



Intercultural Collaboration betten **Germans** and **Americans**

Whitney Breer

Unterbörsch 62, 51515 Kürten, Germany

Tel. (+49) 02207.703208

www.GoLebenskunst.de

Whitney@golebenskunst.de

Cultural Spectacles

To the Germans, foreigners can be:

- Unpunctual
- Untidy and disorderly
- Inefficient
- Undisciplined
- Poorly dressed
- Untruthful
- Unreliable, flippant and disorganized
- Nonconformist and reckless
- Inquisitive and can't mind their own business
- Short term and poor planners
- Too hurried, too informal and too early
- Lack respect, frankness and sense of duty
- Don't give enough context or explanation
- Indulge in too much small talk
- Can't stand criticism
- Lack protocol

To the Americans, foreigners can be:

- Slow
- Old-fashioned
- Cautious
- Impractical
- Undemocratic
- Stuffy
- Afraid of change and innovation
- Small thinkers
- Lacking in drive, ambition, energy, work ethic and a national mission
- Apt to complicate simple things
- Fail to grab opportunities
- Too little focus on the bottom line
- Leftish or anti-American
- Liable to fail if they don't believe that everything is possible in the USA



Some Suggestions to Working with Germans

How do these behavioral rules compare to the American culture?

Use formal etiquette when meeting your German counterparts – shake hands, use last names if they do.

Maintain a more serious demeanor and formal posture.

Do not joke around or get too relaxed until the meeting is coming to a close.

Remember the eye contact can be stronger than in other cultures and that Germans expect you to maintain eye contact to show you're listening and are honest.

Set clear deadlines and stick to them, whether you're doing the asking or being asked to do something. This will help build trust with your German business partner. They place a lot of value on reliability and delivering what you promise.

BE RELIABLE. In business, it's even more important than friendliness.

Emails: Pay attention to whom you're copying and delivering information to. Ask yourself: Is it absolutely necessary to put them in the copy? Germans tend to use Cc much less frequently than Americans.

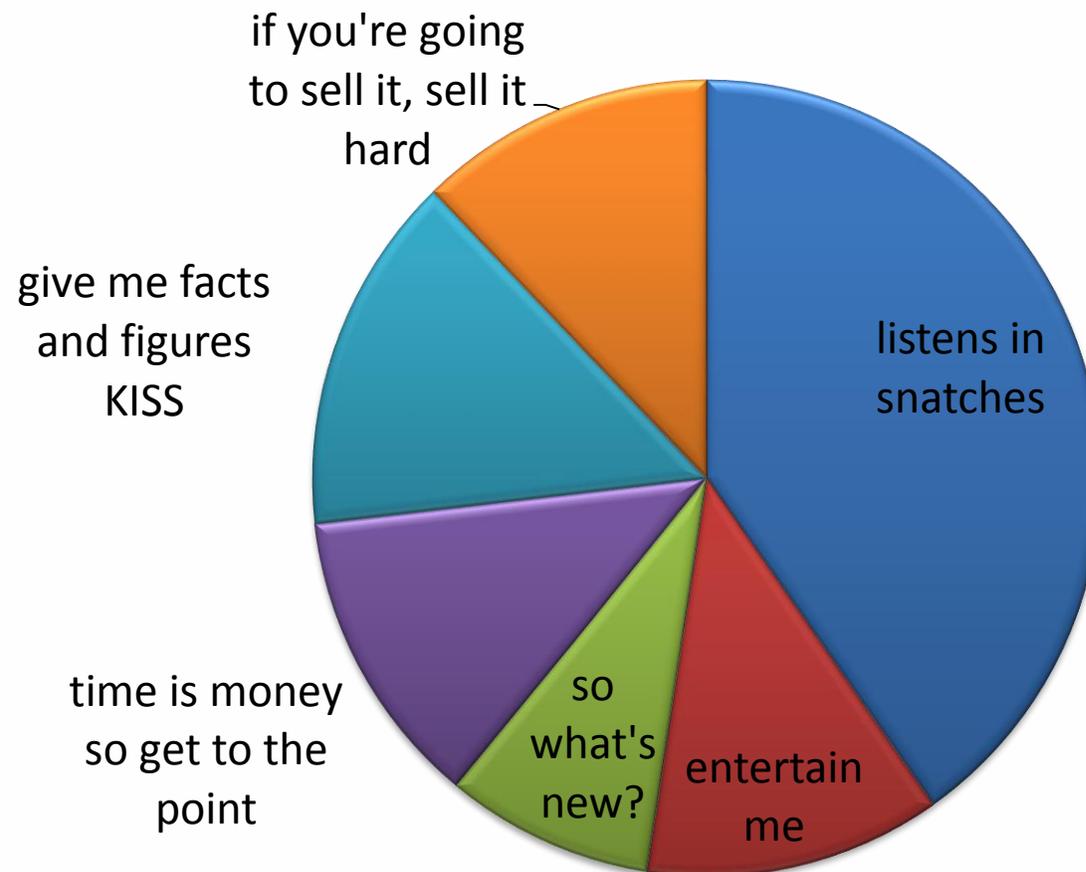
Emails: Don't use blind copies. This is absolutely taboo and can be a root source mistrust between co-workers.

Emails: Answer all mails as promptly as possible (i.e. within 24 hours). If you can't provide the right answer, let the person know and forward the mail to the appropriate person.

Don't be afraid of negative feedback, both giving and receiving. It's considered respectful, helpful and honest in Germany.



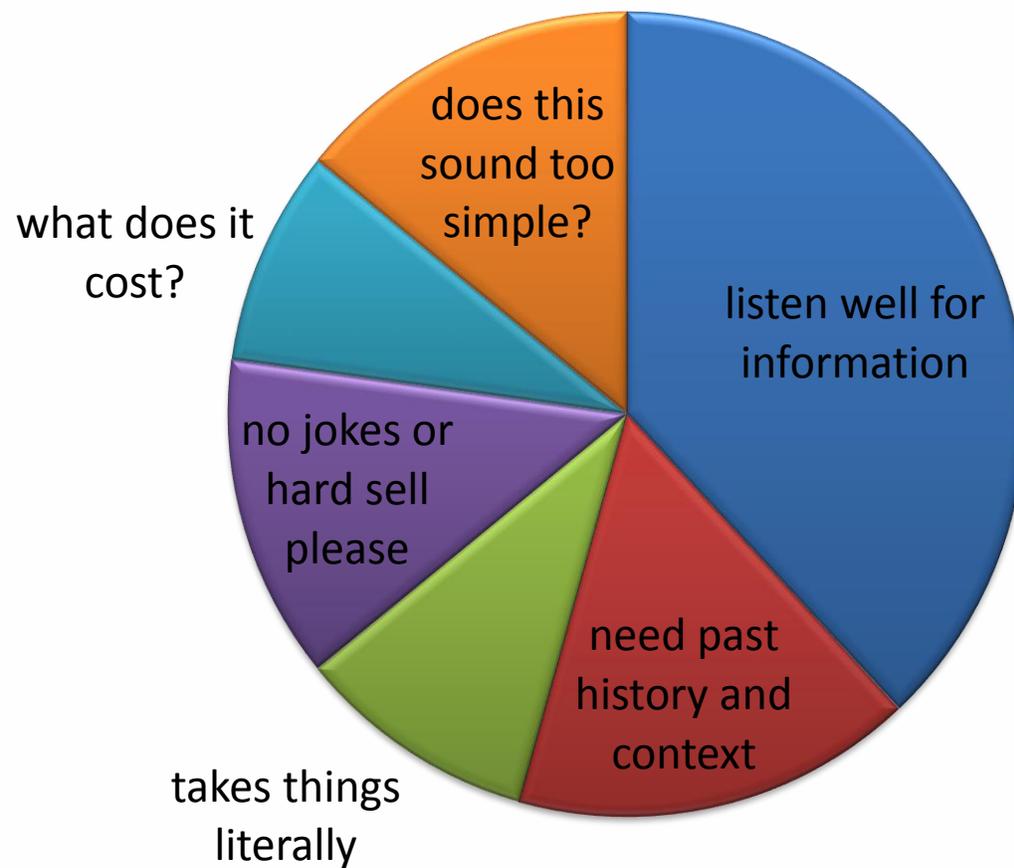
What should you pay attention to when you are presenting to Americans?



Americans are keen on acquiring technical details, but, used to show business, their attention wanders if speakers are boring.

Recent studies indicate that Americans have an average attention span of 7 – 10 minutes when listening to a presentation . After that you lose them and they get bored

What should you pay attention to when you are presenting to Germans?



Germans, hungry for information and technical details, are among the world's best listeners. They are price conscious and need lots of context. They become suspicious if things sound too simple.



We would be glad to help you find the solution you are looking for be it your global (virtual) team, international project, short term assignment, etc: customized workshops, country-specific trainings, conflict mediation or coachings are just a few of the things we on offer.

Get in touch with us and we will be happy to sit down with and find the solution that best suits your needs:

welcome@GoLebenskunst.de
Tel. +49-2207-703208