

**wintranslation**

**Potentially Lucrative  
Global Markets  
Based on the  
Top 10 Languages  
on the Internet**



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After extensive market research, a thorough examination of the strengths of your business, and determining whether there is a need for your product or service, you have decided you are ready to take your company into international markets. You have also come to realize that people speaking English as their first language comprise less than 30% of all online users. In light of this fact, you know that in order to be successful in your attempts at taking your business global, you will have to localize your websites, documents, and marketing materials. But with all the countries in the world, how do you pinpoint the best market for your business? With all the languages spoken across the globe, how do you determine into which language(s) to localize? With so many options, how do you choose? This White Paper will provide you with the information to help you determine which languages will give you the most lucrative and speediest return on your translation and localization investment.

According to John Yunker, co-founder of Byte Level Research, the top languages right now are Chinese, Russian, and Portuguese (overall); Spanish (for the U.S. market); French, Italian, German, Spanish, and Japanese (for companies just starting out); and Arabic and Eastern European languages (for companies that already have more than 25 languages). “While English isn’t becoming any less important on the Internet, other languages, such as Chinese, Russian, Spanish, and Portuguese, are becoming comparatively more important. Web globalization will become increasingly vital to succeeding in this emerging global marketplace.”

Of the almost two billion Internet users worldwide, there are over one billion people on the Internet who view online content in a language other than English because English is not their native language. However, it is not enough to simply know which languages have the highest number of online users. Just because a language has many millions of online users does not necessarily mean that it is the best language for you based on your business’ unique needs, objectives, products and services, as well as the needs of your prospective customers. Though an important clue, the number of online users of a particular language is merely one piece of the puzzle in determining successful localization.

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There is additional information that should be used to help determine the languages that will allow you to reach the most online customers and increase sales. In “Languages that Matter on the Web” *Multilingual* author Aurore Claverie discusses the T-index, a statistical index that ranks languages according to their online purchasing power and identifies “the languages used by the people who will most likely buy from a website or from its advertisers.” This number is written as a percentage and is determined through an analysis of the Internet population of a given language and the GDP per capita of that population.

The chart below examines the top 10 languages on the Internet based on the number of users and their online purchasing power.

### ***The T-Index Top 10 Languages***

<b>Languages</b>	<b>T-Index</b>	<b>Countries</b>	<b>Internet Population</b>	<b>GDP per capita of Internet Population</b>
English	35.0%	24	462,596,756	\$39,072
Simplified Chinese	10.7%	2	421,097,520	\$13,155
Japanese	7.0%	1	99,143,700	\$36,724
Spanish	7.0%	21	147,873,934	\$24,615
German	5.9%	4	75,637,527	\$40,508
French	4.6%	16	61,265,749	\$39,172
Portuguese	3.5%	5	82,359,000	\$21,753
Russian	3.3%	3	69,436,800	\$24,475
Arabic	2.6%	19	65,041,000	\$20,648
Korean	2.4%	2	39,487,600	\$31,973

Source: T-Index Study, 2010 [www.translated.net/en/languages-that-matter](http://www.translated.net/en/languages-that-matter)

Localize a website into these top 10 languages and you will be able to tap into 80% of the global purchasing power on the Internet; with the top three (English, Simplified Chinese, and Japanese) you can access 50%. It is information such as this that will help you determine into which language(s) to translate your website. However, there are also other factors to consider when entering new markets via translation, areas that can only be addressed through extensive market research. In addition to the size of the online market of a particular language (based on the T-Index above), businesses should also consider:

- Demand for your business' product or service in the local market.
- Ease and ability of adapting your product or service to the local specifications, preferences, and regulations.
- Local market competition.
- Perceptions of your home country in the target market (may impact people's willingness to buy a product or service from your country).
- Consumption habits.
- Internet censorship in the local market (i.e. China).
- Online payment methods in the target country.
- Distribution costs and import/export requirements for the product.

If you plan on entering a foreign market where one of the top languages are used on the Internet, your success will depend on more than simply translating or even localizing your websites, documents, software applications, and marketing materials. You must also consider the culture and business etiquette in these markets.

***Translate a website into these top 10 languages and you will be able to tap into 80% of the global purchasing power on the Internet; with the top three (English, Simplified Chinese, and Japanese) you can access 50%***

## **General Business Etiquette: Applicable Everywhere**

If you own or run a business you know that competition in the business world is fierce. Your company must stand above your competitors in order to attract new customers, successfully tap into global markets, and increase sales. In today's business environment, one of the best ways to do this is to understand the culture and etiquette necessary to flourish in both business and social situations. Etiquette will help you to be more effective in forming relationships with new clients and retaining old ones, thereby increasing your sales and reputation as an executive or manager who is respectful of people's culture and country.

Why is etiquette so important for companies planning to enter international markets? Because first impressions matter; they stick with people long after you have left the room. Proper etiquette will help you convey confidence, credibility, competence, and respect in that first meeting and beyond. The rest of this White Paper provides helpful tips and examines the basic business etiquette of the main countries using the top 10 languages online based on the number of speakers and their purchasing power.

## 1) English: The United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom

There are several countries around the world where English is the dominant language spoken. The three largest developed markets in the world where English is at least one of the official languages include the United States, Canada, and the U.K. The following is a very basic overview of business etiquette and culture in these regions. Please note, however, that there will still be differences when interacting and doing business with people from each region, despite their speaking a common language.

### *Important Values and Personal Characteristics*

- Individualism; privacy; hard work; personal achievement; self-reliance; equality between people; and guaranteed rights and freedoms.

### *Behaviour and Expectations*

#### *Communication*

- English-speaking Canada - minimal personal contact between acquaintances, other than handshakes. The distance between two people when they are talking is about two feet.
- French-speaking Canada - expressive gestures are more common, personal contact is more frequent and accepted, and people often stand closer together when speaking.

#### *Greetings*

A firm handshake and eye contact is standard when greeting someone or leaving a room or meeting in both business and social settings in Canada and the U.S. The handshake is also common in the U.K. However, lengthy eye contact is usually avoided.

- Keeping a wide distance between you and another person while speaking is customary. For the most part, personal space is important.
- When introducing or addressing someone, use their title (if applicable) or Mr., Ms. or Mrs. and their full name.

### *Business Dress/Appearance*

- Clothing should always be clean, neat, and of good quality.
- Men – generally, dark, conservative business suit with dress shirt and tie are recommended for business meetings.
- Women – conservative business suit, dress, or skirt.
- When in doubt it is always safer to dress conservatively until you know for sure what the expectations are.

### *Gift-Giving*

- Etiquette surrounding the giving of gifts varies depending on the country/region. It is a good idea to conduct specific research into the particular policies of the company you will be doing business with.

### *Avoid*

- Avoid loud cell phone usage; invading people's personal space when talking; and hugging, kissing, or touching people you have just met.
- Avoid discussing personal or controversial topics with people you have just met. Examples may include politics, religion, homosexuality, racism, abortion, criticism of the government, and financial issues (i.e. asking how much money a person makes).

## ***Business Structure and Etiquette***

- Punctuality is expected.

### *Business Meetings and Negotiations*

- In Canada, print all of your material in both French and English if you are doing business with French Canadians.

### *Decision-Making*

- Since decision-making is often slower in England than in the U.S. it is advisable not to be pushy or try to rush people in business dealings.

### *Business Cards*

- Usually exchanged during an initial meeting or introductions, but they may also be exchanged when leaving.



## 2) Simplified Chinese: China

According to Tony Wanless, of Knowpreneur Consultants, who admitted in the Financial Post that he made many mistakes when attempting to enter the Chinese market, “The Chinese rely heavily on ‘Guanxi’ (strategic, long-term networking) to conduct business relationships. It’s a business culture in which you leverage your personal connections.”

Chinese is one of the fastest growing languages on the Internet today. Though different Chinese dialects (Mandarin, Cantonese, etc) are spoken in several countries, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore, this section will assist those companies contemplating a move into the largest market in the world where Chinese is spoken through providing information on the culture and business etiquette in China. The following information will help you develop business relationships and make a great first impression in China.

### **Important in Chinese Society**

- Commitment and loyalty to family or other group; strong relationships; overcoming obstacles through perseverance; saving and giving face; hierarchy, respect for elders, and status; and patience, politeness, and modesty.

### **Conversations**

#### *Suggested Topics*

- The weather, work, asking what part of China they are from, food, and children.

#### *Topics to Avoid*

- *Avoid* discussing sex, family planning, and female reproductive health issues as these topics are seen as very private. Politics should also be *Avoided* during initial meetings.

***“The Chinese rely heavily on ‘Guanxi’ (strategic, long-term networking) to conduct business relationships. It’s a business culture in which you leverage your personal connections.”  
(Tony Wanless, Knowpreneur Consultants)***

## ***Behaviour and Expectations***

- Although it is changing with the younger generation, Chinese often have a reputation for being shy, not maintaining eye contact, and not displaying their emotions.
- Remove your shoes before entering a home.

### *Communication*

- Keep the same amount of distance/ personal space as you would in the West – around two feet. The distance may decrease as you get to know the person better.
- Maintain eye contact, but do not stare.
- In business situations, refrain from touching the other person or hugging when saying good-bye.

### *Greetings*

- A short and light handshake is usually offered at the beginning of a business meeting. Wait for your Chinese counterpart to extend their hand first. Bowing or nodding is also common.
- Introductions are formal: use their surname followed by their title. For example, Mr. Wang would be Wang Xiansheng and Director Wang would be Wang Zong.
- When introducing yourself, state your name, the company you work for, and your position within the company.

### *Business Dress/Appearance*

- It is advisable to dress up for business meetings. Always dress professionally in a business setting.
- Men – conservative suit and tie in dark or subtle colours is recommended.
- Women – Avoid high heels and revealing clothing. Good quality jewelry is recommended to make a good impression.

### *Dining Etiquette*

- Business relationships are developed over meals so dining etiquette is important.
- Always show up on time or early for dinner.

- As a sign of respect, taste all of the dishes you are offered (there may be several courses anyway, so taking small amounts is acceptable).
- Wait for your host to begin or you are invited to do so before you begin to eat or drink.
- Do not place your chopsticks straight up in your bowl (connotes death) or drop them (bad luck).
- Leave a small amount of food at the end of the meal. If you eat your whole meal, your hosts will assume you did not receive enough and are still hungry.

### *Gift-Giving*

- Giving gifts is an important practice.
- Give and receive a gift with both hands.
- It is best if the senior member of your delegation gives a gift (on behalf of the company) to the most senior member of the Chinese delegation for the entire group after business has concluded.
- Gift ideas: a lavish dinner, quality writing pens, or gifts unique to Canada.
- Gifts to avoid (they are associated with death): clocks; straw sandals; handkerchiefs; stork or crane; and anything white, blue, or black.
- Be aware of the significance of numbers and colours: four signifies death, three means longevity and eight means wealth or prosperity. The colour red indicates power, prosperity, and authority.

### *Avoid*

- Avoid slang and colloquial phrases; large hand movements (i.e. talking with your hands); personal contact; pointing when speaking; putting your hand in your mouth; staring straight in the eyes of a colleague, especially at a business meeting; putting your feet on a table or chair; wearing shoes without socks; and discussing business at meals

## ***Business Structure and Etiquette***

- Send a brief letter of introduction to a key contact or colleague and set up a formal meeting. Make contact and appointments before arriving in China.
- Relationships are important when doing business in China. Therefore,

take the time to develop and maintain them. Introductions and connections will also help establish your credibility.

### *Business Meetings and Negotiations*

- Be sure to show the proper respect to your superiors and colleagues.
- Always be punctual. Arriving late is considered a great insult.
- Rank and status are valued; let the most senior member of your group lead important meetings.
- Do not interrupt the person speaking.
- Speak slowly and clearly with short breaks between sentences.
- Avoid using the word “no.” Instead say “I’ll look into that” or “I’ll see what I can do.”
- Don’t assume that “yes” from your Chinese counterpart actually means they agree with you. Saying “yes” or nodding their head may simply mean they understand what you are saying.

### *Preferred Managerial Qualities*

- Knowledge; education; experience; leadership abilities; hard work; creativity; willingness to build relationships with staff members; and showing respect to the people you work with.

### *Decision-Making*

- Decisions will be made by people at the top of an organization. Hierarchy is important.
- Top management will ask for input and feedback from middle management. However, in most cases the superiors will make final decisions and pass them on to staff in the form of an order.
- Though meetings may appear to be the chance to exchange ideas, they are usually opportunities for superiors to inform management and staff of their duties and responsibilities.
- The process of making decisions is slow. Your business will not be completed quickly.

### *Business Cards*

- Should be exchanged at the beginning of the meeting.
- Have one side translated into Chinese and written in gold script (symbol

of status and prestige).

- Present and receive cards with both hands.
- Give your card to the most senior official first.
- Always treat business cards with respect – take the time to look it over after you receive it and never write on one or put it in your wallet or pocket. Instead, carry a small card case.
- Bring an adequate supply, at least 30, to each meeting.

Finally, if you have decided to translate your website, documents, and marketing campaign into Chinese, it is important that you use the following information as a guide, since Chinese is not the same in all Chinese-speaking markets. Spoken Chinese may be either Mandarin or Cantonese, while written Chinese may be either Simplified or Traditional Chinese. It is important that you translate properly depending on the country in which you are planning on doing business. The chart below is a handy tool to help you determine the form of Chinese you will need.

<i>Markets</i>	<i>Spoken</i>	<i>Written</i>
China	Mandarin	Simplified Chinese
Singapore	Mandarin	Simplified Chinese
Taiwan	Mandarin	Traditional Chinese
Hong Kong	Cantonese	Traditional Chinese

### 3) Japanese: Japan

According to Japan Entry Corporation, “When you’re doing business in Japan, you don’t want to inadvertently harm your deal by breaching a rule of Japanese business etiquette. Japanese consider their traditions and culture very important, and the business setting is no exception.”

The following examines several issues you may come across when interacting and doing business with people in Japan. It is recommended that you use these situations and topics to better prepare yourself for doing business and making a great first impression in Japan.

#### **Important in Japanese Society**

- Loyalty and commitment to family and other groups; politeness; and formality.

#### **Conversations**

##### *Suggested Topics*

- The weather or season-related topics, different foods and customs, family, hobbies, work, where someone is from, and sports (baseball or soccer).

##### *Topics to Avoid*

- Political or personal topics, North Korea, and recent world history.

#### **Behaviour and Expectations**

- Japanese are generally not very expressive compared to people from the West and most are not comfortable showing affection. It is not common or acceptable to kiss, hold hands, or hug in public. It is especially important that you remain subdued and emotionless in business dealings.

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## *Communication*

- “Maybe” is much more likely than a direct “yes” or “no” since most Japanese prefer to avoid using the word “no.”
- When being spoken to by a superior or when a superior is giving a speech or a presentation, it is common to direct your eyes downward and then occasionally glance up toward the speaker.
- Most Japanese are direct when questioning foreigners and you may be asked extremely personal questions involving how much money you make or if you are married.
- Avoid the use of large hand gestures or arm movements since most Japanese do not talk with their hands and if you do so, it may be distracting to your host.

## *Greetings*

- Calling people by their first name is generally reserved for family members.
- At work and during introductions, you should address people by their last name + “san” (to indicate Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms.). Address supervisors by their title and for doctors, teachers, and some artists and politicians, it is a good idea to address them as “sensei” + name.
- The bow is the customary greeting. However, some Japanese may greet you with a (weak) handshake or a slight nod of the head (informal).
- If someone greets you with a bow, then return the bow as low as the one you received. If you are bowing to someone of a high position or status, then be sure to give a deep bow.
- After the bow, business cards should be exchanged.

## *Business Dress/Appearance*

- Business wear is generally more formal in Japan than in North America. People working in offices tend to dress conservatively.
- Dress to impress, according to your position and status. Avoid wearing casual clothes in a business setting.
- Men – dark, conservative suits, dress shirt, and tie are customary. Business suits are preferred.
- Women – dress pants or skirt with a shirt that does not show skin below the collar bone. Many women wear uniforms for work. Conservative

clothing is best. Accessories should be minimal. Avoid high heels and short skirts.

### *Dining Etiquette*

- During a toast, the glass is never left unfilled.
- If invited to a social event, it is customary to be “fashionably late” rather than right on time.
- Most dinner meetings and social gatherings will be held in a restaurant rather than a home.
- The inviting party usually orders and pays for the meal.
- Slurping your noodles is acceptable as it indicates how much you are enjoying your food. However, avoid burping as this is seen as bad manners.
- Tipping is not expected.
- The proper use of chopsticks is extremely important.
- When eating, try to empty your dish down to the last grain of rice as this is considered good manners.
- Try at least some of every food that you are served.

### *Gift-Giving*

- Giving and receiving gifts is an important aspect of Japanese culture and the practice has existed for a long time in Japanese society.
- The ceremony surrounding the giving of a gift often matters more than the gift itself.
- Give and receive gifts with both hands.
- When it comes to gifts, color and symbolism are important. The number four is associated with death; the number two is believed to be lucky; and white flowers are only given during times of mourning.
- It is recommended that you give gifts at the end of a business trip.
- It is customary to open gifts in private rather than in the presence of the gift-giver.
- Avoid: Do not give gifts in groups of four as this number is considered bad luck because it sounds like the Japanese word for “death.” Also, do not give gifts in odd numbers as they are believed to be bad luck.
- Suggested gift ideas: high-quality beef, fruit, or alcohol, such as brandy, good quality whiskey, Bourbon, and wines.



### *Avoid*

- Avoid pointing with one finger. Instead, point with an open hand, palm facing upward.
- Blowing your nose in a public place, including meetings, should be avoided.
- Do not pat a Japanese man on the back or shoulder and do not grab someone's hand for a firm handshake if you have just met. Many Japanese are uncomfortable shaking hands.
- Avoid public displays of affection or touching someone of the opposite sex in public.
- Never write anyone's name, including your own, in red ink.

### ***Business Structure, Relationships, and Etiquette***

- Establishing personal relationships is an extremely important aspect of doing business in Japan.
- It is important to arrive to work on time and not leave early.

### *Business Meetings and Negotiations*

- Politeness, sensitivity and good manners are vital (just like many other countries and cultures).
- Call one to two hours before your scheduled meeting to confirm that you are on your way.
- Arrive early for meetings.
- Plan and follow an exact agenda for meetings.
- Take a lot of notes during meetings as this indicates interest in what the other person is saying.
- Wait to sit down until the most senior-level Japanese person in the room tells you to do so and do not stand up to leave the meeting until after the same person has done so.

### *Preferred Managerial Qualities*

- Education (from a respected university), experience, age, leadership, openness to new ideas, working hard, being personable, and willingness to put staff's best interest first.

### *Business Cards (meishi)*

- The exchange of business cards is very important and will take place before any business is conducted.
- Content and format includes Company Name; Department; Title; Person's Name (family name goes first); Address (Country, State, City, Street); Phone Number; and Fax Number.
- Have one side of your business card translated into Japanese and one in English or have a card that displays your name in Japanese with the English translation beneath it.
- Treat business cards with the utmost respect. Never push or slide your business card across the table to the recipient. Instead, be sure to present the card (Japanese side facing up) using both hands to the most-senior member of the Japanese party first, bowing slightly. Repeat this step as you make your way down through the other members of the party in order of seniority.
- Do not put business cards in your pocket or briefcase. Place them instead in a carrying case. Forgetting a business card, writing notes on it, or treating a card casually or with disrespect is taken as a sign of disrespect towards the person who gave you the business card.

## 4) Spanish: Spain, Mexico, and the United States

Spanish is spoken in several countries throughout Central and South America. However, since there is not enough space in this paper to examine every Spanish-speaking country in detail, this section will focus on Spain, Mexico, and the Spanish-speaking population in the United States.

The following examines several topics and issues you may come across when interacting and doing business with people in major markets where Spanish is the dominant language spoken. Keep in mind that this is not a comprehensive list of business etiquette and culture, but rather information to help prepare you for doing business and making a great first impression in Spain, Mexico, or the U.S.

### Spain and Mexico

Spain has an extremely large Spanish-speaking population; almost 90% of the country's population speaks Spanish as their native language. That means localizing your website into Spanish will give you access to over 41,000,000 people in Spain alone. Mexico is the United States' third largest trading partner, the United States' second largest export market, and the source country for the majority of Spanish-speaking immigrants into the United States. As such, understanding and appreciating the culture and business etiquette in Mexico is vital.

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### **Conversations**

#### *Suggested Topics*

- Food, wine, customs, the weather, soccer (Spain), history and culture.

#### *Topics to Avoid*

- Avoid political or nationalistic discussions, as well as topics involving physical appearance or age. Never discuss money or financial matters. (Spain)

- Avoid questions about a person's racial (i.e. indigenous) background as this may be a sensitive issue due to negative perceptions associated with people with darker skin. Avoid discussing the Mexican-American war, poverty, illegal immigration, or earthquakes. (Mexico)

## ***Behaviour and Expectations***

### *Communication*

- Personal space between two people when having a conversation in Spain is less than in North America. Distance will usually decrease as you get to know the person better. However, standing close to the person you are talking to is more common in Mexico.
- Spanish people often talk loudly and with their hands (compared to people in North America).
- For people who know and trust each other, personal contact is common and accepted. However, people who have just met or do not know each other well will generally not have much personal contact.
- Do not address someone by their first name unless they give you permission to do so.
- Use "usted" when addressing superiors, colleagues, and people you have just met. Address people with their titles as appropriate. If they do not have a professional title, use Mr. (Senor), Mrs. (Senora), or Miss (Senorita) and his or her surname.

### *Greetings*

- A common greeting when meeting someone in a personal context would be a kiss on both cheeks between men and women, a small hug and kiss on each cheek between females, a handshake between two men, or a hug between two people of the same sex who are close friends.
- A handshake is now the common greeting in a business situation.

### *Business Dress/Appearance*

- Appearance is important. Choose well-made, conservative suits and ties.
- Clean, elegant, and formal are always well-received. A high value is placed on appearance.
- When in doubt, go for too formal over too casual, as the latter indicates

a lack of respect. However, in some workplaces, casual attire is becoming more acceptable.

### *Dining Etiquette*

- It is common to conduct much of your communication over lunches and dinners as they are a very important part of business life and are associated with establishing business relationships. Therefore, be sure to follow appropriate dining etiquette so as to make a favorable impression.
- Tipping is appropriate and appreciated, especially since wages are often so low that tipping is necessary to supplement income (Mexico).

### ***Business Structure, Etiquette, and Relationships***

- People are not expected to develop relationships with their Spanish counterparts before conducting business. However, since personal relationships are quite important in order to be effective and successful when conducting business in Spain, it is important to spend the time necessary to develop and maintain these relationships.
- In Mexico, personal relationships are vital to professional success.

### *Business Meetings and Negotiations*

- Due to the importance of status and hierarchy, it is important to include senior-level people on your team if meeting with top executives. Sending people of lower status may cause offense.
- Meetings and negotiations may take longer than you anticipated. Be patient.
- Negotiations are often chaotic as many people may speak at once.

### *Preferred Managerial Qualities*

- Formal education; hard work; friendly; dynamic leadership; humility; compassionate; ability to develop casual business relationships; and willing to listen to input from local people. (Spain)
- Public recognition in their field; local connections and respect; experiences and achievements (more important than education); strong leadership abilities; and being personable. (Mexico)

### *Decision-Making*

- Historically, most businesses were very hierarchical and people in charge were expected to make decisions. In recent years, however, many organizations have begun to move away from this approach. Instead of a top-down approach, more people within an organization will have the power to make decisions, often after consulting with others. (Spain)
- Business is hierarchical and decisions are generally made by the most senior person. (Mexico)

### *Business Cards*

- Have one side of your business card translated into Spanish.
- When you present the card to your colleague, be sure that the Spanish side is facing him or her.

Due to their importance, titles should be included on business cards.

### *Hispanic Population in the United States*

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, there are almost 45 million Hispanics in the United States (2006 data) and this group comprises almost 15% of the entire population of the country. Current research and analysis indicates that the purchasing power of the varied Hispanic population is growing faster than any other group and is now valued at approximately \$1 trillion.

## 5) German: Germany

### ***Why you should Consider Translating your Website into German***

There are so many reasons to consider translating your websites and advertising campaigns into German. The following are just a few of the reasons localizing your web content into German could lead to increased customers and sales for your company:

- Largest national economy in Europe.
- Fourth largest GDP in the world.
- One of Europe's largest e-commerce markets.
- German is spoken by more than 100 million native speakers around the world, particularly in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, and parts of Italy and Belgium.

Since so many businesses have already entered the German market, it is imperative that you differentiate yourself from your competitors if you plan on succeeding in this extremely competitive market. The information below will help you do just that.

### ***Important Information for Localizing your Website for a German Audience***

- It has been noted that German website localization is actually more effective when typically masculine characteristics, such as achievement, strength, wealth, and success are highlighted.
- It is important to include security features since many Germans will not buy online unless they are convinced of the security of their purchase and the privacy of their information. Do everything you can to help eliminate user uncertainty or risk.
- Clean, concise, and logical design, symmetry, and colors are preferred.
- Be aware that certain colors carry specific meanings or are symbolic of a particular aspect of German culture. For example, blue is considered

### **Did You Know?**

***German is spoken by more than 100 million native speakers around the world, particularly in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, and parts of Italy and Belgium.***

to be the color of loyalty and formality; black is the color of grief, death, and hopelessness; and green is the color of hope and conservation.

In Germany alone, approximately 95% of the population (over 78 million people) speaks German as their first language. The following examines several issues you may come across when interacting and doing business with people in Germany. In addition to conducting your own research, use this information to prepare yourself for doing business and making a great first impression in Germany.

### ***Important in German Society***

- Individualism, independence, self-reliance, achievement, individual freedom, autonomy, competition, non-conformity, and equality and opportunity for every citizen.

### ***Conversations***

#### *Suggested Topics*

- Questions about themselves, such as family, job, or what part of the country they are from.
- Vacations, homes, gardens, and cars are also acceptable topics of conversation.

#### *Topics to Avoid*

- Politics; the arrival and settlement of immigrants and refugees; violent conflict and war.

### ***Behaviour and Expectations***

#### *Communication*

- Keep personal distance, a bit more than in North America, when talking with people.
- Eye contact is important; this shows openness and confidence.



## *Greetings*

- When meeting people for the first time, address them with the polite form of you (Sie) and their last name. Use this until you are given permission to use the informal “du” form (plus their first name). However, it is advisable to use the “Sie” form indefinitely with your superiors. You may use “du” with people your own age you know well.
- A handshake is the common greeting when meeting someone.
- If a person has a PhD, address them as Doctor plus their last name. Titles are very important.

## *Business Dress/Appearance*

- Very conservative, though the dress code may vary depending on the company you work for or the people you are meeting with.

## *Dining Etiquette*

- Only take as much food as you plan on eating as most Germans eat all of the food on their plate.
- Wait to begin eating until everyone at the table has been served their food and do not get up to leave after a meal until everyone with you has finished eating as well.
- Don't drink until everyone at your table has something to drink and a toast has been made.

## *Behaviours to Avoid*

- Chewing gum while talking to someone is seen as rude.
- Even though drinking is common, it is not acceptable to get drunk in public.
- Personal contact with people you have just met should be avoided.

## ***Business Structure, Relationships, and Etiquette***

- There is no need to establish a personal relationship with your German counterparts before conducting business. However, it is still advisable to spend a little bit of time engaging in “small talk” or social conversations before jumping right into business matters.
- Punctuality is important; it signifies honesty. Be on time for every business meeting, appointment or social engagement. Being even a

little bit late is seen as very insulting to most German executives.

- Productivity and meeting deadlines are also important.

### *Business Meetings and Negotiations*

- Meetings and the decision-making process often take a long time since each facet of a project will be thoroughly examined. However, once the planning stages are complete, projects usually move quite quickly and deadlines expected to be met.
- Meetings are seen as very important.
- During negotiations, do not confront the other party right away with demands and arguments. Be fair and objective; listen carefully and ask thoughtful questions; and be patient.

### *Preferred Managerial Qualities*

- Professionalism (comprised of experience, a positive and fair attitude, and commitment to hard work); education; and the ability to offer new and exciting ideas.

### *Decision-Making*

- Most companies are quite hierarchical and most decisions are made by someone in a position of authority. However, the level of involvement that high-level managers have in the day-to-day operations of a company generally depends on the size and type of the organization.
- People at all levels of a company generate ideas, however, final decisions on how to tackle a problem or project are generally made by managers in senior-level positions.

## 6) French: France

### *Is French Really that Important?*

Is translating your website and ad campaign into French a good idea? Will it yield a profitable and speedy return on your investment? How many potential customers will you be able to communicate with if you translate and localize your content into French? The information below will help you answer these important questions and more.

- Around the world, more than 110 million people speak French as their first language and approximately 60 million more speak French as their second language.
- French is (at least one of) the official language of both large and small countries in Europe and Africa, as well as Canada and Haiti.
- French plays a significant role in international business, commerce, diplomacy, and administration.
- French is one of the official languages of the United Nations, as well as other international organizations including the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

“The French business world is formal, organized and professional... Always stay as formal as you can until asked to do otherwise. This goes for virtually everything: language, dress, respect for appointments and deadlines, respect for personal space and personal time.” (“French Business Etiquette,” <http://www.french.lovetoknow.com>)

Due to the large concentration of French speakers in France, the following will provide useful information and examine several issues you may come across when interacting and doing business with people in France. It is recommended that you use these situations and topics to better prepare yourself for doing business and succeeding in France.

***“The French business world is formal, organized and professional... Always stay as formal as you can until asked to do otherwise. This goes for virtually everything: language, dress, respect for appointments and deadlines, respect for personal space and personal time.”*** (“French Business Etiquette,” <http://www.french.lovetoknow.com>)

## ***Conversations***

### *Suggested Topics*

- Anything France is known for including food and wine, historical monuments or museums, cultural and natural attractions, vacation destinations, travel, and your home country.

### *Topics to Avoid*

- Negative comparisons of the country's social system; politics; and religion.

## ***Behaviour and Expectations***

### *Communication*

- When addressing someone you have just met, especially an older person, colleague, or supervisor, use the formal form of “you” (“vous”) until they give you permission to use the informal “tu.”
- When addressing your boss use “Monsieur” or “Madam” + last name.
- Look people in the eye when speaking with them.
- It is always a good idea to learn some common phrases in French before doing business.

### *Greetings*

- Use formal introductions with full titles.
- People of the opposite sex, as well as women with other women, often greet each other with a kiss on the cheek. When greeting (or leaving) a superior or colleague, however, shaking hands is customary (though not as firm or long as you might be used to in North America).

### *Business Dress*

- Requirements often depend on your workplace. However, the French often take much pride in their appearance so it is a good idea to dress conservatively until you learn what is acceptable.
- For most office jobs, men wear a suit, shirt and tie, while women usually wear a suit jacket with a skirt or dress pants.

### *Dining Etiquette*

- Even though you will probably be offered wine frequently, you are not expected to drink a lot.
- Compliment the food you are served.
- Ask about the wine you are offered and the region it comes from.

### *Gift-Giving*

- Gifts are not expected at a first meeting, but they are appreciated.
- If you are invited to someone's home, take flowers or good quality chocolate.
- Avoid giving any gifts of poor quality; wine (unless you understand it and can talk about the bottle you brought); red roses, carnations or chrysanthemums; or an even numbers of flowers.

### *Avoid*

- Talking or laughing loudly, especially in meetings, restaurants, and while traveling on public transportation, may offend those around you.
- Refusing offers of hospitality should be avoided, as this may cause offense.
- Hugging or being overly demonstrative with people you have just met should be avoided.

## ***Business Structure, Etiquette, and Relationships***

- It is very important to establish good relationships with the people you plan on conducting business with.

### *Business Meetings and Negotiations*

- Business meetings are usually formal.
- Meetings may start late and may take longer than anticipated due to the common practice of having casual and social conversations before conducting business. Small talk is expected.
- Companies are often quite hierarchical.
- Important decisions will be made in meetings.
- Business negotiations often take place during lunch.

### *Preferred Managerial Qualities*

- Competence (understand the work their employees are doing); extensive education (certain schools are better known and therefore open doors to positions with more responsibility); years of experience; teamwork, availability, and empathy; being personable, hard working; organized; strong leadership and management skills; and the ability to motivate employees, create a positive working environment, and develop individual initiative.

### *Business Cards*

- Customary to exchange business cards.

## 7) Portuguese: Portugal and Brazil

There are two main regions of the world where Portuguese is widely spoken – Portugal and Brazil. With populations of approximately 10,735,765 and 201,103,330 respectively, these countries provide a very large Portuguese-speaking market. The following provides business leaders, marketing executives, and technical writers with the information they need to interact with other business leaders, advertise to people in this market, and write culturally appropriate content and websites.

### **Conversations**

#### *Suggested Topics*

- Where you are from and what you are doing in the country.
- Hometown, family, work, weather, culture, hobbies, sports, travel, sightseeing, and food.

#### *Topics to Avoid*

- Street children, crime, corruption, poverty, religion, deforestation in the Amazon, the economy, politics, or what people do for a living. (Brazil)

### **Behaviour and Expectations**

#### *Communication*

- Energetic hand gestures during conversations are common.
- In Portugal, a distance similar to that in North America is kept between two people during a conversation. On the other hand, Brazilians often stand close to each other when talking, regardless of how well they know the other person.
- Eye contact is important, but do not stare.
- Personal contact, such as a touch on the arm, is normal during conversation. (Brazil)

***There are two main regions of the world where Portuguese is widely spoken – Portugal and Brazil. With populations of approximately 10,735,765 and 201,103,330 respectively, these countries provide a very large Portuguese-speaking market.***

### *Greetings*

- A handshake is the common form of greeting. As the relationship develops, a small hug or kiss on the cheek may be added after the handshake. In a business setting, shake hands with the most senior-level person present and then make your way down the line according to seniority.
- Use the formal form of “you” (equivalent of “vous” in French) when addressing superiors and colleagues. Only call people by their first name if invited to do so.

### *Business Dress/Appearance*

- It is important to dress well and formal.
- Many Portuguese closely follow fashion trends.
- Men – suit, shirt, and tie (Portugal); jackets and long-sleeve shirts are common (Brazil)
- Women – skirts or pants; conservative, fashionable, and professional clothes are preferred.

### ***Business Structure, Etiquette, and Relationships***

- Before conducting business, it is vital that you establish a personal relationship with your counterparts since relationships indicate you can be trusted. It is therefore necessary to invest the necessary time into developing and maintaining these relationships outside the workplace.

### *Preferred Managerial Qualities*

- University degree; experience; willingness to accept new ideas; ability to decide and resolve problems; hard-working; efficient and productive; kind; respectful; and interested in employees’ ideas and feelings. (Portugal)
- Respect for staff; relevant professional knowledge; and appropriate experience. (Brazil)



## 8) Russian: Russia

With a population of 139,390,205 in Russia, it is easy to see why Russian is one of the top 10 languages on the Internet today. The following examines several issues you may come across when interacting and doing business with people in Russia. Use these situations, topics, and suggestions to prepare to make a great first impression in Russia.

### **Conversations**

#### *Suggested Topics*

- Sports, literature, the weather, pets, and comments reflecting respect for Russian achievements or culture (be sure to do your research first), such as music, art, literature, or dance.

#### *Topics to Avoid*

- Religion, politics, history, current socio-economic situation in Russia, comparisons between Russia and other countries, crime, and Chechnya.

### **Behaviour and Expectations**

#### *Communication*

- Personal contact is quite limited upon first meeting someone and will only increase as you get to know the person better (i.e. hug and three kisses on the cheeks).

#### *Greetings*

- Russians are often formal with people they have just met.
- A firm handshake along with eye contact is customary when greeting someone or when leaving.
- In the workplace, you should address colleagues and superiors by their «patronymic» name: father's first name + -ovich for men and father's first name + -ovna or -evna for women.

- In formal situations, use the formal form of you (vy) rather than the informal (ty).

### *Business Dress/Appearance*

- Conservative and formal for both men and women.
- Men – shirt, tie, jacket in darker colors and dress shoes are best for the office or formal situations. Suits should be well-tailored.
- Women – conservative, but fashionable clothes. Suits and dresses or pantsuits are acceptable.

### *Dining Etiquette*

- For more relaxed, social events, it is acceptable to arrive 15 to 30 minutes late. However, it is a good idea to be on time when attending dinner at a restaurant.
- Russians place great value on hospitality. It is considered rude to turn down an offer of food or drink. Have a little, even if you are not very hungry.
- Russians will often put more food on the table than can actually be eaten to show that there is an abundance of food (even if there is not).
- Leave a little bit of food on your plate as a sign to your host that you have eaten well.

### *Gift-Giving*

- Avoid giving gifts that can now be easily obtained in Russia.
- High-end gifts (i.e. those used for trade promotion), alcohol, chocolates (usually for women), or flowers are all good gift ideas. Be sure that when giving flowers as a gift that you give an odd number, as an even number is considered unlucky (used for funerals).

### *Avoid*

- Shaking hands with someone across the threshold of a doorway is considered bad luck.
- Speaking or laughing loudly in public is frowned upon.
- Putting your thumb through your index and middle fingers or making the OK sign should be avoided as they are considered extremely rude gestures.

## ***Business Structure, Etiquette, and Relationships***

- It is important to develop personal relationships before attempting to do business in Russia. Most Russians prefer to do business with people they know and trust. Attending social events or dinners will help to further facilitate and expedite the formation of these relationships.
- Arrive at work and business meetings on time. Follow through on your work commitments.

### *Business Meetings and Negotiations*

- Thoroughly prepare detailed and factual presentations.
- Your company should be represented by a senior-level team of specialized experts.
- Some Russians still believe that compromise is a sign of weakness and will therefore refuse to back down from their position.
- Negotiations may take a considerable amount of time. Be patient.

### *Preferred Managerial Qualities*

- Experience and knowledge; strong leadership skills; confidence; excellent communication skills; assertiveness; and ability to get along well with other people.

### *Business Cards*

- Have your cards printed in English on one side and in Russian on the other.
- Cards are always exchanged (quite liberally) at business meetings. Be aware that presenting and receiving business cards involves significant ceremony and significance that should be treated with respect.
- Your cards should clearly indicate your title and academic degree.

## 9) Arabic

Since Arabic is spoken by over 200 million people in 22 countries around the world, you may want to consider translating your website into Arabic, while also taking into consideration the unique cultural requirements of this market. There are many similarities, as well as differences, between Arabic-speaking countries throughout the Middle East. This section is not designed to be a comprehensive examination of all such countries. Instead, the following includes some general tips for doing business in the Middle East and if you desire to enter the Arabic-speaking market, it would be prudent to gain an understanding of the culture and expectations of the particular country you plan on entering.

### ***What You Should Know Before Traveling or Doing Business in the Middle East***

***Since Arabic is spoken by over 200 million people in 22 countries around the world, you may want to consider translating your website into Arabic, while also taking into consideration the unique cultural requirements of this market.***

- The Middle East is considered to be more formal and traditional than Western societies.
- In most Middle Eastern countries, business associates will spend a considerable amount of time getting to know you before “getting down to business” as many prefer to do business with people they trust. Therefore, building and maintaining relationships are a vital aspect of cultivating business contacts and ensuring success in these markets.
- Dress modestly and conservatively. In many countries, women will need to take extra care in how they dress and wear loose clothing that conceals the body and with high necklines, sleeves at least to the elbows, and hemlines well below the knee (preferably ankle-length). In some countries it would also be advisable to avoid pants or pant suits. Be sure to carry a scarf.
- Men will shake hands with other men. However, observant Muslim men will probably not shake hands with women. Similarly, observant Muslim women will not shake hands or touch any man who is not a member of their families. Therefore, in order to avoid offending a Muslim woman or her husband, be sure not to attempt to shake hands with her if you are a male businessman.
- Communal eating is common and recognized as an “expression of friendship.”

- Always eat, give gifts, or hand out business cards with your right hand, never your left, which is considered unclean.
- It is a good idea to accept the offer of tea or coffee from your Arab hosts (even if you don't even take a sip), since offering is a sign of hospitality and accepting is a sign of respect. Rejecting this offer is viewed as rejecting the person.
- Observant Muslims will not eat pork, consume alcohol, or smoke.
- Avoid taking pictures in mosques or at military facilities. Further, if you wish to take a photograph of someone in the Middle East, particularly if it is a woman, then be sure to ask permission before doing so.
- When speaking with men in the Middle East, asking general questions about the welfare of their families is encouraged. However, be sure to avoid asking specifically about their wife or daughters (any female relatives) as this is an extremely private area of life.
- Generosity and thoughtfulness are highly respected traits.
- While it is important for foreigners to arrive at meetings on time and call if they are going to be late, "the concept of time in the Middle East is generally seen as fluid, and many Middle Easterners are more relaxed about when an appointment or event ends or begins, both at work and at a social gathering."
- Be careful how you sit since showing or pointing the bottom of your feet at someone, even by accident, is considered extremely rude and offensive in Arab culture.
- Religion (Islam), tradition, hospitality, loyalty, honour, respect, and the family are all extremely important in most Middle Eastern societies.
- Physical contact between the sexes should be avoided in public.

## **Islam**

If you are planning on doing business in a Middle Eastern country where Islam is the dominant religion, such as Egypt, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, or the United Arab Emirates, the following section is vital. Since religion plays such an important role in the lives of many people throughout the Middle East, it is important to have at least a basic understanding of the beliefs and practices of Islam, in particular, how religion impacts the daily professional and personal lives of the people you may be interacting with.

### ***The following explains some of the most important facets of Islam in brief:***

- Founded by the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, approximately 1,400 years ago.
- Islam originated in Saudi Arabia and therefore millions of Muslims visit this country every year.
- Based on five pillars: 1) profession of faith, 2) prayer, 3) fasting, 4) charity, and 5) pilgrimage.
- Prayer is therefore an important aspect of life for Muslims. They will pray five times a day at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and night. Since prayer may take place in public places and at work, a room or space for prayer is often specifically designated.
- For many devout Muslims throughout the Middle East, Islam “governs their personal, political, economic and legal lives.”
- The Qur’an and the actions of Muhammad provide guidance for all Muslims.
- The traditional greeting among Muslims is Assalamo Alaikum,” which means “May peace be upon you and may God’s blessings be with you.”
- Ramadan takes place every fall. It is a month of fasting and celebration. Between sunrise and sunset, Muslims will not eat or drink, and during the day, they are only permitted to work six hours. Each night after sunset, families and friends will get together to break the fast with a large meal known as iftar. During Ramadan, it is also important to be aware that businesses generally operate on a reduced schedule.
- To show respect, if you are traveling or working in the Middle East during Ramadan, it is important that you avoid eating, drinking, or smoking in public places or in front of Muslim staff or business associates.
- The traditional greeting of Ramadan is “Ramadan Kareem” which means “Happy, or blessed, Ramadan.”

### ***Conversation***

When meeting people for the first time, it is a good idea to be aware that there are certain topics that may alienate or offend your Arabic counterparts, while others are much safer.

### *Safe Topics*

- Sports, family, inquiries about the other person's health, food, compliments about the country, and asking where someone is from and the type of work they do.

### *Topics to Avoid*

- Palestinian-Israeli conflict; Iraq, Afghanistan, or terrorism (and the U.S. response); any inquiries about female relatives; religion; politics, and atheism. If you are an atheist, DO NOT say so. Atheism is not understood or respected (particularly in Saudi Arabia). To say that you do not believe in God will cause people to lose respect for you.

## 10) Korean: South Korea

The population of South Korea is approximately 48,636,068. The following examines several areas of business etiquette and culture you may come across when interacting and doing business with people in South Korea. In addition to conducting your own research, use these situations and topics when preparing to do business in South Korea.

### **Important in Korean Society**

- Status; respect for elders; hard work; modesty; and education (highly valued and seen as the path to status, money, and success).

### **Conversations**

#### *Suggested Topics*

- Hobbies, family, health, food, and your positive experiences in South Korea.

#### *Topics to Avoid*

- Be wary of questions regarding the university attended since certain universities are seen as very exclusive and questions on this issue may be seen as a way of judging status.

### **Behaviour and Expectations**

- Remove your shoes when entering a Korean's home.

#### *Communication*

- Traditionally, eye contact was generally avoided, especially when speaking to elders. However, eye contact in conversations is becoming more common, especially among younger Koreans.
- Most Koreans generally do not use expressive gestures or facial expressions when speaking.
- Koreans speak to superiors with deference and respect, using titles



rather than personal names.

- Koreans often try to avoid saying no, so even when you hear yes it might not mean agreement.

### *Greetings*

- A slight bow, followed by a handshake (not very firm), is the common greeting.
- During an initial meeting, provide a detailed introduction about yourself.

### *Business Dress/Appearance*

- Koreans generally dress well and dressing accordingly indicates respect for your Korean counterparts. Dress is generally more formal in South Korea than in North America.

### *Dining Etiquette*

- Sharing a meal with your Korean business counterparts is important in building relationships.
- If you see a “No Tipping” sign, pay attention. In many areas, tipping is considered offensive.
- Wait for your host to show you to your seat before sitting down.
- As a general rule, the host pays for dinner. The bill is never split.

### *Gift-Giving*

- Giving gifts is very common in Korea as it is an extremely important part of Korean culture.
- Good ideas: liquor (such as good quality scotch), fruit, or desk accessories.
- Avoid: Scissors or knives (signify the cutting of the relationship); gifts wrapped in red or with red writing on it (indicates death); expensive gifts (your business associate will feel the need to reciprocate with a gift of similar value); or gifts in sets of four (signifies death).

### *Behaviours to Avoid*

- Avoid public displays of anger. Always attempt to remain civil, especially in the workplace.
- Do not touch, pat, or slap on the back a Korean that is not a relative or close friend.

- Avoid crossing your legs or stretching them out in front of you. Always keep your feet on the floor, rather than on a desk or a chair.

### ***Business Structure, Etiquette, and Relationships***

- Relationships are very important when doing business in Korea. Most Koreans prefer to do business with people they know and trust rather than strangers.
- Be punctual and respect deadlines.

### *Business Meetings and Negotiations*

- Business is generally not discussed during the first meeting. Instead, this time will be used to ascertain if you are trustworthy.
- Be formal in meetings until you develop a relationship with your Korean counterparts.
- At the end of a meeting, a low, deep bow signifies that the meeting was successful, while a short, quick bow means it was not.
- Negotiations often require a significant time commitment and may require several trips.

### *Preferred Managerial Qualities*

- Quality education (especially from a select group of universities) and experience.
- Good leadership skills; openness to new ideas; decisive; and working long hours.

### *Decision-Making*

- Traditionally, ideas and decisions came from the top of a company, with people required to implement the ideas and decisions having very little input. However, this is changing.

### *Business Cards*

- Exchanged during the initial meeting with another business professional.
- As a sign of respect, use two hands to present your business card to your Korean associate and two hands to receive a business card.
- Be sure to take a few seconds to look over the card before putting it away.

## Conclusion

Please note that the information in this White Paper is intended to provide a general overview of the culture, business etiquette, and customs of particular countries where the top 10 languages are spoken. Since much of the information gathered is based on the experiences of individual people who have spent a considerable amount of time in these countries, you may not agree with everything, especially since culture is an extremely complex topic and people within the same culture may not always respond the same way or hold the same beliefs as other people within that culture. The information above is therefore simply designed to assist you in preparing for your entry into these foreign markets. Since this information is just a brief overview of culture and business etiquette in the top 10 online markets, it is important that you take the time to do your own research before doing business in a new country or market. This White Paper is simply an excellent resource to help you get started on this process.

This White Paper will prove extremely helpful when entering markets where the top 10 languages on the Internet are spoken. Conduct market research, use the information and tips in this White Paper, and treat with respect all the people you do business with, and you will be on your way to being extremely successful in overseas markets.

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