

Evolution or Revolution

Observations on how to open doors and close deals in Japan

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INSIDE HELP

"An outsider with no connections almost never penetrates the outer wall of the castle"
Get an interface that you can trust, someone to get you across the moat, a go-between, adviser, consultant
Not just Introductions but personal ties and guarantees
Borrowing face

UNDERSTAND THE PEOPLE

Two Cultures exist – The visible/tangible culture & one that can-not be seen or touched
It's the invisible culture of Japan sets it apart & makes it difficult to follow
Westerners 'give as good as get', tough skin, frank, direct, assertive
Japanese opposite: control & mask thoughts and emotions, don't allow others to know what they are thinking

NON VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Communication without talking, regarded highly as a characteristic in Japan "the art of the belly"
It works domestically, but brings problems when dealing with internationals
Is this an opportunity or threat for you?
Reduce this tension; learn some Japanese words, protocol, appreciation of culture

PRESENTING YOUR COMPANY

Avoid lack of knowledge about the market and your target company – do your homework
Emphasise your unique, strong "value add"
Professionalism and thoroughness
Show commitment – a BIG issue to Japanese companies
Show long term vision
Important hallmarks; confidence, trust, loyalty – is this a barrier or opportunity for you?
Show quality; avoid 'second class' image
Show fighting spirit, samurai strength
Assign your own person/contact in Japan, someone the Japanese company can trust, and you can trust

GETTING BEHIND THE FAÇADE

Japanese society is based on a carefully fashioned image to the outside world
Determine the facts before you commit and make decisions
Need to trust and like you

DECISION MAKING

Dealing with a closely knit group – not a leader, boss or individuals
Centuries of group think conditioning has resulted in a highly refined ability to communicate with each other "company telepathy"
PLUS = Projects progress smoothly once agreed, MINUS = unable to respond quickly

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Pre activity in Japan - Japanese people are comfortable with this – it is important, "clear a path into the forest in advance"
Provide information – everything that is required
Be prepared to travel – personal relationships are key
Advisors and consultants – know the difference, work with a good one
Follow up – 'a fragile flower needs daily care', 'courting a very desirable mate' Japanese people expect regular communication and touching
Recognize a NO – non verbal clues
Negotiation tactics – Japanese side will always allow (make) you go first – manage this!
Silence is golden
After 5 meetings, 'Nomi-nication'
Outside office communications