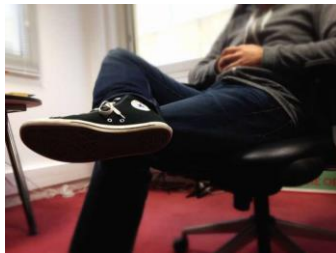




Don'ts on the International Business Scene

It's wise not to underestimate the importance of **cross-cultural issues** whenever doing business with international partners – getting off on the wrong foot is always potentially risky for any relationship, let alone when it comes to business partnerships. Here are three **Don'ts** to bear in mind with your Arab, Chinese and Finnish customers:



1. ARAB COUNTRIES

Displaying the **soles of the feet** doesn't come across as a good gesture in many countries, and especially in the Arab world.

One of the main reasons why such an action is perceived as an insult is because the feet are considered as **the most unclean part of a person's body** – especially the soles.



2. CHINA

Saying 'no' in Chinese culture is among the most offensive and rudest things ever – so much so that **in Mandarin there is no direct way to say 'yes' or 'no'**. This explains why your Chinese customer keeps on postponing the meeting with you – it's just one of the many indirect Chinese ways to say 'no'.



3. FINLAND

Whereas mastering the subtle art of small talk may prove an asset in most business cultures, this is not the case in Finland. **Finns are notoriously reserved and concise**: no need to force small talk on them. During conversation, **two- or three-minute pauses** are common: don't interrupt them.