

Differences In Communication Styles

As you know, communication plays a key role in the success and survival of a partnership. Paying attention to the communication styles of individual members encourages participation and collaboration.

- **Conventions for courtesy.** Each culture has conventions for courtesy. For example, “How are you?” is usually not a real question, but a greeting. Some other cultures, however, find it rude to ask a question and not wait for an answer.
- **Sequence.** How people arrange information differs from culture to culture. Some people communicate in a linear fashion, while others branch off on tangents.
- **Phasing.** Cultural and regional differences affect how and when business subjects are discussed. In some cultures, business and pleasure don’t mix.
- **Objectivity.** To some people, logic, orderliness, and accuracy are essential in communication. While the less orderly communicator may seem chaotic to some, the persistently reasoned, precision-oriented communicator may seem manipulative and domineering to others.
- **Specificity.** In some cultures, people prefer to start with the specifics and expand to the broader topic. In other cultures, people want to deal with the generalities and then move to the specifics.
- **Assertiveness.** People may be offended by communicators who are more assertive than what is acceptable in their culture.
- **Candor.** In some cultures, telling the truth is essential, and candor is respected. In others, people are not less honest, but they have their own way of communicating the real meaning.
- **Simplicity.** Many people think that if they use big words and long sentences they will make a better impression, when actually they do just the opposite.
- **Accents.** Some accents impress people, and others cause negative reactions. A common mistake some Americans make is that a person who speaks English without an accent is more competent or trustworthy than someone with an accent.
- **Telephone/Electronic Mail.** The telephone and e-mail are cold mediums for people who prefer personal contact, because they do not transmit nonverbal communication, such as gestures and other forms of body language.



