

Lesson 7 - Common Mistakes

In this lesson we will examine common mistakes made by companies entering foreign markets.

Common Mistakes

When doing business in a foreign country and a foreign culture, particularly a non-Western culture, assume nothing and take nothing for granted. Turn every stone. Ask every question. Dig into every detail. Because cultures really are different, and those differences can have a major impact on the business environment and management challenges you will face in another country.

Common mistakes occur in the areas of exporting, business dress, and communication.

Exporting Mistakes (1 of 3)

Common exporting mistakes made by companies include:

- ▶ In the first flush of enthusiasm, the company spreads itself too thin, attempting to enter several different markets, rather than focusing on one and establishing a base of expertise and strength from which further efforts might be undertaken.
- ▶ The company regarded exporting as a safety net, turning to it only when the domestic market experienced a downturn and abandoning it when domestic business recovered. It did not develop a long-term strategy or presence.

Exporting Mistakes (2 of 3)

- ▶ The company treated its foreign partners, agents, and distributors with less consideration than it treated its partners and associates at home.
- ▶ The company refused to modify its products to respond to regulations or cultural preferences in its target markets.
- ▶ The company attempted to operate exclusively in English and did not bother to provide itself with capabilities in the language of the target market, nor did it seek to produce documents in that language.

Exporting Mistakes (3 of 3)

- ▶ The firm attempted to do everything by itself instead of engaging specialists such as freight forwarders and Customs brokers to handle the technical details of exporting.
- ▶ The company did not gather all the necessary background information about the target market. It failed to devise a meaningful marketing plan before attempting to export.

Read “International Business Dress” by Mark Twain

- ▶ Read Article then complete Assignment #1 - Accepted International Business Practices - [see Handout](#)

Read Article “Communication Mistakes” by Wallace Immen

- ▶ Read Article - see Handout
- ▶ Continue with slides before starting assignment

Overcoming Troubles With Words

- ▶ An accent or regional speech pattern can be a trademark -- but it can also be a career limiter, says speech pathologist Bonnie Gross, president of SpeechScience International Inc.
- ▶ On the next slide you will see some of the ways that speakers from areas where much of Canada's new skilled immigrant talent hails face difficulties, and ways to overcome them

Chinese Exhalations



Words in Chinese are formed mainly in the back of the mouth and there is little movement of the tongue or the air in the mouth. That's almost the complete opposite of the way words are spoken in English, in which many are pronounced by movements of the tip of the tongue and air is pushed outward, Ms. Gross says. It can make Chinese speakers sound tense and hesitant unless they practice loosening up the front of their tongue and exhaling when they speak English. She recommends word exercises that emphasize tongue movement and breathing.

Indian Intonation

Languages spoken on the Indian subcontinent use the same tone for all words, making statements sound flat to English speakers. Ms. Gross has people from this region practice saying sentences and putting emphasis on key words until the pattern becomes natural.

It is also difficult for people from India to pronounce words that contain the combination "th" or that start with the letter R. Repeating a sentence like "With or without the ruler" about 50 times in a row slowly each day for several weeks will help make the pronunciations flow more naturally, Ms. Gross says.



Spanish Speed Control

People from Spanish-speaking countries have learned to talk so quickly that others used to the slower pace of English can miss what they are saying. Ms. Gross says that can be helped by having people practice reading text at a specific rate, which helps them remember they have to slow down when talking.



Canadian eh?

Those who come from rural regions of Canada may speak more slowly than people in the cities. And those from the Atlantic Provinces have a tendency to drawl their vowels. Ms. Gross typically coaches Canadians to sharpen their phrasing when speaking, and put stronger emphasis on words.



Avoiding Mistakes (1 of 6)

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Avoiding Mistakes - Profit From the Experience of Others (2 of 6)

Customers, suppliers, and even competitors could be willing to share their experiences with you. Network with those who have been where you are going, even those in unrelated businesses. If you can find someone who has picked a partner, made an investment, hired an employee or done any of the other things you will be doing overseas, take advantage of that expertise.

Avoiding Mistakes - Start Slowly (3 of 6)

A good start is more important than a quick start. Trade before you invest. Recruit a representative before opening an office. If you can invest small before you invest big, do it.

Avoiding Mistakes - Commit the Resources (4 of 6)

It takes time, money, and effort to prepare your business to succeed in a foreign market. You will have to travel, hire new people, manage those people and rely on new service providers.



Avoiding Mistakes - Be Wary of the Gatekeeper (5 of 6)

It is important not only to get information but to get quality information. That can be difficult if you rely exclusively on one information source. Different perspectives improve your opportunity for success. Each perspective serves as a reality check for the other.

Avoiding Mistakes - Establish Goals, Procedures and Business Practices (6 of 6)

Set detailed and realistic goals and define business policies and procedures. Should problems arise in the future, you will have something to fall back on to explain your position.



Assignment #2 - Communication Mistakes

- ▶ Complete assignment on handout