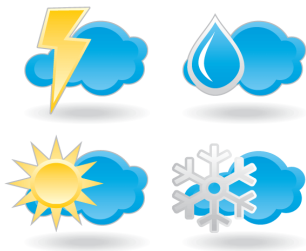




### *Icebreakers*

The art of small talk is of paramount importance in any business situation; yet, it's also the hardest to master. What topics to address in order to **break the ice** with a new potential business partner without risking to make any **faux-pas**? Here follow the top three topics we would recommend:



#### 1. WEATHER

As banal as it may sound, it is no chance that the weather is THE international icebreaker by definition; in effect, it provides the unique opportunity to immediately and spontaneously **agree** on something, thus providing a **common ground** where to build discussion and negotiation.



#### 2. COFFEE

A quite **impersonal** (and, therefore, safe) topic to address upon meeting someone. It is, however, less impersonal than weather, as **coffee habits** vary from country to country. It may therefore offer an opportunity either for agreement or for a **conflict-free cross-cultural confrontation**.



#### 3. PETS

Pet talk is more **culture-bound** than weather and coffee are, and it therefore provides less common ground for mutual understanding and agreement. If you decide to address it, just avoid to show **astonishment** if your potential business partner from Asia starts praising his favorite pet spider...