. The seat furthest from the door and opposite the door belongs to the hostess. The seat to the right of the hostess is the first guest of honor, usually a gentleman. The seat on the right hand side of the man is the second guest of honor, usually the lady of the guest of honor. The seat on the left hand side of the hostess is the third guest of honor. The seat on the left hand side of the man is the fourth guest of honor.^[3]

2.2.4 Tableware

In China, the tableware used for eating is mainly plates, bowls, chopsticks, spoons, etc. The use of tableware is also relatively simple, and there will not be many classifications and requirements. In Western countries, the use of tableware is more complicated. There are knives, forks, spoons, cups, plates, etc. These tableware are subdivided into many types at the same time. And Westerners have high requirements for the use of tableware, and they have to use different knives and forks to eat different things. So you'll see a lot of knives and forks on both sides of the dishes on the Western table.

2.2.5 Dining Attire

In China, people eat in restaurants and can dress casually. People only dress grandly at important banquets. In the West, it is common sense to dress appropriately when eating. For example, in high-end restaurants, men must wear suits and leather shoes, and women must wear suits and heeled shoes.

2.3 Differences in conversation

Conversation is an important means of people-to-people communication and the main channel for obtaining information in business situations. We should pay more attention to the behavior of conversation.^[4]

2.3.1 Conversational Style

In business conversations, Chinese like to have an in-depth conversation with you about a problem from big to small, starting from the whole, then solving it from big to small, and finally putting forward the key points. In the process of talking, we also try not to hurt each other's harmony. Westerners, on the other hand, like to be direct when talking, spreading outward through a specific problem, and solving the problem at its root. So they don't like the euphemistic way of communicating with Chinese. Therefore, we should try to avoid this behavior when talking to foreign guests.

2.3.2 Listening Methods

In the process of conversation, Chinese always listen silently when listening to others, and will not interrupt others by casually asking questions. We think it's very impolite to do this, a sign of humility and pickiness. People in Western countries, on the other hand, are accustomed to constantly reacting and asking questions when listening to others. They think silence means you're not listening well, or you're tired or angry.^[5]

2.3.3 Body Language

Chinese doesn't have a lot of body language when talking. Generally, when talking to someone, you will sit there upright and watch the other person express your opinion. Sometimes there are some auxiliary movements on the hands, but the amplitude is not very large and not very exaggerated. Because the Chinese is more rigorous, more subtle, and does not like such an explicit expression. Westerners will have a lot of body language when speaking, and the body movements are rich and exaggerated. They think it's a good way to express their emotions.

2.4 Differences in Interactions

2.4.1 Daily language and habits

Chinese will use some of the more easy-going colloquialism in daily interactions. For example, ask the other person where they went or if they had eaten. But for Westerners, this way of greeting can make the other person feel sudden, embarrassed, and even unhappy. Because they will feel that this kind of questioning is a feeling of inquiring about the privacy of others, and feel that the other party is asking about their private life. In the West, their daily greetings are only a word of hello or how are you going. More often than not, they talk about the weather.^[6]

Chinese like to nod, shake hands or smile when they meet. But in the West, people like to hug, kiss on the cheek or kiss their hands when they meet.

2.4.2 Gift-giving concepts

Chinese pays attention to courtesy and likes to give gifts as an expression of heart. We believe that the more valuable the gift, the deeper the affection. Therefore, they will often give away valuables at business events in the hope of promoting friendship between them. But Westerners don't like this practice. They pay attention to the distinction between public and private, and do not like to solve problems by giving gifts. And they don't accept expensive gifts and gifts involving their private lives. They like gifts that are not very expensive but do mean something, such as flowers, concert tickets, alcohol, etc.

3. REASONS FOR THE DIFFERENCE IN BUSINESS ETIQUETTE BETWEEN CHINA AND THE WEST

3.1 Differences in values

In the traditional Chinese concept, the value of the individual is reflected in the social value. We attach importance to social values, and national interests are greater than individual interests. Traditional Chinese culture has always examined personal value from the perspective of social relations and evaluated personal value from the perspective of social value. Individuals cannot be separated from society. Individuals can have individuality, and individuality should be promoted, but individuals can never be placed above the state and society. Therefore, Chinese advocate harmony, benevolence and righteousness, and will not blindly pursue interests. This value of non-self-subjectivity is very different from the Western values of self-centered individualism. Western culture believes that the individual is the standard, purpose and core of society. The initiative and creativity that pursues individual interests is the intrinsic driving force of social progress, so personal interests should be placed above all else. They advocate egoism, individual heroism and liberalism, which excessively praise themselves and care only for themselves, making interpersonal relationships very cold. The mutual concern we advocate is seen by them as prying into privacy, so they are very averse to Chinese inquiring daily language. And in terms of privacy, they pay great attention to it, and they are very resistant to anything that involves privacy.^[7]

3.2 Different views of time

In traditional Chinese culture, the understanding of time is a circular concept of time. Chinese concept of time is relatively casual and flexible. Westerners have a linear concept of time, believing that time is a straight line with a beginning and an end. Westerners have a strong sense of time. They use the time very precisely and do everything strictly according to the schedule. In the eyes of Western businessmen, time is always money. So Westerners like to get straight to the point. In the meeting, they do not like to stop or remain silent, hoping to get to the point as soon as possible. In China, the two sides do not immediately get down to business when talking, but talk about topics of mutual interest. This practice is believed to nurture the relationship and determine whether the other party is suitable for long-term cooperation. In the course of the meeting, the main task is to exchange ideas and information with each other, and real decisions are made outside the meeting. At the same time, we are happy to invest emotionally, and business activities generally progress slowly.

3.3 Different views on diet

Chinese emphasized that Food is the paramount necessity of the people, indicating that diet is very important in the hearts of Chinese. Chinese cuisine requires color, aroma and taste. Westerners' diet is based on the highest standards of nutritional taste, and the color, aroma and taste of dishes are secondary requirements. At the traditional Chinese banquet, everyone sits around a round table, which is in line with the general mentality of our national great reunion. The core of Western-style banquets lies in friendship, elegant and warm.

3.4 Different language habits

The language of a human group is intimately linked to its worldview. The concept of the same language often has completely different derivations and rhetorical meanings, and even different lexical meanings, in different cultures. In China, keeping a low profile and being modest is a virtue. Therefore, being praised by others is always self-humility, and Chinese often shows humility. And this is not in line with Western cultural traditions, and they regard this humility as inferiority. In Western culture, people who praise others always expect positive comments and positive reactions to their praise. Westerners always do not hesitate to express gratitude when they hear the praise of others. In the eyes of Chinese, it is very immodest to accept the praise of others.^[8]

3.5 Nonverbal habits

Nonverbal habits include gestures, posture, gaze, body distance, etc. Handshakes are the most common non-verbal habit in modern business etiquette. In China, people often hold each other's hands for a long time in order to show warmth and respect for each other. At the same time, they will exchange pleasantries, and sometimes pat each other on the shoulder and back. In

Western countries, the two will immediately loosen after shaking hands . They think that getting too close will appear too intimate. So people in Western countries will be embarrassed by the excessive intimacy of Chinese. Shrugging is also a common body posture in many Western countries. When they shrug their shoulders, they often show that they can't do anything. In China, we shake our heads or wave our hands when we say that.

4. CONCLUSION

Due to different cultural backgrounds and ways of thinking, there are some fundamental differences between business etiquette in China and Western countries. Therefore, in order to successfully conduct international business activities, business personnel must have a better understanding of the business etiquette of each country. We need to pay attention to the application of etiquette in different countries, maintaining good and smooth communication, and promote the successful development of business activities.

While understanding and respecting the etiquette of Western countries, we must not abandon our own etiquette. Now there are some people who admire the outside world and forget their roots. We should learn from the excellent culture of other countries, but we should inherit and carry forward the excellent culture of our own country.

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